

# What causes truancy?

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



What Causes Truancy? The reason a student misses school will for different depending on the age and circumstances of each student. Sometimes a student will skip school because they feel unsafe at school or on their way to or from school. Other students may miss school because of family issues, financial demands, substance abuse, or mental health problems. Factors contributing to truancy commonly stem from three core areas: school, family and community. Innate student characteristics and their experiences within all these areas will have a heavy impact on truancy rates.

**Bad Influences**

One of the common causes of truancy and disruptive behavior in children is the influence of friends and peers. Many times these peers are seen encouraging truancy as a status-seeking activity or as a way of joining in or blending in. The child's natural instinct to want to be a part of a larger crowd or group dynamic will take over, even if they are taught better habits. Often times this same dynamic is prevalent in the face of any resistance the child may put forth, prompting teasing or goading the child into truanting.

**School**

What is classed as truancy can depend largely on the school's attitude to the 'truant' or their problems. Relationships with teachers, seen as lacking respect/fairness, play a large factor in truancy rates among children. Often times this inability to get along with teachers and/or students will result in disciplinary problems which may lead to suspension, or expulsion. Of course, being away from the school either voluntarily or at the school's demand can have an adverse affect on the student's academic performance, resulting in not being able to keep up with school work, getting poor grades, or even failing. A school may also be remiss in not notifying parents/guardians of absences. This feeds into the larger school category as a whole,

encompassing not only relationships with teachers and issues of fair treatment but also the content and delivery of the curriculum, seen as lacking in relevance and stimulus. At this point the factors coming together are often times consolidated into the “ standard” excuse from children regarding school and truancy, namely that they don't like school in general or that they don't like the particular school they are attending. Compounding the problem is the ease with which some pupils slip away unnoticed and how their school systems do not have in place a method to deter them. For example inconsistent and ineffective school attendance policies, in conjunction with poor record keeping, may cause a school to inadequately identify a child's special education needs. Bullying Closely related to the issue of a child's relationship with school is the matter of bullying. Bullying is a prime component in the making of an unsafe school environment; if a child does not feel safe at school, or on the way to/from school, they are much more likely to become truant. Bullying occurs for many reasons and it goes beyond the one isolated instance of harassment either because of teachers' inability to control, or problems arising from the child's own personality or learning abilities. A parent might say they're keeping their child off school because they're being bullied. The school might call it truancy. Personal Matters Individual (personal) factors related to child truancy include: lack of self-esteem/social skills/confidence; poor peer relations; lack of academic ability; special needs; and lack of concentration/self-management skills. Professionals have identified that many chronically truant children had a job, had a family to support, or had trouble managing both school and work, thus forcing them to make a choice between personal life and school. For sure

when a child gets married, gets pregnant and/or becomes a parent the risk of truancy increases. Often times the risky behaviors are further instigated if the child develops or has already developed an alcohol or drug problem. Family factors that contribute to truancy in students are innately personal in nature. Parentally condoned absence is especially influential, as it reinforces the lack of consequences for irresponsible/unwanted behavior on the part of the child. Parental attitudes to education are crucial to schools success in keeping children in school; often times a parent's condonation of truancy (albeit overt or tacit) is construed as the parent's not valuing education. It is worth noting that many parents indiscriminately sanction an absence by sending a note or making a call. Schools should be able to enlist the support of parents when it comes to tackling truancy. When a parent doesn't value education, wants their child to help them out at home or believes their child has good reasons for staying away, the task is altogether more challenging. Many educators point to the prevalence of so-called 'tourist truants': like children who stay two weeks in the French Alps missing vital parts of their school curriculum. These kinds of trips give as negative a message to a child as a note for a fortnight off school for a mild cold. Many schools will only exceptionally agree to a child missing more than 10 school days for a family holiday or other reason during one year. Some schools may refuse to authorize any absence for holidays.