

What happens if someone makes a report to DCF?

If someone makes a report for educational neglect, DCF will decide whether or not to investigate. If DCF decides to investigate, they might talk to you, your parent/guardian, or your school. Someone from DCF will also do a home visit to come see where you live. DCF will also consider things like your age, health, abilities, and academics.

If DCF thinks that your education has been neglected, they may refer you to a program in your community for help. DCF may keep the case open to make sure you are going to school.

Can you get arrested if you don't go to school?

No. You cannot get arrested or sent to jail for not going to school.

Can your parent/guardian get arrested if you don't go to school?

No. Your parent/guardian cannot get arrested or sent to jail if you don't go to school, but the State can make them pay money. Your parent/guardian can be fined up to \$25 a day if they aren't making sure that you go to school.

Can you still get in trouble for missing school after you turn 18?

Yes. You can be considered truant or chronically absent if you miss too much school even after you turn 18. As long as you are still enrolled in school, your parent/guardian is supposed to make sure that you go to school.



Where can I get help?

Missing school is a big deal.

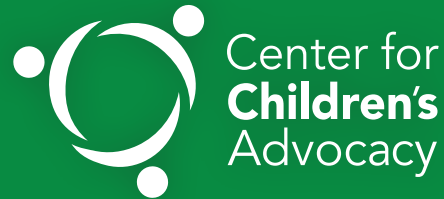
For information about truancy or chronic absenteeism and your legal rights:

CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY

cca-ct.org • speakupteens.org

Hartford: 860-570-5327

Bridgeport: 203-335-0719



The information in this brochure is intended as reference only and should not be interpreted as legal advice in an individual case.

If you need specific information about the law, please call us at 860-570-5327 or 203-335-0719.

© CCA 2026

Missing School?

It's a big deal – here's what the law says

Have you missed a lot of school?

Missing too much school can be a big deal. If you've missed a lot of school, you may be considered truant or chronically absent.

Truant:

A student is considered truant if they have 4 unexcused absences from school in a month or 10 unexcused absences in a school year.

Chronically Absent:

A student is considered chronically absent if they have missed 10% or more of the total number of days they've been enrolled during that school year. It does not matter if the absences were excused or unexcused – all missed days count.

Example: There are about 40 school days between the start of the school year and the end of October. So, if you have missed 4 or more school days by the end of October, then you have missed more than 10% of school days and are chronically absent.

What happens if you have too many absences?

Your school has to take certain steps if you are absent a lot, but those steps are different based on whether you're considered truant or chronically absent.

Truant:

Your school is required to meet with your parent/guardian within 10 school days after you become truant. At this meeting, you will talk about why you haven't been coming to school and help you solve the problems that keep you from coming to school.

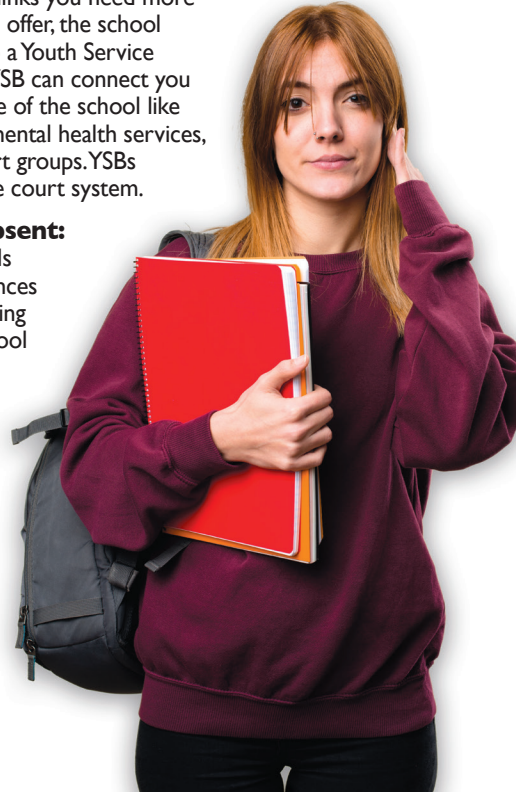
If you have a disability that affects your learning, you might have another meeting called a Planning and Placement Team meeting (PPT). At the PPT, a team of people, including you, your parent or

guardian, and people from your school, will talk about making an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for you. IEPs are plans that give students access to special education and other services. Having an IEP can help you get things like resource room time or counseling with the school social worker.

If your school thinks you need more help than they can offer, the school might refer you to a Youth Service Bureau (YSB). A YSB can connect you to services outside of the school like youth programs, mental health services, and parent support groups. YSBs are not part of the court system.

Chronically Absent:

Each school deals with chronic absences differently, depending on how much school you've missed. The more school you've missed, the more steps your school will take to help. If your school or district has an attendance review team, you may end up working with them.



To start with, your school might talk to your parent/guardian about missing school, have you join a mentoring program, or connect you with a Family Resource Center. If you need help with a disability at school, they might make a plan with the different supports you can have at school. You might hear these plans called a 504 plan or an IEP. These plans can help make going to school easier.

If those steps don't work, your school might try something else. Other steps could include referring you to a YSB, having you join a dropout prevention program, or connecting you with mental health help. Your school should work with you and your parent/guardian to see what steps would be the most useful for you.

What happens if your parent/guardian doesn't work with the school to help you?

If your parent/guardian refuses to talk to or meet with your school, the school may make a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for educational neglect. Schools don't have to make a report to DCF just because you're truant or chronically absent, but school staff are mandated reporters (if a teacher or staff member at your school thinks that your education is being neglected, the law says they have to report it).

What is educational neglect?

Educational neglect is when a parent or guardian (1) doesn't enroll you in school, (2) doesn't allow you to go to school or be schooled at home, or (3) doesn't make sure that you go to school on a regular basis.