



The Four Reasons

How do I classify an absence accurately enough to choose the right response?

THREE MOVES FOR THIS WEEK



Interview before you code

Cost: \$0

A direct conversation with student and family decides the category.



Use the Type Cards

Low cost

Match markers to the Kit's six patterns and their first moves.



Re-classify on schedule

Cost: \$0

Review each case at 30 days; categories can shift.

CLASSIFICATION INTERVIEW PROMPTS

1. Walk me through a morning when [student] missed school.
2. Is there a place, person or time at school that feels hard?
3. Does anyone at home need [student]'s help on school days?
4. When [student] thinks about school, what feelings come up?

CLASSIFY BEFORE YOU CONSEQUENCE

Truancy

Choice-driven, unauthorized absence. The last-resort category, confirmed only after a real conversation.

Withdrawal

Family-centered: caregiving, shifts, housing, a ride that never came, economic survival.

Avoidance

Climate-driven: a building, class, peer or time of day the student experiences as unsafe.

Refusal

Anxiety-driven, often with clinical features. Needs health and counseling partners.

AVOID THESE MISSTEPS

- x Assuming the category is self-evident from attendance codes
- x Inferring cause from pattern alone
- x Treating classification as a one-time event

HOW YOU WILL KNOW IT WORKS

Leading: Cases with a documented classification

Lagging: Truancy referrals avoided after classification

Evidence: Gentle-Genitty, Schools Spared, Children Punished (Attendance USA, 2026); Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 1 (Maria, composite case); Attendance USA Attendance Kit, Items 9 and 10 (Absenteeism Type Cards, Intervention Tip Sheets); Schools Spared, Ch. 1, Another Voice from the Field.



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