LETTER 1 NOTIFICATION OF TRUANCY

DATE

Dear [FN] [LN],

At [school name], we strive to work as a team with our families to ensure our students succeed, both in school and as adults. We recognize that the key ingredient to student success is regular school attendance. Our school staff, therefore, is committed to forming a partnership with you to address any issues that are preventing <Student First Name>’s from attending school. We miss your student when he/she is gone and we value his/her contributions to our school. We really need your help to create a pattern of good attendance for your student! Your support in this process is critical. Please consider the following important points about attendance.

Did You Know?

* + Starting in kindergarten, too many absences (excused and unexcused) can cause children to fall behind in school.
  + Missing 10 percent of a school year (or about 18 days) increases the chance that your student will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
  + Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
  + Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
  + Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.
  + Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
  + By being present at school, your child learns valuable social skills and has the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with other students and school staff.
  + Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school-and themselves.
  + Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

Our records show that your son/daughter [FN] [LN] has missed \_\_\_\_ days of school. \_\_ of these absences were "unexcused" absences occurring on:

* date
* date
* date

Because of the number of unexcused absences, the law now categorizes your child as a "truant." I know this is difficult news, and it is difficult for us to have to inform you. State law requires us to notify you of your student's status and to make you aware of potential future legal consequences you face. The applicable law is quoted at the bottom of the letter. As you can see, the language is very strong and the consequences are severe. Please know that my staff and I are dedicated to partnering with you to correct the problem. We will do all we can to avoid legal consequences for our families. We can only succeed, however, with your help and cooperation.

We would sincerely like to meet with you and to work together to create an attendance action plan. By collaborating on this plan, we can help your student excel and we can also help you avoid legal consequences. We will do our part by regularly tracking attendance and communicating with you if your child misses school. We will also identify barriers to good attendance and provide available supports and services to help you rise above those attendance barriers. We must choose partnership over prosecution.

What Can You Do?

* Participate in attendance meetings and help us create an attendance action plan together.
* Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
* Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night’s sleep.
* Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required immunizations.
* Don’t let your student stay home unless they are truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
* Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
* Develop back-up transportation plans for getting to school if something comes up. For example, be prepared to call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
* Keep track of your student’s attendance. Every absence places your student at risk of falling behind.
* Talk to your student about the importance of attendance.
* Talk to your students’ teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
* Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

We know that there are a wide variety of challenges and obstacles to good attendance. Our school staff will work with you to overcome these challenges. We look forward to improving attendance together as a team.

Sincerely,

**Truancy- California Education Code** School administrators determine what types of absences are excused or unexcused based on state law and on the facts of the pupil's circumstances. When a child is absent from school and/or tardy in excess of 30 minutes on three (3) occasions in one school year without a valid excuse, the law considers that child to be truant.  
Education Code Section 48260.5 requires us to inform you of the following:

* *That the parent or guardian is obligated to compel the attendance of the pupil at school.*
* *That parents or guardians who fail to meet these obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution pursuant to Article 6 (commencing with Section 48290) of Chapter 2 or Part 27.*
* *That alternative educational programs are available in the district.*
* *That the parent or guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the pupil’s truancy.*
* *That the pupil may be subject to prosecution under Education Code Section 48264.*
* *That it is recommended that the parent or guardian accompany the pupil to school and attend classes with the pupil for one day.*