



Newaygo County

H.A.L.T. Diversion Program

(Helping Adolescents Liberate from Truancy)

Introduction

In response to an increased number of school truancy cases, Newaygo County Juvenile Court, along with their educational partners and the Newaygo County Community Collaborative (NC3) has developed the H.A.L.T. Diversion Program. This program will streamline the process of referrals from each school to the court in an effort to best assist the schools and youth as expeditiously as possible.

Criteria for Participation

The following criteria must be met for a youth to be considered for participation in the program:

- No prior legal history with this or any court.
- Complaint filed by the school directly to the court with supporting documentation attached.
- This documentation must include the following:
 - Attendance Report
 - Copies of letters/contracts between the school and youth
 - Meeting dates with youth and/or parents (guardians)
- Youth and parent must voluntarily agree to participate. If they do not, the complaint will be addressed at a more formal level with the court.

Services Provided

Due to the numerous reasons a youth may be truant, the court initially will be addressing the needs on an individual basis. The program will be tailored to address the specific reason the youth is truant. Numerous videos have been purchased that will address issues such as bullying, peer pressure, self-esteem, substance abuse, etc. Minimally, all youth will submit weekly attendance reports, perform eight hours of community service, follow curfew, submit written assignments and view appropriate videos. In addition, other components may be added, such as:

- Camp Henry with experiential education
- Job shadowing for a day
- College visit
- Career research

GET AN EDUCATION



STAY IN SCHOOL

H.A.L.T. Procedure

The procedure will be as follows:

- Once the school has exhausted all resources to resolve the truancy issue, a complaint with all supporting documentation is filed with the court.
- The complaint is reviewed by the Director of Juvenile Services and if all criteria are met, an Inquiry hearing is scheduled. Notice of Hearing will also be sent to the school personnel filing the complaint. It is strongly recommended that a school representative attend the hearing.
- If appropriate, the youth is referred to the H.A.L.T. Program from that hearing. Depending on the circumstance, participation will last from 60-120 days. Again, it will be tailored to the needs of the individual.
- Successful completion of the program will allow the juvenile's record to be expunged at the age of seventeen and no public viewing will be allowed.

School Partnership

The Juvenile Court would appreciate any information school officials feel would be beneficial in the initial development phase of the H.A.L.T. Program. Additionally, it is our hope that the Juvenile Court and local schools can work in coordination for the reduction of truancy and the betterment of Newaygo County's youth.