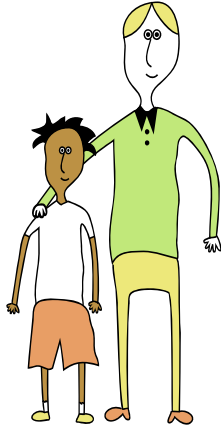


## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRUANCY TO MY PARENTS?

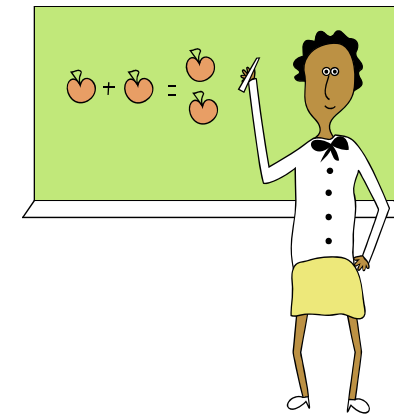
If your parents do not compel you to attend school, they may be guilty of educational neglect and subject to prosecution. A criminal complaint can be filed against a parent or guardian who fails to comply with the order of the school or the court. Penalties for violations may include a fine of up to \$500 and 60 days in jail. Parents or guardians who have refused to abide by the State's education laws or have failed to cooperate also have been prosecuted for neglect or for contributing to the delinquency of a minor.



*This brochure was prepared by the Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County. It is provided as a general overview of the truancy laws in the state of Florida as of 2007. This brochure can be downloaded from the internet at [www.swfljac.org/truancy.pdf](http://www.swfljac.org/truancy.pdf).*

Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County  
2107 Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard  
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Phone: (239) 344-5100  
[www.swfljac.org](http://www.swfljac.org)

## Know the Law Truancy



**Information for youth on truancy laws  
in Florida**

## WHO MUST ATTEND SCHOOL?

You must attend school:

- Full-time from the age of 6, or those children who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year, to the age of 16. It is your parents' responsibility to see that you attend school.
- Full-time or part-time from the age of 16 to 18, unless you have been exempted (excused) OR have graduated from high school OR have taken and passed a special test called the G.E.D.

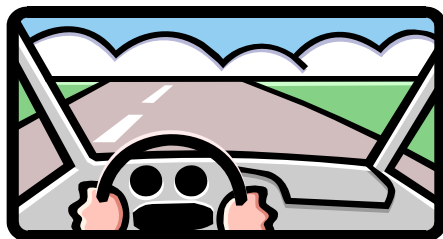
If you change where you live, your parents must enroll you in school in your new location.

## WHO DOES NOT HAVE TO ATTEND A PUBLIC SCHOOL?

If you are 16 or 17 years old, you may formally withdraw from school, but your parents must be notified. If you are receiving full-time instruction at a private school or from a tutor, or if you are enrolled in a home education program, you may be exempt from attending public school.

## ATTENDANCE AND YOUR DRIVERS LICENSE

If you do not attend school, your driver's license may be suspended until you reach the age of 18.



## WHAT IS AN EXCUSED ABSENCE?

Legally, all students must be in school unless they have:

- A medical or dental appointment.
- An absence for religious holiday or ceremony observance.
- An absence requested in advance by parents and approved by the school.
- Any other justifiable reason.

## WHAT IS TRUANCY?

If you have 5 or more unexcused absences within a calendar month, or 10 unexcused absences within a 90-day period, you are considered truant. In Lee County, after 19 unexcused absences, a letter from the School District requesting a parent/student conference may be sent to your parent.

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRUANCY TO ME?

### TRUANCY PETITION

A truancy petition can be filed against you and you will have to appear in court with your parents. You may be ordered to attend school or attend alternative classes, do community service work, participate in counseling with your parents, perform other sanctions, and/or participate in other services.

### CHILD-IN-NEED-OF-SERVICES (CINS) PETITION

If you do not successfully complete the sanctions of a truancy petition, you may be referred for a Child-in-Need-of-Services (CINS) Petition filed by the Department of Juvenile Justice. If the Court finds you a CINS, you and your parents may be required to pay a fine, participate in treatment, or other sanctions. You may even be removed from your parents' custody and placed in the custody of another adult or a CINS shelter. The court may use its contempt powers to enforce its orders and may retain jurisdiction over you until you reach the age of 18.