

What's going to happen if I keep MISSING school?

Are you wondering what's going to happen because you've missed so much school?

Truancy is a serious problem. Here's what the law says:

In Connecticut, a truant is someone who has 4 unexcused absences from school in one month or 10 unexcused absences in one school year.

There is also something called a habitual truant. This is someone who has a habit of being absent from school. A habitual truant is someone with 20 unexcused absences in one school year.

What will happen if I am a truant?

Your school is required to have a meeting with your parent/guardian, or another person who is taking care of you, within 10 days after you become a truant.

The reason for this meeting is to talk about why you haven't been coming to school and to help you solve the problems that keep you from coming to school.

What if my parent/guardian doesn't go to the meeting at school?

If your parent/guardian doesn't go to the meeting, or if the school feels your parent/guardian is not helping you to come to school, then they can refer your case to court. There are two laws that allow the school to get the court involved. One is called "Family with Service Needs" and the other is called "Youth in Crisis."

What will happen next?

Your case will be assigned to a probation officer. This is the person who makes a decision about whether your case will go to a judge or it will be handled out of court. The probation officer can decide to:

- close your case; or
- refer you and your family to a program to help you; or
- assign you to be supervised by a probation officer for a period of time; or
- ask your school to do an educational evaluation; or
- send your case to a judge.

What happens if my case gets sent to a judge?

You and your parent/guardian will have to go to court. You will receive a summons in the mail telling you the time and place. There will be a hearing before a judge (probably more than one hearing). You will have a lawyer appointed to represent you at the hearing. Ask your lawyer to explain the legal process to you.

What can the judge do?

If you are under 16,

some of the things the judge can do are:

- close your case and give you a warning
- order that you be supervised by a probation officer
- order you to go to school
- order you to go to counseling
- require the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to get involved with you and your family
- order you to be locked up if you disobey the judge's orders

If you are 16 or 17,

some of the things the judge can do are:

- stop you from driving a motor vehicle for a period of time
- order you to work or to do community service
- order you to go to school
- order you to go to counseling

Can I get arrested or locked up for truancy?

Not at the beginning. But, if you are under 16 and you do not follow the judge's orders, you can be taken into custody and charged with the crime of violating a court order. If you are found guilty, you could be locked up in juvenile detention.

Where can I get help?

Truancy is a serious problem. We want to help you so you can stay in school.

For more information about truancy and your legal rights
Call CCA's Teen Legal Clinic at 860-570-5327.



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