

Playing truant for a better future

This Friday, thousands of teenagers and young adults all over the world will again march through the streets towards national parliaments or the town halls of their cities instead of attending a regular day at school or university. They all have a common aim, which is to stop climate change and make politicians do something about it. The movement has become known as *#fridaysforfuture* and is mainly organized on social media platforms.

Aware that their future is threatened by global warming, resulting, for example, in the rise of sea levels, extinction of certain species, and an increase of natural disasters such as floods and droughts, the protesters accuse representatives of being passive and inactively waiting for others to take action. Students claim that politicians have their heads in the clouds¹ and are more concerned with topics like 'Brexit' or maintaining their own power.

Obviously, it is against the law to miss school without being sick. That is why students might have to face penalty from their schools. A great number of missed lessons will be listed in their school reports and might put off future employers in a job interview. Moreover, parents might also face consequences if they encourage their children to not attend school. Similarly, teachers and headmasters are caught between two stools when having to condemn the absenteeism² of the minors they are responsible for whilst feeling an educational need to encourage them to fight for their own rights.

Among teachers and parents alike, other voices argue that many teenagers use the protests as an excuse for playing truant without really having a clue³ of greenhouse gases and what those have to do with their future. Those who criticize the teenagers claim that there is enough time in the afternoons and at the weekends to attend demonstrations.

Despite some critical voices, one has to acknowledge that freedom of speech and the right of free assembly are two of the most fundamental human rights. So who would want to prevent our teenagers from demonstrating for their own future, especially if social responsibility is a common goal of education?

¹ having one's head in the clouds: to think about different things that appear to be more important

² absenteeism: not being present

³ to have a clue: to understand

Student demonstrations for a better future

Thousands of students all over the world will march through the streets of their cities this Friday.

The students demonstrate instead of attending a regular day at school or university.

The students have a common goal:

The students want to stop climate change.

Climate change means that our planet gets hotter each year.

The results of climate change are:

- the rise of sea levels,
- some animals will die out,
- and more floods and droughts.



A drought is a long time without rain.

The students want to make politicians do something.

The movement has the name *Fridays For Future*.

It is mainly organized on social media platforms.

Facebook, Youtube or Twitter are examples for social media platforms.

The students know that climate change is a great danger for their future.

They say that politicians are too passive.

They say that politicians find other things more important.

It is against the law to miss school without being sick.

That is why students might get a punishment from their schools.

School reports will show the number of missed lessons of the students.

Future employers can read these school reports in a job interview.

There can also be bad consequences for parents of the protesting students.

It is hard to decide what is right for teachers and headmasters.

Teachers and headmasters have to dislike that the demonstrations take part during school days.

But teachers and headmasters also want to encourage their students to fight for their own rights.

Some people say: Some students use the protests as an excuse for leaving school.

Some people say: Students have enough free time to demonstrate in the afternoons and at the weekends.

People have the right to demonstrate and to say their opinion openly.

So who would want the students to stop demonstrating for their own future?

