



What parents can do.

- Make your child's education a family priority.
- Tell your child how important his/her education is to you.
- Insist that your child attends school and does their homework.
- Understand your child's school attendance policy.
- Make sure your child obeys curfew laws and gets plenty of sleep at night.
- Buy your child an alarm clock.
- Tell your child that you love him/her and give him/her hugs on a regular basis.
- Do not enable your child by calling the school to cover for illegitimate absences.
- If your child does not want to attend, find out why. Talk to your child and listen for an answer. If there is a problem, try to solve it together.
- If your child refuses to go to school, do not be afraid to ask for help. Talk to school staff to find out if your child has a problem and what resources are available to you.
- Advocate for your child in the school system.

If you would like additional information or services for your child please contact:

Marian Phillips
Supervisor's Secretary of Attendance
at 904-277-9071
or
Dr. Catherine Drew
Director of
School Climate Transformation Grant
at 904-491-9871

Every kid deserves
the best possible
start in life.



Make sure yours
are in school.

Nassau County School Board
1201 Atlantic Avenue
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

*A guide for parents and teens
about school attendance and truancy.*

What parents should know.

It is not uncommon for parents to have questions about truancy. Many adults are unsure about the types of absences that are unexcused. The following are examples of lawful excuses for a child to miss school:

- illness
- family emergency
- funeral
- religious holiday

The following are examples of absences that are not lawful:

- missing the bus
- oversleeping
- didn't feel like going to school
- sleepiness or boredom
- staying home to baby sit

It is the responsibility of both the parent and child to know the school's attendance policy. All schools welcome questions and encourage parents to contact them if they have questions about a particular type of absence.

Why your child is at risk.

- Children who are absent frequently have a much greater chance of dropping out.
- 90% of all children in juvenile detention have a history of truancy.
- About 50% of the current state prison population does not have a high school diploma or GED.
- Children who don't get their high school diploma earn about \$9,000 a year less, as an adult, than those who have diplomas.

What will happen if your child misses too much school.

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After the student has 5 unexcused absences in a 30 calendar day period,
the Principal will send a letter requesting a parent/teacher conference with the child study team.

If there is no response or the student has 7 unexcused absences,
the Principal will complete a Truancy Home Visit Report, and a visit will be made to the home by an official from the school board.

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After the student has 10 unexcused absences in a 90 calendar day period, the Principal will send a letter requesting a teacher conference with the child study team.

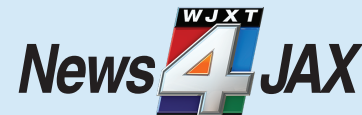
After the student has 15 unexcused absences in a 90 calendar day period, the Principal will notify the Adult Ed/Dropout Prevention office and a certified letter will be mailed to the parent. An affidavit will be filed with the State Attorney's office for Contributing to the Delinquency of a minor.

The State Attorney's Office will notify the parent of the Truancy Arbitration Hearing (TAP)

The TAP Hearing will be held and an agreement will be signed by the parent/guardian that the child is to have no further unexcused absences. Services will be offered such as counseling or crisis intervention as appropriate for the child. Violation of this agreement will result in further prosecution by the State Attorney's Office and the arrest of the parent.

A total of 15 parents from Duval, Clay and Nassau Counties were arrested in a sweep. Children of these parents had at least 20 unexcused absences from school this year.

Added together, the children had missed more than 4,600 days - nearly 26 school years.



May 6, 2008