

## What will happen if you miss a lot of school?

**Kids who are out of school a lot are called “truant” or “chronically absent.”**

### Truant

A truant is someone who has 4 unexcused absences from school in one month or 10 unexcused absences in one school year.

Schools can excuse absences with a parent’s note, up to your 9th absence. After your 9th absence, the school needs notes from your doctors if you were absent due to sickness. Other excused absences could be for a religious holiday, death in the family, mandated court appearance, or transportation issue.

Always bring a parent’s note if you are absent. Some schools will not accept parent notes after a certain amount of time.



## 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 school days after you become a truant.

The meeting is to talk about why you have not been at school and to help solve the problems that keep you out of school. Depending on the problems, there might be another meeting, called a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting, to see if you need extra services like resource room time or support from the school social worker.

### What if my parent/guardian does not go to the school meeting?

If your parent/guardian doesn’t go to the meeting, or if the school thinks your parent/guardian is not helping you get to school, the school can refer your case to a community program to help resolve the issues that cause you to miss school.



## What will happen next?

The school should give you more information about a community program that could help you.

Community programs are voluntary. You and your parent/guardian have to agree to participate. The program will connect you with supports and services that could help you get to school.

It is your “job” to be in school. The law says you are not allowed to withdraw or drop out until you turn 17.

It is your parent/guardian’s job to make sure you go to school. If the school tries to meet with you and your parent/guardian and they do not respond or engage in a program and you don’t go to school, the school may contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and ask them to investigate.

A lot of schools will take away class credit if you are absent too many times. It can be very hard to get those credits back, especially if you want to graduate on time.

### Will my case get sent to a probation officer or judge?

No. In Connecticut, probation officers and judges do not handle truancy cases. Truant kids are served by community programs instead of the juvenile court.

## What is chronic absenteeism?

Chronic absenteeism means you have been absent for more than 10% of the school year that has already passed.

For example, if there have been 100 days of school this year, you have been absent for 10 of them, including both excused and unexcused absences.

Even if you are absent for excused reasons, you are still missing out on class time. You may not be able to get classwork done and you may not be able to graduate on time.

If you are chronically absent, the school should set up a meeting for you and your parent/guardian with the Student Attendance Review Team. The Team may suggest ways to help you catch up on lost class time.



## Need Help?

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

If you need information about your legal rights, call the Center for Children's Advocacy at 860-570-5327 or 203-335-0719



This brochure is intended as reference only and should not be interpreted as legal advice. If you need specific information about the law, please call 860-570-5327 or 203-335-0719.

**Center for Children's Advocacy**  
**speakupteens.org**  
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# Missed a lot of school?

## What will happen? What does the law say?