



# Saint Louis County

Public Health and Human Service Department – [www.co.st-louis.mn.us](http://www.co.st-louis.mn.us)

Ann M. Busche  
Director

September 20, 2010

Dear School Staff:

The intent of this letter is to provide information regarding students who have excessive absences due to educational neglect or truancy. We hope to increase our collaborative efforts with schools regarding the educational neglect of children. The Initial Intervention Unit (IIU) in Virginia is the intake point for reports of educational neglect of children residing in Northern St. Louis County. The Truancy Review Team (TRT) is the intake point for truancy.

### Educational Neglect:

*Educational neglect is when children 11 years old or younger have 7 or more unexcused full day absences and the school has made efforts to engage the parent in a process to remedy the educational neglect.* Additionally, for students of ANY age, if you have reason to believe that a parent is neglecting their child's education a mandated maltreatment report should be made by calling the intake screener at 218-749-7128. School staff would need to identify what evidence exists that neglect is occurring in these cases. Most reports of educational neglect receive a Family Assessment approach rather than an Investigative Response. The desired outcome is to increase the child's attendance. The hope is also that a partnership can be developed with the parent(s) to respond to their child's educational needs and that we work collaboratively with schools to the same end.

### Truancy:

*Truancy is when children 12 years old or older miss school or classes without a valid excuse.* A "habitual truant" is when a child under the age of 16 years is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high school, or high school. These children should be referred to the TRT. The desired outcome of the TRT is to act as a problem-solving group to help students attend school and be successful. [Please find attached legal references for neglect and truancy.]

In addition to mandatory assessments, St. Louis County offers Family Outreach services to parents who contact IIU to request help for their family. Family Outreach social workers work voluntarily with families at no charge and can work with any age child and their family regarding education or other issues.

Again, call 749-7128 to make a mandatory report or request voluntary services. We look forward to working with you regarding the education of children in Northern St. Louis County. If you have any questions about this letter or would like a social worker to speak with your staff, please feel free to call me at 749-7178.

Sincerely,

Paula Stocke, Supervisor  
St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services Initial Intervention Unit

Cc: Dick Pingry, Division Director

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