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Dear Parent/Guardian:

As the new school year begins, we want to remind you of the importance of daily school attendance for all students, ages 6 to 18. This is a legal requirement and it's key to your children's education and future employment success.

The Sonoma County District Attorney's Office and Sonoma County Office of Education are working together to promote regular school attendance and reduce truancy. As part of our joint commitment, we want to inform you of the significant challenges that we as parents, educators, and professionals may face this school year.

Overall, Sonoma County has a low truancy rate. Last year, we launched an initiative designed to ensure that we reach every student who is not attending school on a daily basis. Known as Truancy Court, this program was developed in collaboration with the Juvenile Justice Center.

It is significant to note that truancy not only has a negative impact on individual students, but also on the funding schools receive. In the current economic climate, the financial impact of truancy can affect the services and programs available to your child.

You can help us and Sonoma County schools by making sure your children are at school on time, every day. If you are struggling to get your child to school, we can provide the support that you need. Please contact your school so that we can work together to maximize your child's chances of educational success.

The H1N1 swine flu virus is another cause of concern related to school attendance. Local schools are working closely with the Sonoma County Department of Health to provide guidelines for parents on when to keep children home from school when the flu virus is suspected.

The Sonoma County District Attorney's Office and Sonoma County Office of Education are proud to join in partnership to ensure quality education for all youth. As we have seen firsthand, students respond positively when we work together to correct excessive absences and tardiness. We encourage you to join us by making sure your child is at school daily to receive the outstanding education our schools provide.

Sincerely,

Stephan Passalacqua
Sonoma County District Attorney

Carl Wong, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools