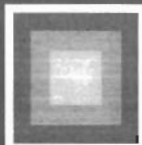




**Community  
Mediation  
Center**  
Conflict Resolution and Restorative Justice  
Services and Training  
165 South Main Street, Suite A  
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# Truancy Mediation



## A Collaborative Approach to Truancy and Attendance Problems

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## The Mediation Process

### ***What is Truancy Mediation?***

Truancy/Attendance Mediation is a process that brings together students, families and school administrators to discuss poor attendance and other issues that may include behavioral concerns, academic decline and the emotional well-being of the student. The meeting is facilitated by trained, experienced mediators and is focused on problem solving. All parties work together to build understanding, brainstorm ideas to address issues and concerns and develop mutually satisfactory options for resolving truant behavior and related attendance problems.

### ***The Role of the Mediators***

Mediators are in a neutral role and do not take sides or tell the parties what to do. Rather, mediators help the parties to talk with each other and come up with their own solutions. The role of the mediator is to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, that all sides understand each other, and that both families and schools work together to resolve issues.



## Outcomes of Truancy Mediation

### ***Truancy Mediation is Empowering***

Mediation is voluntary and is not about winning or losing. Truancy Mediation is about giving parents or caregivers the opportunity to get more involved in their children's education and to help them learn. Truancy Mediation improves communication between the family and the school as well as helps the family to actively develop approaches to resolving the student's attendance problem.

### ***Mediation can Strengthen the Family***

Often problems in school such as truancy, as well as problems outside of school, reflect troubles at home. Mediation is a way to identify and resolve differences between family members. Mediation helps to reduce stress and disruption within families by addressing underlying issues that contribute to conflict between parents and their children.

### ***Mediation Reduces Truant Behavior***

Statistics on various national and state levels indicate that mediation helps to reduce problems with attendance and tardiness. Further, reducing truancy can also help to prevent more serious problems like vandalism, drug use and gang association.



## ... More About Benefits and Outcomes

### **Additional Benefits and Outcomes**

- Helps students to achieve a higher level of self-worth and a sense of accomplishment.
- Facilitates better communication within families and builds partnerships between families and schools.
- Contributes to a healthier home and school environment.
- Provides schools with an alternative method for reducing poor attendance.
- Provides a model of communication that is positive, respectful and honest.
- Demonstrates that there are many solutions to a problem and allows individuals to look at problems as challenges.
- Breaks down misunderstandings and builds a sense of respect and openness among parties.
- Clarifies ways the situation could change and identifies steps for making changes.
- Focuses on making education a positive experience.
- Acknowledged by educators and truancy officers as an effective tool.



## Written Resolutions and Next Steps

### **Resolutions**

Mediators record points of agreement, and a written document is usually formed at the end or within a few days of the mediation. For court-referred cases, a signed agreement may be entered as an Order in the courts. You are also welcome to bring an attorney to the mediation. If your attorney is not present and a written agreement is formed, you are encouraged to consult with him/her before you sign the agreement.

### **What is the Cost?**

If your case qualifies, the mediation process may be offered free-of-charge through a contract with the Supreme Court of Virginia. If your case does not qualify, the case manager will inform you of the cost which is typically charged on a sliding scale. Occasionally, other funding options may also be available.

### **How to Contact CMC**

School administrators, teachers, parents, truancy officers, attorneys and others may call CMC concerning the need for truancy mediation. Our office hours are Monday--Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Evening appointments are available upon request, and mediations are conducted at convenient locations throughout our service area.