

“When I was in 9th grade, I started missing more and more school. I had always enjoyed school, but my mom was struggling and needed my help at home. SAM staff was able to get my mom the help she needed so I could stay in school and not worry about her. Now, I’m on track to graduate next year and am applying to college!”

- 11th grade student

“I really felt supported by SAM. The help I received in setting up programs for my student was awesome.”

- Parent of 11th grade student



“SAM gives us an added tool and resource to help our students and families. The majority of students referred to SAM improve their attendance and experience success in school.”

- School staff member



Education opens the doors of opportunity to good-paying jobs, paving our students’ paths to successful careers. Without a high school diploma, many of our residents struggle to find work to make ends meet and, sadly, sometimes end up in the criminal justice system.

Thank you, parents and school staff, for working with us to ensure all our students are in school learning so they can graduate with the skills they need to succeed.

John J. Choi
Ramsey County Attorney

For more information and resources to help improve attendance:

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RAMSEY COUNTY

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS (SAM)

Every day. Every grade.

OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY

JOHN J. CHOI
County Attorney





SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS (SAM)

Students who frequently miss school fall behind. We collaborate with students, families, schools, law enforcement, community agencies and child protection staff to improve school attendance.

Our goal is to understand the reasons children are missing school and work with students and their families to remove those barriers so they are present every day and succeed in school and in life.

WHAT WE DO

- An Assistant County Attorney meets with parents of children (and children 12 and older) to discuss the lifelong benefits of education and educate parents on the compulsory education law and the steps we take to enforce it.

- If attendance does not improve, parents (and children 12 and older) are given the opportunity to participate in a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) meeting, during which we create a contract to address the reasons for the child's absence.

- If attendance still does not improve, the County Attorney may bring the matter to court. If a child is under 12, legal action will be taken against the parents. If a child is 12 or older, legal action will be taken against the student, the parents, or both.



EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY

Students:

Education is key to your future. Your job is to be in school – every hour of every day.

Parents:

Parents/guardians are legally responsible for making sure their children attend every day school is in session. Children are not allowed to miss school without a legal excuse.

School:

- Provide a program/schedule that meets the student's educational needs
- Address barriers to the child's ability to attend and learn
- Maintain accurate attendance records and document communication with students and parents/guardians about attendance

DID YOU KNOW? In Minnesota, every child between the ages of 7 and 17 is required to attend school full time. It's the law.

THE ONLY LEGAL REASONS TO MISS SCHOOL:

- Sickness
- Doctor appointments
- Religious holidays
- Extreme family emergencies

CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT FOLLOWING THE LAW

For children under age 12, parents can be petitioned to court for educational neglect and ordered to:

- cooperate with Child Protection
- participate in parenting classes, counseling sessions, or other services designed to improve their children's school attendance
- pay fines

For children aged 12-17, parents and/or students can be petitioned to court for truancy and ordered to:

- be placed under the supervision of Ramsey County Human Services
- participate in programs and/or services deemed appropriate for the student's specific situation
- not be allowed to drive until they are 18
- pay fines

In extreme cases, children can be removed from their parents' home and placed in foster care, with other adult family members, or in a shelter or group home.

GOOD NEWS!

79% of students improve their attendance after this step!