

Teens in Trouble



Please contact us on 0845 090 8044 for other leaflet formats e.g. large print, audio, another language or through discussion.

School attendance

Truancy can occur in all families and may begin as early as primary school or when children start secondary school. Whether your child is truanting or has been excluded, it will help if you can find out why your child may be unhappy at school, may be they are being bullied or may be finding it difficult to keep up with the work.

What can happen?

If truanting or disruptive behaviour continues the school may ask you to sign up to a parenting contract. This is an agreement which offers practical help and support to make sure your child attends school or improves their behaviour.

The next step would be a parenting order. This is a court order which requires that you attend a parenting programme and comply with orders about your child's attendance and behaviour. This support is designed to help you tackle your child's behaviour and to gain the skills and confidence to make a real difference.

There are also a number of fines and penalties which can be imposed and if things are getting serious. It is really important that you find out about these measures and your rights. You can order a leaflet called "Is your child missing out?" Ref: 2097-2005DOC-EN from the Department for Children, Schools and Families at 0845 60 222 60. There is also further information on **www.parentscentre.gov.uk**

What to do

- Listen to your child, it is important to show that you want to understand their problems rather than punishing and blaming them.
- Ask for help as soon as you know there's a problem. Talk to the school, or the Education Welfare Officer.

Aggressive behaviour

If the behaviour directed at you feels like aggression, then it is aggression. Be aware that you may feel particularly sensitive to feelings or acts of anger because of experiences you may have had, but you can say what is not acceptable to you.

It is a good idea to look for help if you feel overwhelmed with worry or if your other children are witnessing the abusive behaviour. In asking for help you are recognising your limits, acting responsibly and setting a good example to your children.

What to do

- Be fair and firm. Give yourself time to cool down and think through your response carefully.
- Explain how you feel about what they have done and let them say how they feel about it.
- Talk about ways to improve behaviour and agree appropriate rewards and penalties.
- Think ahead and anticipate problems and conflicts that may arise and how you will manage them.
- For more help start by contacting your child's school; they will be able to identify any concerns at school and may offer a counselling service or an anger management programme, or they may be able to help through a process called the Common Assessment Framework. Other sources of help are Relate for family counselling, your child's GP for a referral to the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health team for counselling or Parentline Plus helpline on 0808 800 2222.

Sex, drugs and alcohol

Unprotected and early sex is often linked to alcohol and drugs, especially if it's for the first time. The number of teenagers trying drink and drugs in their early teens is growing, often influenced by peer pressure and the media. Most who have sex under the influence admit they regret what happened.

It is hard to lay down rules about drink and drugs. Your teenager may get angry and refuse to discuss it but keep trying to get the message home that being drunk or drugged can be dangerous. Remember that drink or drug use may be covering up some other problem such as bereavement, bullying and difficulties with school work.

Talking about sex, sexually transmitted infections, staying out late, drinking and trying drugs, may not be easy for parents but research shows that this is what young people want. Young people say that they want to talk about relationships, responsibilities and values, not just biology. They also learn by example, if they see that you are considerate, thoughtful and responsible in the way that you deal with other people they will learn the value of behaving that way too.

What to do

- Keep talking about responsibility and choice. Let them know that if they experiment, they must be responsible and avoid taking undue risks.
- Talk about the risks of pregnancy, catching a sexually transmitted infection, overdose, a bad "trip", having an accident, a fight or unwanted sex while under the influence. The choices they make will help keep them safe and well.
- Talk about safe choices and options like not going out late alone, knowing how they will get home, keeping in touch by their mobile, letting you know where they are going.
- Talk about condoms - they protect against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection.
- Let them know they can call you for help if they need you.

Further help

Respect Yourself

Web: www.respectyourself.info/

Frank

Web: www.talktofrank.com

Tel: 0800 776600

Parentline Plus

Web: www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

Relate

Web: www.relateforparents.org.uk

Tel: 0300 100 1234

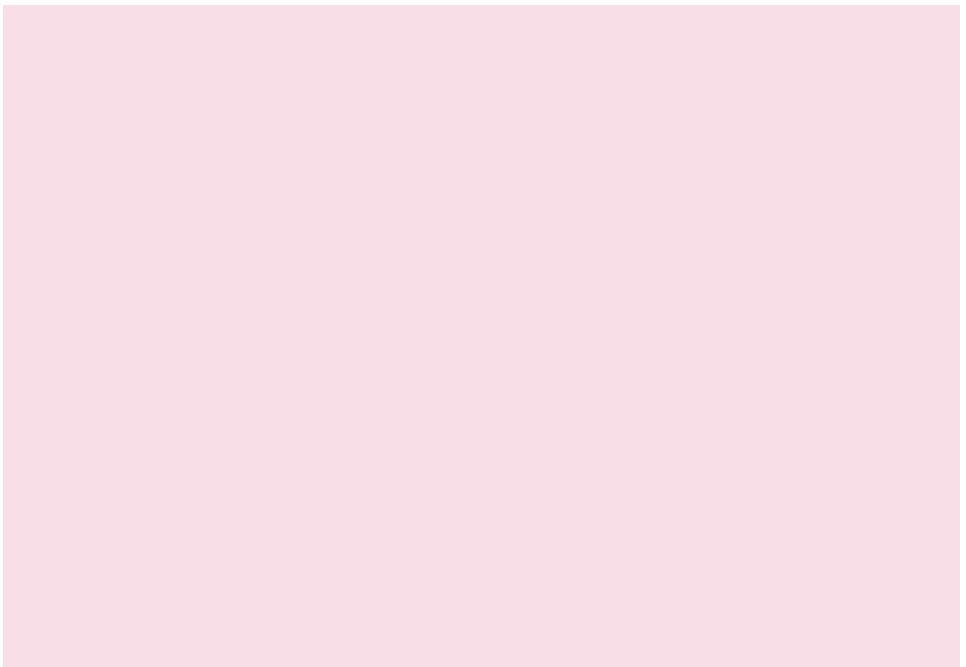
Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

Advice line

Web: www.ace-ed.org.uk

Tel: 0808 800 5793

Notes



Contacting the Family Information Service

If you are looking for any further information or advice for your family the Family Information Service can help you. We offer a free and impartial information and signposting service for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-20 on a range of topics such as; childcare, benefits, health, leisure and much more. If you don't know who to ask, ask the Family Information Service!

Opening Hours:

Monday to Thursday - 9.00am-5.30pm

Friday - 9.00am-5.00pm

Phone us:

0845 090 8044 (local Rate) or 01926 742274

(Voicemail for out of office hours)

Textphone: 01926 736327

Email us:

fis@warwickshire.gov.uk

Visit our website:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis

Write to us:

Family Information Service

Children, Young People and Families

Saltisford Office Park, Ansell Way

Warwick CV34 4UL

