

## Truancy Guidance

Truancy is a societal challenge and happens for many reasons. It is understood that many school districts have different local protocols to work with the challenge of children and youth not attending school on a regular basis and/or having excessive unexcused absences. Vermont State statute positions that children ages 6 to 16 must be enrolled in public/private school or educational plans approved by the Agency of Education. The Department for Children and Families/Family Services has recently shifted the response to truancy cases. (Revision were made to DCF/FS Policy#60) With this change, DCF districts were asked to reach out to schools and tasked with creating a local truancy protocol. Truancy, as defined by DCF/FS includes students having 20 or more unexcused absences between grade 7 and the age of 16 years- old. Educational Neglect, as defined/screened by DCF/FS; **Educational Neglect:** Occurs when a parent or person responsible for a child's care knowingly fails to enroll a child in school or to provide education in accordance with 16 V.S.A. § 1121. Through the parent or caretaker's action or inaction, the child regularly fails to attend school. Educational neglect will be considered for children **beginning at age six until the completion of the sixth grade**, where the expectation is that the parent or caretaker is responsible for getting the child to school and the parent or caretaker's behavior has contributed to the child's lack of attendance. Exceptions to this age/grade consideration apply if circumstances of the child or youth, such as intellectual or developmental disabilities, exclude them from being held responsible for getting themselves to school. DCF/FS screens these reports, educational neglect differently than truancy reports. If a school official suspects educational neglect (inaction by the parent/caretakers) they should report to CIES at 1-800-649-5285.

Barre. DCF/FS and the Washington County States Attorney collaborated in 2019 to bring the DCF/FS policy changes to schools and suggested a new affidavit format for school officials to help guide their work. The new affidavit format offers guidance for what the State's Attorney would like to see regarding efforts by the schools and community providers when youth are truant from school. The DCF policy changes involve when DCF/FS staff would then become involved in truancy cases. Now, if DCF/FS is already working with a youth or family through an open case and truancy becomes a challenge, the assigned FSW should be notified by school official so they can work collaboratively with the team to address unexcused absences. If DCF/FS has no assigned FSW working with the youth or family, we do not become involved unless there is a finding by a Family Court Judge of Truancy and/or an Emergency Care Order is issued. DCF/FS would be happy to be invited to CSP meeting for those identified at risk students providing the parent/guardian grants permission for our collaboration with the CSP team. In addition to these changes, the presiding Family Court Judge is requesting that a school official attend all court hearings if a truancy affidavit has been filed with Family Court.

Locally it has been the experience of DCF/FS and Washington County States Attorney office that school officials had previously submitted truancy affidavits that did not show significant efforts by schools to offer families services in support of bringing about changes in the truancy of an identified student. Historically the affidavits also noted very high numbers of unexcused absences with no attempted Coordinated Services Meetings or follow up team meetings. We would kindly ask that schools invite DCF to attend coordinated service plan with the parent/caretaker's permission. (CSP- *see description of CSP meetings/ACT 264 statute below*) meetings with all children and families. We will do our best to get a representative to the table for robust collaboration and coordination for the identified child.

Flowchart attached.

Act 264, passed in 1988, requires that human services and public education work together, involve parents and coordinate services for better outcomes for children and families. The act developed a coordinated system of care so that children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance and their families receive appropriate educational, mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, residential, and other treatment services in accordance with an individual plan.

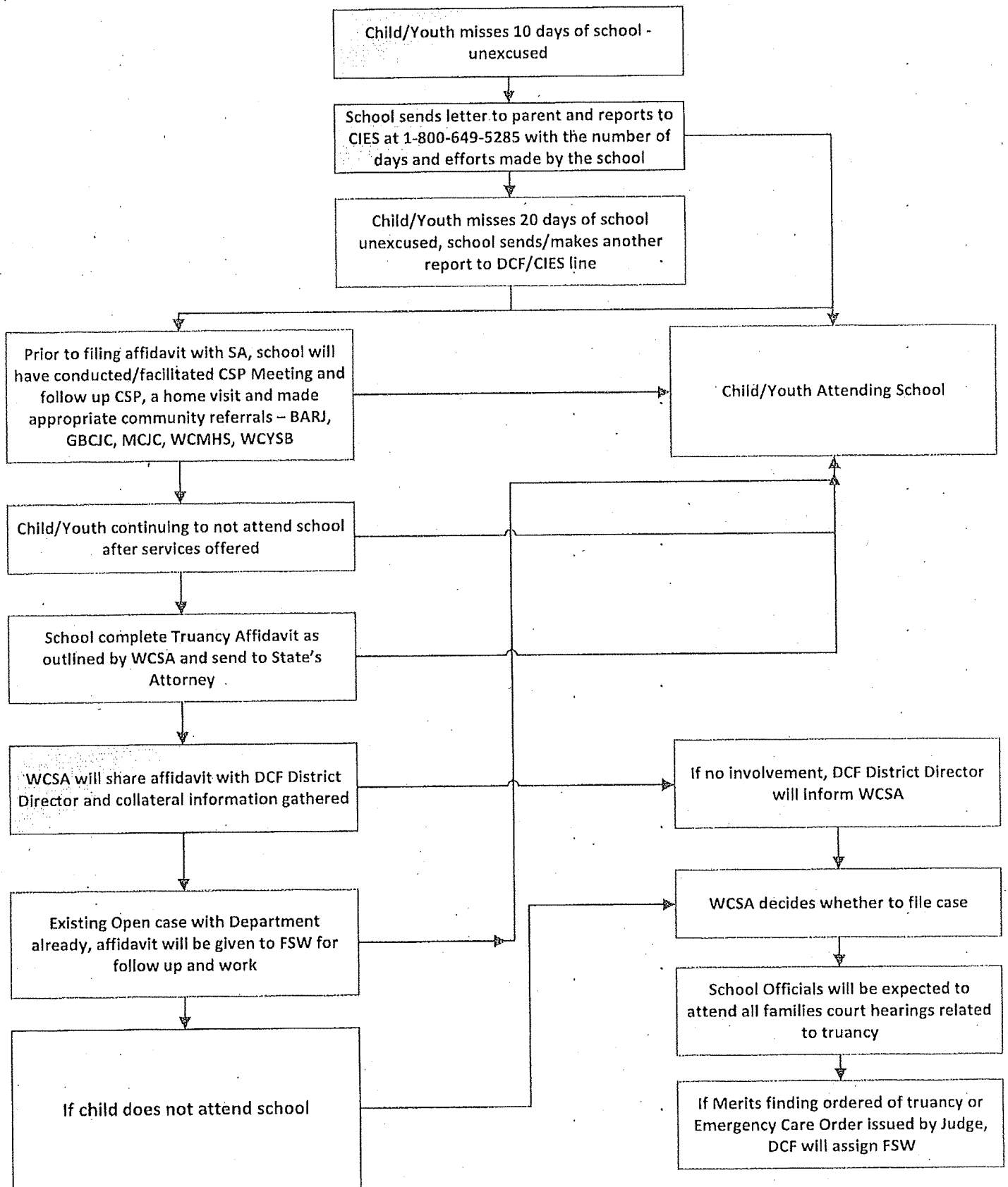
Under the Interagency Agreement of 2005, eligibility was expanded to include all children/youth with a disability who receive services from the Agency of Education and the Agency of Human Services. This statute entitles families to coordination not necessarily services. There can't be a CSP meeting without the consent of a parent. If a parent doesn't attend a scheduled CSP meeting, then it isn't a Coordinator Services Meeting. AOE and DMH representation must be at CSP meeting. DCF would like to be invited however if there is no involvement with the family a DCF representative does not need to be present. If DCF is invited the parent/guardian must agree with DCF being at the table.

Additionally, parents are entitled to have a parent representation. It is helpful if you are thinking about requesting a CSP that you connect the family to the parent rep well before the scheduled meeting so they help prepare the family for the meeting. present with them. Judy Patterson is the local Parent Rep.

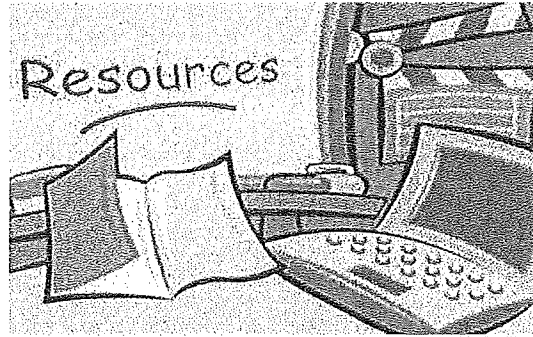
The Coordinator Services Plan document and a Facilitator's Guide can be found at <https://ifs.vermont.gov/>. This is a helpful resource.

Dcaruso.9/2019

**Protocol for Responding to Truancy Concerns**  
 (From grade 6 until 16 yrs. Old – Children in grade K – grade 5 are considered Educational Neglect Policy)



## Resource List for Washington County



**Washington County Youth Service Bureau:** Montpelier, Vermont- 229-9151 (youth at risk services including individual counseling, substance abuse counseling, family counseling, shelter and mediation)

**Greater Barre Community Justice Center:** Barre, VT- 476-0276 (conflict resolution/restorative services)

**Montpelier Community Justice Center:** Montpelier, VT- 223-9606 (Strengthening Families thru COSA/conflict resolution/restorative services/Family Group Conferencing)

**Washington County Mental Health/Children & Youth Services:** Barre, 476-1480 (if new client parents should ask for Navigation for referral to specific services)

**Washington County Diversion/Balanced & Restorative Justice:** Barre, VT- 479-1900 (restorative services/BARJ referrals, youth services for at risk youth)

**Central Vermont Substance Abuse Services:** Berlin, VT- 223-4156 (substance assessments/treatment)

**Department for Children & Families:** Barre, VT – 479-4260 (access to Easterseals of Vermont for Family Safety Planning Meetings) \*\* call DCF Hotline: 1-800-649-5285 to make a report of suspected abuse/neglect

**Coordinated Services Planning Meeting/CSP** – a coordinated meeting to include, family, youth (if possible), current service providers, education, mental health and DCF representatives and parent rep to create a coordinated service plan to address what services/supports are

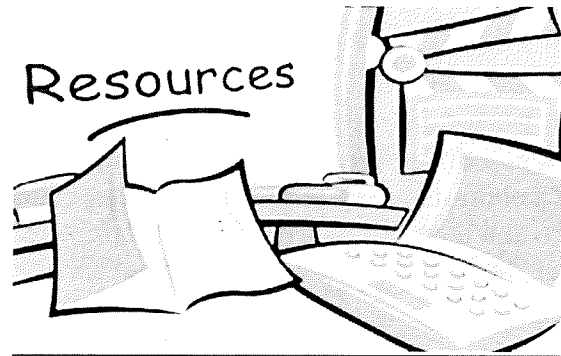
currently in place and what services/supports are needed to support children/youth and families. Participants should leave the meeting with a completed CSP document and a scheduled follow up meeting within 30 days

CSP law: Act 264, passed in 1988, requires that human services and public education work together, involve parents and coordinate services for better outcomes for children and families. The act developed a coordinated system of care so that children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance and their families receive appropriate educational, mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, residential, and other treatment services in accordance with an individual plan.

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For more resources in reference to Act 264 and CSP meeting you can consult the IFS website:  
**<https://ifs.vermont.gov/docs/sit>**

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## TRUANCY AFFIDAVIT

Now comes, Click or tap here to enter text., affiant, duly sworn and under oath, deposes and states that Click or tap here to enter text., (DOB Click or tap here to enter text.) is child in need of care and supervision pursuant to Title 33, V.S.A. § 5102(3)(D) based upon the following information:

### Information about Affiant

1. I am an employee of Click or tap here to enter text. Supervisory Union and I work at Click or tap here to enter text. School.
2. My work for Click or tap here to enter text. School includes having knowledge regarding the attendance of students at Click or tap here to enter text. School.

### Information about Student

1. Student (full legal name): Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Date of Birth: Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Home Address: Click or tap here to enter text.
4. County of Residence: Click or tap here to enter text.
5. School District: Click or tap here to enter text.
6. Grade Level: Click or tap here to enter text.
7. Parent/Legal Guardian #1: Click or tap here to enter text.  
Address: Click or tap here to enter text.
8. Parent/Legal Guardian #2: Click or tap here to enter text.  
Address: Click or tap here to enter text.
9. Is Student on an IEP or § 504 Plan? (If yes, attach plan.)      YES  NO   
Accommodations implemented: Click or tap here to enter text.
10. Has school referred Student for truancy in a prior school year?      YES  NO   
If yes, what year(s)? Click or tap here to enter text.

11. Total Absences: Click or tap here to enter text. Full Days: Click or tap here to enter text. Partial Days: Click or tap here to enter text. Tardies: Click or tap here to enter text. Total School Days: Click or tap here to enter text.

12. Have parent(s)/guardian(s) provided explanation for absences? YES  NO   
If yes, please explain: Click or tap here to enter text.

13. Has Student been a victim of bullying? YES  NO   
If yes, please describe the school's actions to remedy the bullying: Click or tap here to enter text.

### Record of Interventions

1. School reported absences to DCF at  
10 days: Intake No. Click or tap here to enter text., Reporter Click or tap here to enter text.  
15 days: Intake No. Click or tap here to enter text., Reporter Click or tap here to enter text.  
20 days: Intake No. Click or tap here to enter text., Reporter Click or tap here to enter text.
2. School's contacts (or attempts) with parent(s)/guardian(s), results and comments: Click or tap here to enter text.
3. School sent certified letters to parent(s)/guardian(s)? YES  NO   
If YES, Date(s) sent: Click or tap here to enter text.
3. School conducted a home visit? YES  NO   
If YES: Date: Click or tap here to enter text.  
School personnel present: Click or tap here to enter text.  
Observations Click or tap here to enter text.  
If NO, explain why: Click or tap here to enter text.
4. List all school meetings: Click or tap here to enter text.
5. School called Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) meeting? YES  NO   
If no, explain why: Click or tap here to enter text.  
If yes, Date held: Click or tap here to enter text.  
Information provided to DCF: Click or tap here to enter text.  
Who attended? (Provide names and role.): Click or tap here to enter text.  
Plan created? YES  NO   
If Yes, attach plan.  
If No, explain: Click or tap here to enter text.  
Date of follow-up CSP meeting: Click or tap here to enter text.  
Who attended? (Provide names and role.): Click or tap here to enter text.  
Result: Click or tap here to enter text.



6. School referred Student/Family to other agencies?

- a. Washington County Diversion/Balanced & Restorative Justice (BARJ): YES  NO   
Result: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- b. Greater Barre Community Justice Center (Family Group Conference): YES  NO   
Result: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- c. Montpelier Community Justice Center (COSA for Strengthening Families): YES  NO   
Result: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- d. Washington County Mental Health/Children & Youth Services: YES  NO   
Result: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- e. Washington County Youth Service Bureau: YES  NO   
Result: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Affiant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_.



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