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Posted: 01/27/2012 04:29:14 PM PST
Updated: 01/28/2012 12:20:19 AM PST TOLL FREE 1.866.999.9085

Two parents of students attending Rodeo Hills Elementary School must appear in criminal court next month because their children were absent from too many classes this year.

The Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office made a public statement announcing the case, the first time in county history parents are facing charges for not ensuring their children attend school

The two parents each have at least one student at the school, District Attorney Mark Peterson said. Both face a misdemeanor charge for "failing to encourage their truant children's attendance in school," referencing a new law dealing with child neglect.

One student, a fifth-grader, missed more than half of the current school year with unexcused absences. The other, a third-grader, missed more than one-third of the school year unexcused.

"Our goal is to get these kids back in school and to get parents to take responsibility for making that happen," Peterson

Peterson works closely with school districts around Contra Costa County regarding truancy. Prosecutors filed these two cases Friday because they were particularly egregious and because the John Swett Unified School District devoted a lot of time and effort to resolving the problem with the parents, without success. Bay Area News Group is not identifying the defendants to protect the identity of their children.

The new law took effect in January 2011. It applies to parents of truant children in

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kindergarten through eighth grade.

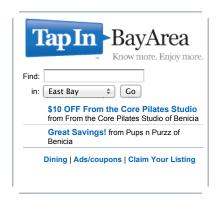
Each parent will receive mailed notices instructing them to appear in court next month, Peterson said.

If convicted, they could face as much as a year in county jail and a \$2,000 fine.

The superintendent of the John Swett district could not be reached for comment.







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Will Hyres · California State University, Chico

1 · Like · Follow Post · Friday at 5:39pm

I've told several parents that I will be forced to follow up on this law if they don't get their kids to start attending school regularly, and low and behold they showed up the very next day! Chronic absenteeism accounts for a huge reason why children fall seriously behind toward graduation. Thank goodness for strong leadership and support of District Attorney!



This problem is more widespread than most people think. At the Antioch elementary school where a friend of mine teaches, at least two sets of parents are headed down the same path. I say good job DA Mr. Peterson.

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Elaine Perry · Richmond Senior High

Jerry, u r tough. Throw them in jail and send those kids to foster homes.

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