

STATE ATTORNEY TRUANCY INTERVENTION

Helping Keep Kids In School

Truancy is one of the most powerful indicators of juvenile crime. Truant children not only miss out on critical education, but may also be exposed to repeated opportunities to commit or be victimized by crime.

In 1997, the State Attorney Truancy Intervention Unit was formed by a collaboration between the State Attorney and the Broward County School Board. Currently, all Broward County Public Elementary Schools are participating in the Broward Truancy Intervention Program (BTIP).

The State Attorney Truancy Intervention Unit's primary focus is to place the truant child back in school through interventions with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the truant child.

Initially, when a child accrues five unexcused absences, the child's school will schedule a conference with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine the cause of the nonattendance; and if necessary, implement interventions to assist in resolving the issue. Once 10 unexcused absences are accumulated, a Truancy Intervention Program Specialist (TIPS) is assigned to deliver a notice to the parent(s)/guardian(s) explaining Florida's compulsory school attendance law. Following the assignment of a TIPS, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may be asked to meet with school officials, social workers, teachers, and State Attorney staff in a final effort to enact interventions designed to bring the child back to school.

If the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not receptive to the interventions discussed or the pattern of nonattendance continues after the final meeting, the case is referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation and then submitted to the State Attorney's Office as a criminal case. The Office then reviews the case for filing a violation of the compulsory school attendance law (a second degree misdemeanor).

The State Attorney Truancy Intervention Unit can be reached at (945) 831-8592.