



Youth Living Away from Home

Can my parents force me to come back?

In general, you can't live away from home unless you:

- have your parents' or legal custodian's consent
- are 18 or older
- are married
- are in the armed forces or
- have a court order saying you can live on your own



If your parents agreed to let you live on your own, they can change their minds – unless you have a court order saying you can live away from them. If you don't go back, they can start a runaway case in court to get you back home.

BUT

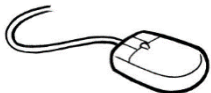
If you fear you will be hurt or neglected at home, tell that to the police or a county child protection worker. You can ask for a court order to let you live with someone else or on your own. You can also call the Youth Law Project at (612) 332-1441 or email them at youthlawproject@mylegalaid.org.

What legal situations might let me live away from home?

There are different legal situations that can change the relationship between you and your parents.

- **A CHIPS petition** (Child in Need of Protection or Services). The Juvenile Court can order you to live in foster care. The court decides what supervision you need. CHIPS cases are usually filed by the county, after child protection investigates.
- **A Delegation of Parental Authority (DOPA)**. The DOPA is a paper your parents sign to let someone else act as parent. It can last up to 12 months, and your parents can take it back at any time. See our fact sheet [Delegation of Parental Authority \(DOPA\)](#).

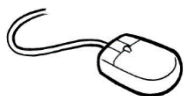
DOPA forms: [Create a completed form](#) online at www.lawhelpmn.org/forms.



- Under *Family Law*
- Click on *Delegation of Parental Authority (DOPA)*

- **An Order for Protection (OFP).** If your parents have abused you emotionally, physically, or sexually, or contact with them is harmful, the court can order that they stay away from you or see you only under certain conditions with an OFP. An OFP also covers threatened physical abuse. See our fact Sheet [Orders for Protection and Harassment Orders](#).

OFP forms: [Create a completed form](#) ready to file at www.lawhelpmn.org/forms.



- Under *Abuse and Harassment*
- Click on *Order for Protection Against Domestic Violence (OFP)*

- **Emancipation.** Some states have “emancipation” where a court orders that a youth is not under the parents’ care or control and is on their own. There is no set process for “emancipation” in Minnesota, but emancipation is possible here. See our fact sheet [Emancipation](#) and call the Youth Law Project at (612) 332-1441 to find out more.

Can I rent my own apartment?

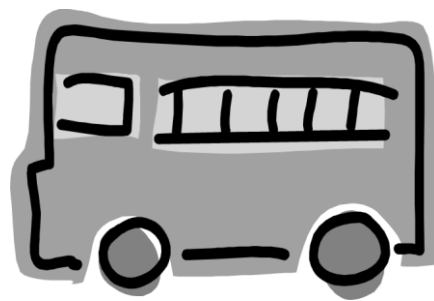
Yes. There is no law against youth under age 18 renting apartments, sub-leasing, or renting a room. But some landlords won’t rent to you if you are under 18. There is no law telling them that they have to rent to you. Some landlords rent to teens if an adult also signs the lease, promising that the adult will pay the rent if you do not.

Can I live with an adult other than my parents?

Yes. But remember, if you live away from home without your parents’ permission or a court order, you may be considered a runaway. An adult who lives with you may get in legal trouble for “harboring” a runaway. Harboring means keeping or helping. Arrests for harboring don’t happen very often, unless some other crime was also committed. If you and the adult agree that you would like to live there long-term, contact the Youth Law Project at (612) 332-1441 to talk about your options.

Where can I go to school?

You have the right to go to school in the district where you live. Sometimes, the school rejects you. They might tell you that you have to go school where your parents live, or that you need your parents to register for you. This may not be right. Call the school district’s homeless youth liaison if the school rejects you. Or call the Youth Law Project at Legal Aid for advice: (612) 332-1441.



Do I have to go to school?

- You have to go to school if you are 17 or younger. If you skip school, you can be charged with truancy in Juvenile Court. Your school may drop you if you skip over 15 days in a year.

- If you are 17 and you want to drop out, you have to have a meeting with your parents and school personnel. You and your parents have to sign a written statement.
- If you get MFIP, you must go to school until you graduate, get a GED or turn 18.
- If you are 18 to 20 years old and getting MFIP, you can decide if you want to keep going to school or go to work. You have to choose one or the other or you lose your MFIP benefits. See our fact sheet, [MFIP for Parents Under 18](#).

Do I need my parents' permission for medical care?

- Not if it is for pregnancy, childbirth, care for your child, an STD (sexually transmitted disease), or drug and alcohol treatment. (Special laws apply to abortions.)
- Not if you live on your own and support yourself. It does not matter how you support yourself; it can be with work, GA, or MFIP.
- Not if it is an emergency, and getting your parents' consent delays your care.
- Not if you have been married or have a child.
- See our fact sheet [Can I go to the doctor on my own if I'm under 18?](#)



Do I have to pay for medical care?

Yes. But if you are eligible for General Assistance (GA) or Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), you can also get Medical Assistance (MA). If you can't get MA, look for a clinic that has free or low-cost care for teens. You may be able to get MinnesotaCare.

Call 2-1-1 statewide to find out about clinics. You can also text them your zip code at 898-211 for help in your area or chat online at www.211unitedway.org.

Always call 911 in an emergency.

Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.

Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.

© 2021 Minnesota Legal Services Coalition. This document may be reproduced and used for non-commercial personal and educational purposes only. All other rights reserved. This notice must remain on all copies. Reproduction, distribution, and use for commercial purposes are strictly prohibited.