



**NAPA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

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**ALLISON HALEY**  
District Attorney

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As the new school year begins, I want to gently remind you that regular attendance at school is mandatory in California for all children up to the age of 18. As your District Attorney, I encourage you to do everything possible to guarantee your child's success by making sure your child regularly attends school throughout the year.

The reason for this letter is simple: When children don't go to school they are more likely to commit crimes, and they are more likely to become a victim of a crime. When a parent keeps a child out of school (except in the case of illness, of course) children conclude that school is not important and they don't understand that success in school can translate to success in adult life.

It hardly needs to be said that sending a young adult into the world without a solid educational foundation puts him or her at a tremendous disadvantage. Most obviously, it is more difficult to find well-paid employment and to advance in the workplace. This reduced earning capacity can last a lifetime; it is almost impossible to "make up for" in adulthood. Truancy also costs school districts hundreds of thousands of dollars every year in lost Federal and State funds based on attendance – the net effect is the reduction of services for everyone in school.

Under California law, a "truant" is a student who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than a 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse three separate times in one school year, or any combination thereof (California Education Code ("EC") Section 48260). A "habitual truant" is a student who has been truant three or more times in a school year (EC Section 48262). A "chronic truant" is a student who is absent from school without a valid excuse for ten percent or more of the school days in one school year (EC Section 48263.6). The Education Code and the Penal Code provide for serious consequences for students who are truant and for parents or guardians who don't ensure their child's regular attendance. Punishments for parents and guardians can include up to one year in county jail as well as thousands of dollars in fines.

My office works closely with the school district and with parents and students to resolve attendance problems early. However, when our collective efforts have failed, we must use other tools to ensure children are in school. Truancy is a crime. I am prepared to prosecute parents who allow their children to be habitually or chronically truant.

I urge you to make your child's regular school attendance a priority for you and your family. Please join me in working together to end truancy in the Napa Valley. I know you share my wish for a future in which all of our children have the best chance to grow, learn, and succeed.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allison Haley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a horizontal line.

Allison Haley,  
A Parent of a Grade Schooler and Napa County's District Attorney