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June 23, 2025

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to the new school year! As you know, providing your child with the opportunity to receive an education is one of the greatest and most significant gifts a parent can give their child. A good education serves as the foundation for a child to grow to become a happy, healthy, and productive adult. Society recognizes this importance and puts safeguards in place to ensure that each and every child benefits fully from their educational opportunities. With that said, I want to share with you some important information regarding those safeguards.

Education Code §48200 requires all children between the ages of 6 and 18 to attend a full-time education program as designated by the governing board of the school district in which the parent or legal guardian resides.

Education Code §48260(a) defines a “truant” as a student who **three times** during the school year either misses more than **30 minutes** of instruction or is absent from school for **three full days without a valid excuse**. Because society recognizes the importance of regular school attendance, Education Code §48205 defines when a student may be validly excused from school.

All parents or legal guardians of school-aged children should know the law provides that parents of students are responsible for ensuring school attendance and can be held accountable with legal sanctions amounting to an infraction and/or a misdemeanor.

Your school is here to help your child become well educated. Truancy can result from many causes and your school district is ready to assist you as a parent in obtaining help from government and community-based organizations to address any issues that may be associated with truancy. With support and encouragement, your child can thrive and will reap the rewards from developing successful organizational skills; engaging in the arts, sports, and sciences; solidifying strong school-oriented friendships; and appreciating the value of academics, hard work, and studying.

The School District and I are committed to keeping the children of Santa Barbara County in school and doing all we can to ensure their individual joy and success. I hope that you have found this information useful, and I wish you and your child a safe and productive school year.

Sincerely,

John T. Savrnoch
District Attorney

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