



# **Brookings County Truancy Program**





# Agenda

Introduction

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Team Members

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Stats

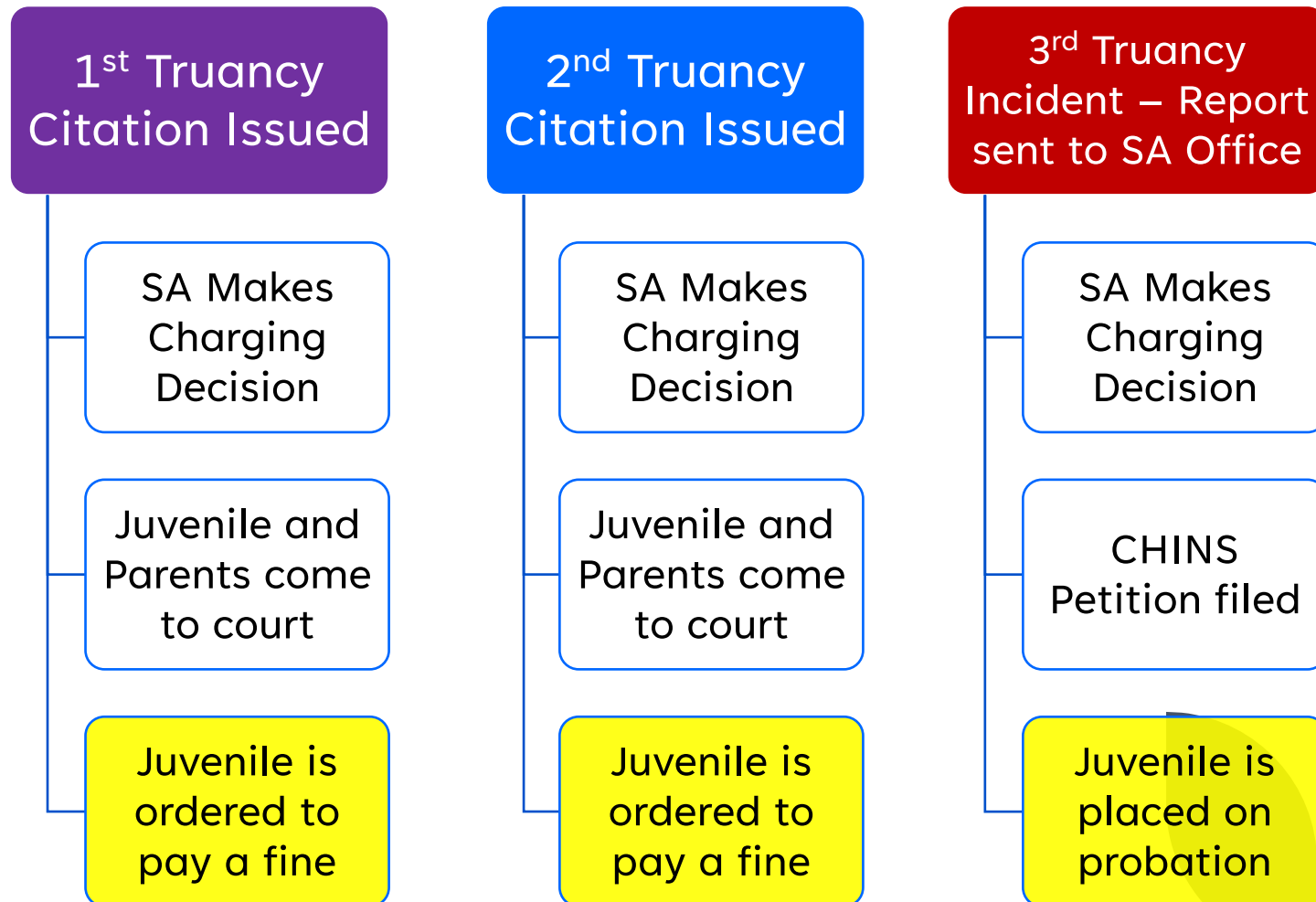
Questions/Answers

Contact Information



# Juvenile Citations

26-7A-126. Law Enforcement treatment as juvenile cited violation  
26-8B-2. Child in need of supervision



# TIME.....



- Student receives citation and court date is set at least 10 days out.
  - 10 more days of missed school
- SA Office reviews citation.
  - Option 1: Divert to court program
    - \*Referral sent by SA Office.
  - Option 2: Juvenile/Parent appear in court
    - \*Juvenile receives a fine

Either path leads to continued missed days before the issue can be addressed with either Diversion or the Court.



# Purpose of the Truancy Program

Designed to target students who are truant and placing the responsibility back on the parent(s).



## **Team Members of the Truancy Program:**

- State's Attorney's Office Representative**
- Brookings Behavioral Health & Wellness Therapist**
- School District Representative**
- School Resource Officer/Deputy**
- Student and Parent(s)/Guardian(s)**

## **Assisting Team Members:**

- Lutheran Social Services  
(referral if needed for the family)**
- Youth Diversion Coordinator of the Boys & Girls Club of Brookings (if needed)**



# Brookings County Truancy Program - Participating Schools

Initiated in the fall of 2022 with increased school participation

## **2022-2023:**

Brookings High School (Middle School students included if truancy was an issue with siblings within the home)

Sioux Valley School District

Deubrook Area School District

Elkton School District

## **2023-2024, Additional school participating:**

Mickelson Middle School

## **2024-2025, Additional schools participating:**

Camelot Intermediate School

BPA



# Brookings County Truancy Program Workflow

## Phase 1

Referral sent to S.A. Office from School

S.A. Office reviews referral.

Team discusses meeting date/time.

Truancy meeting set and parent letter completed.

Truancy letter served on parent by SRO.

## Phase 2

Round table discussion obstacles/issues.

What resources do we have available to help.

Discuss and confirm plan of action.

Truancy Agreement Form discussed and signed.

## Phase 3

Updates given by the school and BBHW to the Team.

Truancy Program is 120 days in length.

Successful or Unsuccessful letters are issued.

Referral cut off dates: November 30th and April 1st.



# Truancy Program Process-Phase 1

- After 10 unexcused/excused absences in one or more classes per semester, a representative from the school will reach out to the State's Attorney's Office informing them of the student, attendance record, communication had with parent(s)/guardian(s), and request that the student be placed on the Truancy Program.
- The State's Attorney's Office reaches out to the truancy team members for availability to schedule an intake meeting. Once the meeting is established, the school completes a letter addressed to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) informing them of the student being placed on the Truancy Program and information as to why. The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) must attend the scheduled meeting listed in the letter. If they do not attend charges for Failure to Send Child to School may be brought. The school provides the SRO the truancy letter and a return of service form to be served upon the parent(s)/guardian(s).

# Example of Truancy Letter

MICKELSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mickelson Middle School

Todd Foster, Principal  
Matt Christie, Asst. Principal  
1801 12th Street South  
Brookings, SD 57006  
(605) 696-4500  
FAX (605) 696-4506

OFFICE OF STATE’S ATTORNEY

Brookings County

Dan C. Nelson, State’s Attorney  
520 Third Street, Suite 330  
Brookings, SD 57006  
(605) 692-8606  
FAX (605) 692-6960

{DATE}

{PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)}  
{ADDRESS}  
{CITY,STATE,ZIP}

Dear {PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)}:

This letter is regarding {STUDENT’s} absences for the 2025-26 school year. He/she currently has 15 missed days as of September 30, 2025, and meets the criteria for the Truancy Program. Enclosed you will find a copy of his/her absences, the Mickelson Middle School Attendance Policy, and information about the Truancy Program. We certainly understand that situations arise when students are ill and cannot be in school or when students are gone for other reasons. If there are health issues to be considered, please obtain a doctor’s note from your physician. We would like to know if there are any extenuating circumstances other than illness preventing attendance at school.

{STUDENT’s} Truancy meeting has been scheduled for {DATE / TIME} at the Brookings City-County Government Center, State’s Attorney’s Office, third floor, located at 520 3rd Street. You and {STUDENT} are required to attend.

Failure to appear for the above scheduled meeting may result in criminal charges against you for **Failure to Send Child to School, A Class 2 Misdemeanor, SDCL 13-27-11.**

Please feel free to contact me at (605) 696-4500 if you have any questions regarding the above information.

Yours in education,

Matt Christie  
Assistant Principal

Dan C. Nelson  
State’s Attorney

Enclosures  
Cc: Cumulative File  
State’s Attorney’s Office

Mickelson Middle School Attendance Policy

**Compulsory School Attendance:** Due to SDCL 13-27-1, caregivers are required by law to send their child (ren) (six years-eighteen years old) to school on a regular basis. After 10 absences, the Brookings School District will submit a truancy report to law enforcement indicating missed classes/days of school for student displaying “irregular attendance” 13-27-20. Law enforcement will submit all truancy requests to the Deputy State’s Attorney’s Office.

**Excessive Absences**

1. Attendance: All students will be allowed 10 absences per semester.

a. After 7 unexcused absences in one or more classes per semester, school personnel will send a letter to parent or guardian.

b. After 10 unexcused absences in one or more classes per semester, students are considered excessively absent, and a letter will be sent to parent/guardian. Henceforth, the student will only be excused in the case of serious illness (doctor’s verification necessary within 2 days of absence) or other extenuating circumstances. If the student is failing a class, he/she may be removed and will no longer receive credit for the class.

Truancy Program

The Truancy program is in conjunction with the State’s Attorney’s Office, The Ivy Center-Brookings Behavioral Health and Wellness, and Lutheran Social Services, to provide support and services to ensure all students are attending school. The below is an outline of the Truancy Program:

• After 10 unexcused/excused absences in one or more classes per semester the student is enrolled in the Truancy Program.

• A letter is served on the parent/guardian of the student informing them of the enrollment in the Truancy Program with a scheduled meeting date/time.

• The meeting will be held at the Brookings County State’s Attorney’s office and will include the student, parent/guardian, Mickelson Middle School representative, State’s Attorney’s office representative, and Ivy Center-Brookings Behavioral Health and Wellness Therapist.

• The meeting will be conducted as a round table with discussion/input on how/what the student, parent/guardian needs to be successful, and services will be provided/scheduled.

• One week after the Truancy meeting the student will have a check-in with the school representative.

• The Truancy Program will be completed once the student successfully completes services and has consistent school attendance.

• Unsuccessful completion of services and continued school absences may result in criminal charges against the parent(s)/guardian(s) for **Failure to Send Child to School, A Class 2 Misdemeanor, SDCL 13-27-11.**

# Example of Return of Service

## MICKELSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## OFFICE OF STATE'S ATTORNEY

### Mickelson Middle School

Todd Foster, Principal  
Matt Christie, Asst. Principal  
1801 12th Street South  
Brookings, SD 57006  
(605) 696-4500  
FAX (605) 696-4506

### Brookings County

Dan C. Nelson, State's Attorney  
520 Third Street, Suite 330  
Brookings, SD 57006  
(605) 692-8606  
FAX (605) 692-6960

### PERSONAL SERVICE

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)

{PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)}  
{ADDRESS}  
{CITY,STATE,ZIP}

STUDENT

{NAME}

I hereby certify that the following paper(s), a **LETTER**, dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, from the Mickelson Middle School and Office of State's Attorney, came into my hand for service. That on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM, I did serve the documents on \_\_\_\_\_. By then and there delivering to and leaving with a true and correct copy of said letter.

*Parent/Guardian Signature:*

*Date:*

*Time:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*School Resource Officer:*

*Date:*

*Time:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Truancy Program Process – Phase 2

- The meeting is conducted at the State's Attorney's Office and is a round table discussion/input from the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). What do they need to be successful at getting to school, and as a team, how we are going to accommodate/provide those supports to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). What services within the community do we have available and can be provided/scheduled. A small portion of the meeting is set aside for the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to meet with the therapist from Brookings Behavioral Health and Wellness alone. This is to allow intake paperwork for services to be completed and if they would like to disclose anything to the therapist without the team present.
- Once discussions are completed, a plan is put into place on what accommodations/services the student needs to be successful. The Truancy Program Agreement form is reviewed with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). Then signed by the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and a team member representative. This can be completed with the therapist when filling out intake paperwork.

# Example of Truancy Program Agreement Form (English and Spanish)

## Brookings County Truancy Program Program Agreement

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to participate in the Brookings County Truancy Program.

- I understand that the Truancy Program is a voluntary procedure and can only be implemented with the consent of the parent/guardian and the student.
- I consent to the mutual information sharing between participating agencies including but not limited to the Boys & Girls Club, States Attorney's Office, the local School District, The Ivy Center-Brookings Behavioral Health and Wellness, and Lutheran Social Services.
- I understand that I must complete a comprehensive assessment and if my assessment results in recommendations those recommendations must be followed for me to be able to successfully complete the program.
- I understand to successfully complete the program I must complete suggested recommendations for services and have consistent school attendance.
- I understand that any assessment/treatment/counseling is the financial responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- I understand that non-compliance with any portion of this request may result in criminal charges against the parent/guardian for **Failure to Send Child to School, A Class 2 Misdemeanor, SDCL 13-27-11.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT agree to participate in the Brookings County Truancy Program and understand criminal charges may be brought against the parent/guardian for **Failure to Send Child to School, A Class 2 Misdemeanor, SDCL 13-27-11.**

Signed this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Truancy Program Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

## Programa de ausentismo escolar del condado de Brookings Acuerdo de programa

\_\_\_\_\_ Acepto participar en el Programa de Ausentismo Escolar del Condado de Brookings.

- Entiendo que el Programa de Ausentismo Escolar es un procedimiento voluntario y sólo puede implementarse con el consentimiento del padre/tutor y del estudiante.
- Doy mi consentimiento para que las agencias participantes compartan información mutua, incluidas, entre otras, el Boys & Girls Club, la Oficina del Fiscal del Estado, el Distrito Escolar local, The Ivy Center-Brookings Behavioral Health and Wellness y los Servicios Sociales Luteranos.
- Entiendo que debo completar una evaluación integral y si mi evaluación da como resultado recomendaciones, esas recomendaciones deben seguirse para poder completar con éxito el programa.
- Entiendo que para completar con éxito el programa debo completar las recomendaciones de servicios sugeridas y tener una asistencia escolar constante.
- Entiendo que cualquier evaluación/tratamiento/consejería es responsabilidad financiera del padre/tutor.
- Entiendo que el incumplimiento de cualquier parte de esta solicitud puede dar lugar a cargos penales contra el padre/tutor por no enviar al niño a la escuela, un delito menor de clase 2, SDCL 13-27-11.

NO acepto participar en el Programa de Ausentismo Escolar del Condado de Brookings y entiendo que se pueden presentar cargos penales contra el padre/tutor por no enviar al niño a la escuela, un delito menor de clase 2, SDCL 13-27-11.

Firmado esto el \_\_\_\_\_ día de \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma juvenil  
Youth Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Padre / Tutor  
Parent/Guardian Signature

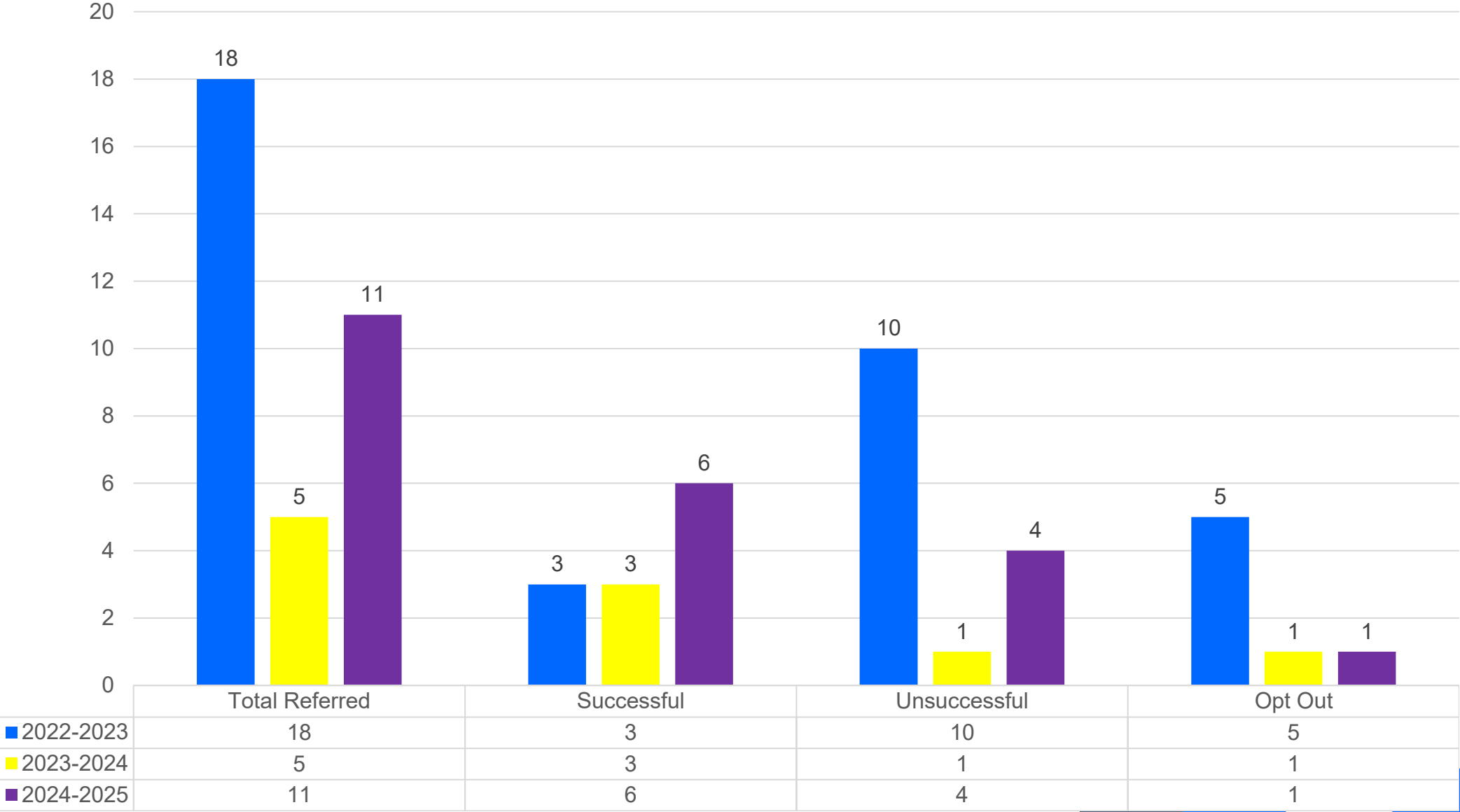
\_\_\_\_\_  
Representante del programa de ausentismo escolar  
Truancy Program Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Padre / Tutor  
Parent/Guardian Signature

# Truancy Program Process – Phase 3

- The school updates the State's Attorney's Office regarding how the student is doing with attendance. The team can decide how often these check in's need to occur based on the individual circumstances. Brookings Behavioral Health and Wellness updates the team on appointments, whether the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) have been attending, if services were required.
- The Truancy Program is a 120 day's and will be completed once the student has consistent school attendance and completed services. If the student is placed on the Truancy Program in the spring and school ends before the 120 day's is up, the student is released from the program at that time and is either successful or unsuccessful. The Truancy Program referral cut off dates are November 30th and March 31st. These are put in place to help remind the schools to get referrals in before Christmas break and end of school year as it takes a little time for set up. The Truancy Program starts over every school year and a student can be placed on the program again if needed.
- The program requires that any future excused absences for illness must have a doctor's note to excuse the student from school.
- Unsuccessful completion of services and continued school absences may result in criminal charges against the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or the student (Depends on the circumstances).

# Truancy Program Statistics





# Tina's Journey: Overcoming Truancy and Family Challenges



- October of 2022, 17-year-old Tina was struggling with truancy due to lack of transportation and her father's refusal to support her getting her driver's license or BATA tokens (public transportation).
- During the truancy meeting Tina's father was angry and blamed the state, school, and Tina.
  - Previously, Tina's father filed a CHINS petition which landed Tina on probation.
  - Tina was discharged from probation after her father didn't engage in family counseling, and other parental conditions that were required.
- Tina's father eventually signed the truancy agreement, BATA agreement for tokens, counseling forms for Tina, and agreed to attend parenting classes even though he stated he didn't need them.
- Tina met her truancy requirements and graduated high school in the spring.

# What They Are Saying



*“The collaborative approach has allowed us to address the root causes of truancy rather than simply penalizing students through the court system. We feel supported with all efforts to help students succeed, as we have additional resources and a structured framework to address attendance issues.”*

*- Dr. Camrin Vaux, Principal, Camelot Intermediate School/Brookings School District 5-1*

*“Truancy is rarely just about skipping school—there’s often a deeper story, and more often than not, it involves mental health. What I’ve appreciated most about the Brookings County Truancy Program is the collaborative approach. It’s not just about holding students accountable; it’s about surrounding them with support. The partnership between schools, mental health professionals, and the State’s Attorney’s office creates a well-rounded team that puts kids first.”*

*- Tyler Bolstad, Sioux Valley Secondary Principal*

*“I greatly value the opportunity to collaborate with additional partners in supporting student attendance. By the time I reach out to the State’s Attorney’s Office, all other interventions have been exhausted, and I am seeking further support. I appreciate the partnership with the State’s Attorney’s Office and our mental health professionals, as their involvement often provides critical insights into underlying issues that may not yet be visible to the school.”*

*- Matthew Christie, Assistant Principal. George S. Mickelson Middle School*

*“At the heart of the Brookings County Truancy Program is a commitment to students’ well-being and growth. It’s not about punishment—it’s about connection, understanding, and building a path forward. Students and families are met with support, not shame. Those relationships create trust, and that trust becomes the foundation for re-engagement, progress, and long-term success.”*

*- Zach Thomas, Assistant Principal, Brookings High School*

# Community Recourses

South Dakota Consumer Protection Office of Attorney General

[Resources - South Dakota Consumer Protection](#)

South Dakota State University Common Sense Parenting Classes

[Common Sense Parenting Classes | South Dakota State University](#)

BATA (Brookings Area Transport Authority)

[Brookings Area Transit Authority – Transportation services for all citizens of the Brookings area](#)

Brookings Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Plains

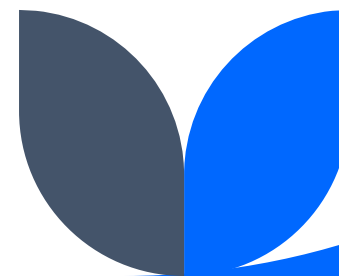
[Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Plains, Inc.](#)

Brookings County Youth Mentoring Program

[Home - Brookings County Youth Mentoring Program](#)

Helpline Center 211

[Find Help - Helpline Center](#)



# Questions?

## THANK YOU

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