

Dakota County Social Services Referral Guide for Educational Neglect and Truancy Reduction Program 2020-2021 School Year

1. Unexcused Absences Referral Criteria-*NEW*
2. Educational Neglect and Truancy school roles and responsibilities
3. Referral Information Needed-*NEW*
4. Educational Neglect and Truancy: Dakota County Social Services roles and responsibilities
5. 360 Communities Partners for Success Program
6. Making a referral for services
7. Responding to additional unexcused absences
8. Dakota County Website resources on www.dakota.mn.us
9. Community resources for parents
10. Contact information and School District Liaisons-*NEW*

COVID-19 and School Attendance

Dakota County will review this guide and referral criteria throughout the school year to address the impact COVID-19 has on student attendance.

School Districts are highly encouraged to refer to the [MDE 2020-2021 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Schools](#) to develop district wide attendance policies.

Unexcused Absences

Dakota County Social Services will accept a report of educational neglect or Truancy for full day absences only. This includes absences for all school models including in-person, hybrid and distance learning. In order to provide consistency across 120 schools, Dakota County has listed the following parameters to determine if a child's unexcused absences meet criteria for a referral.

- Failure to enroll in school will be reviewed by both the programs to determine the most appropriate response.
- Full day absences are defined as not attending in-person or logging on for an entire school day.
- Tardies or late arrivals will not be accepted as unexcused absences.
- Failure to complete in-person or online work on a given day will not be accepted as an unexcused absence.
- Failure to log-on or complete work on student flex days will not be accepted as unexcused absences by Dakota County

COVID-19 Absences due to Student or Family Illness or Exposure

- If a student or their family member is unable to attend school due to COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure that requires them to be in isolation or quarantine, this absence will not be considered unexcused.
- Referrals for Truancy or Educational Neglect in which a student has failed to provide documentation as to a positive COVID-19 will not be accepted by Dakota County.

Educational Neglect and Truancy roles and responses

Educational Neglect (K-age 11)	Truancy (Ages 12-16)
<p>School Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send “3 day” unexcused absence letter to parent/guardian. • Notify County Social Worker if child is open to services and parent has signed a release of information. • Complete at least one contact with the parents/guardian to discuss attendance and academic progress. • At 7 days unexcused absences, make referral to Child Protection Intake using the educational neglect reporting form, include the attendance record. • Attach the student services plan/diversion plan or 360’s Family Learning plan if this was completed with the family. 	<p>School Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send “3 day” unexcused absence letter to parent/guardian. • Notify county social worker if child is already open to services and parent has signed a release of information. • Schedule meeting with student and parents/guardian to discuss attendance and academic progress and develop plan to address school attendance. • At 7 days unexcused absence, send “Referral to Truancy Services” letter and “Truancy Reduction Program” brochure to parent. • Make online truancy referral to Dakota County Social Services. Attach attendance record. • Check off interventions attempted with the family in the online referral form, this is required. • Attach the student services plan/diversion plan or 360’s Family Learning Plan, if this was completed with the family.

<p>Referral Information Needed-NEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What model of learning is the child currently enrolled in? • What days of the week are they attending in-person learning? • What has been tried to resolve the attendance concern? • What has been attempted to reach the student? • Has school staff been able to confirm that the student has appropriate technology equipment including WIFI? • Has school staff been able to confirm that student/parent knows how to access the distance learning process? • School principal has signed off on the referral? • Special Education contacts and information? 	<p>Referral Information Needed-New</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What model of learning is the child currently enrolled in? • What days of the week are they attending in-person learning? • What has been tried to resolve the attendance concern? • What has been attempted to reach the student? • Has school staff been able to confirm that the student has appropriate technology equipment including WIFI? • Has school staff been able to confirm that student/parent knows how to access the distance learning process
<p>Social Services Child Protection Assessment (45 Days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child protection social worker meets with the parent/guardian and student to complete assessment, identify needs and connect family to services and supports. • A school meeting with the family, student and school staff will be scheduled by the social worker. This meeting may be held via zoom. • Services are family system focused. • Social Worker may arrange for community based and/or county contracted services and supports for the family. 	<p>Social Services Truancy Assessment (90 Days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The truancy social worker meets with parent/guardian and student to complete assessment, identify needs and connect family to services and supports. • A school meeting with the family and student may be scheduled by the Social Worker, this meeting may be held via zoom. • Services are family system focused. • School refusal and chemical health screening tools may be completed. • Social Worker may arrange for community based and/or county contracted services and supports for the family.

Social Services Child Protection Case Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For students and families in which a county service is being provided to the family.• Mental Health screenings will be completed with all children in the home.	Social Services Truancy Case Management <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For students and families in which a county service is being provided to a family.• A mental health screening tool (MAYSI) will be presented for completion with the identified student.• If a child has is already receiving case management
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360 Communities Partners for Success Program

Family Support Workers are assigned to 32 schools in Dakota County. Family Support Workers are available to meet with students and families to create a “Family Learning Plan” to address emerging school attendance issues and to resolve other student and family barriers related to attendance. Family Support Workers may be invited to attend any meetings between the family, school staff, and Dakota County Social Services. For information on the 360 Communities Partners for Success Program and its role in preventing and addressing student absences please contact: Lisa Lusk, 360 Communities Director of School Success at llusk@360Communities.org or at 952-985-4014.

Making a Referral

Educational Neglect (K-Age 11)	Truancy (Age 12-16)
Please fax referrals to Dakota County Social Services to Children and Family Intake 952-891-7192.	Go to www.co.dakota.mn.us and search keyword, “school attendance”. Click on Truancy Reduction Program-Online Referral. If you are a first time user it may take up to two business days for approval for your access to the online referral tool.

Additional Unexcused Absences following the initial referral

Educational Neglect	Truancy
When an initial referral for Educational Neglect is received, the Social Worker makes a plan with the family and school about how to respond if the student has additional unexcused absences after the Social Service case is closed. Dakota County Social Services may accept an additional educational neglect referral within the same school year if the plan was not followed and unexcused absences continue.	If a child is open to a Truancy Social Worker and has three or more additional unexcused absences, school staff should check the online truancy referral system to see the status of the case. If it is open, the school can contact the listed Truancy Social Worker at 952-891-7400. If the student was open to a Truancy Social Worker within the current school year or previous school year but the case is closed, a new referral can be made when the child accumulates three or more unexcused absences.

Dakota County Social Services online resources

www.co.dakota.mn.us Keyword Search: School Attendance

Educational Neglect	Truancy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral guide for Educational Neglect and Truancy Reduction Program • Sample “3 Day Letter” & “Referral Letter” (English, Spanish, Somali) • Educational Neglect Brochure in English and Spanish • Educational Neglect Reporting Form (required for referral) • Educational Neglect Meeting Responsibilities and Expectations form • Attendance Works: Elementary School Infographic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online referral link and user guide • This guide to Educational Neglect and Truancy Reduction Program • Sample “3 Day Letter” & “Referral Letter (English, Spanish, Somali) • Sample “Medical Documentation Letter” • Updated Truancy Brochure in English and Spanish • Remove the old County Attorney School Success brochure from circulation at your school. • Attendance Works: High School and Middle School Infographic

Community Resources for Students and their Families

Attendance Works has created an [Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID era.](#)

The [Dakota County Website](#) hosts a variety of community resource directories. In addition, www.minnesotahelp.info hosts the largest data base of community resources in Minnesota.

Contact Information & School Liaisons for 2020-2021

Dakota County has designated staff to be school liaisons for the 2020/2021 school year. Their role is to assist schools in brainstorming about barriers preventing children from being successful with their education. The school and the county liaison can collaborate to explore potential resources and solutions. The liaison can also provide information on how educational neglect reports are handled by the county.

The Dakota county liaisons will meet monthly to check in to see what other districts are doing that may be working well or not well to learn about other resources and ideas. This information will then be passed on to the schools. This is not to replace intake for screening new child protection reports or referrals through the Truancy Portal. Please contact one of the Supervisors below to find out who your school liaison is.

District	Educational Neglect School Liaisons
District 6-South Saint Paul	Connie Wood 952-891-7385 Mary Pat Volpi 952-891-7461
District 191- Burnsville/Eagan/Savage-	Kristie Janusch 952-891-7346 Julie Finnerty 952-891-7306
District 192- Farmington	Paula Pletsch 952-891-7446
District 194- Lakeville-	Chelsea Griemann 952-891-7463 Rianna Laxdal 952-891-7343
District 196 Eagan/Apple Valley/Rosemount-	Betsy Dantoft 952-891-7329 Mary Pat Volpi 952-891-7461
District 197- WSP/Mendota Heights/Eagan	Connie Wood 952-891-7385 Mary Pat Volpi 952-891-7461
ISD 199- Inver Grove Heights Online, Charter and Private Schools	Connie Wood 952-891-7385 Betsy Dantof 952-891-7329

Dakota County Social Services—Referral Guide for Educational Neglect and Truancy Reduction Program 2020-2021 School Year

ISD 200-Hastings	Roxanne O’Connor 952-891-7431
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District	Truancy Social Worker
ISD 196-Apple Valley/Eagan/Rosemount	Tommy Sivongsay 952-891-7374 Tani Imberg 952-891-7351
ISD 6- South Saint Paul ISD 199-Inver Grove Heights ISD 197-WSP, MH & Eagan ISD 200-Hastings	Catherine Nkwo 952-891-7345 Jeff Lynch 952-891-7330 Tammy Loberg 952-891-7309
ISD 191-Burnsville ISD 192-Farmington ISD 194-Lakeville	Mike Vieburg 952-891-7337 Andie O’Brien 952-891-7313 Desiree Wren 952-891-7444 Madeline Jensvold 952-8917458
Float based on referrals	Chris P’Simer 952-891-7387
#917, Charter School Students, and Online	Students will be assigned based on the residence of the parent

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<p align="center">Educational Neglect Kindergarten-age 11</p>	<p align="center">Truancy Age 12-16</p>
<p>Stacy Devitt, Child Protection Supervisor Dakota County Social Services 14955 Galaxie Avenue West Apple Valley, MN 55124 Phone: 952-891-7456 Fax: 952-891-7473 Stacy.Devitt@co.dakota.mn.us</p> <p>Ray LaCroix, Child Protection Supervisor Dakota County Social Services 14955 Galaxie Avenue West Apple Valley MN Phone: 952-891-7356 Fax: 952-891-7473 ray.laxcroix@co.dakota.mn.us</p>	<p>Leslie Yunker, Truancy & Children’s Mental Health Supervisor Dakota County Social Services 14955 Galaxie Avenue West Apple Valley, MN 55124 Phone: 952-891-7425 Fax: 952-891-7473 Leslie.Yunker@co.dakota.mn.us</p>