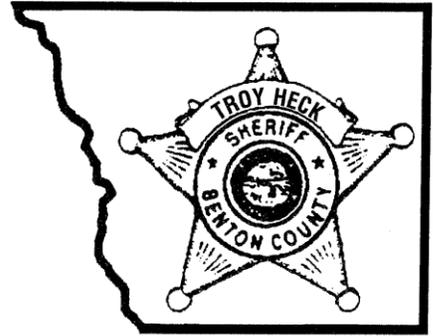


BENTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Troy Heck, Sheriff
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Topic: **School Success, Parental Involvement and Truancy**

- ✍ 160,000 children skip school every day because they fear being attacked or intimidated by other students.
- ✍ The U.S. Department of Justice states that 37% of all students don't feel safe at school.
- ✍ National Institute of Health reports that a third of students in 6th to 10th grades nationwide experienced some kind of bullying.

Safety in our schools has been the focus of much research and keeping kids in school is the goal for parents, school staff and law enforcement.

Truancy is one of the most significant predictors of future criminal activities. Regular attendance in school is the best way to ensure that our children have the best education they can to become successful and productive adults. Studies have shown that children who are truant from school are more likely to be unemployed, rely on public assistance, and engage in criminal or delinquent behavior. Therefore, truancy affects not only the child, but also the overall health and safety of the community. Additional research has shown a strong correlation between the level of education and the average annual income.

There is no single cause for truancy. Research has shown that often times truancy is an indicator for more serious underlying problems such as alcohol or chemical use, family problems, physical or mental health issues, peer pressure, gang involvement, or child neglect. Whatever the cause may be, it is important for the child that the problem be identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

Parental involvement is a key factor in helping children succeed in school. Parents are encouraged to talk to their kids about school, get to know their friends and make sure they attend conferences, sporting events or other activities that their children participate in. Communication between parents and teachers is important too. Checking in with teachers periodically via telephone or email is a great way to gauge how a child is doing in school. Volunteering in a child's classroom, lunchroom or other part of the school is another option for those parents whose schedules allow it.

Parents must also support school staff and law enforcement in tightening security in schools. Depending on the area, that may mean supporting:

- ✍ A Dress Code
- ✍ Code of Conduct
- ✍ Use of Metal Detectors
- ✍ Random Locker Checks
- ✍ Drug Detection Dogs
- ✍ On-Site School Liaison Police Officer