

Telephone
(605)882-6276
Fax Number
(605)882-5233

Offices of
Codington County State's Attorney
14 1st AVE SE
WATERTOWN, SOUTH DAKOTA 57201-1384

Court House
Ground Floor

Alison Bakken
State's Attorney
abakken@codington.org

Scott Polski
Deputy State's Attorney
Jan Steele
Victim Witness Assistant

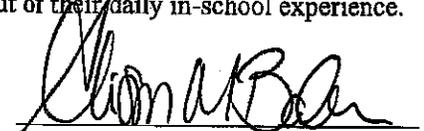
Dear Parents/Guardians

This letter is sent as a reminder that all children, over the age of six, and under eighteen (18) years of age, are required by state law to attend school. The responsibility for ensuring that children attend school as required, is placed upon the parent, guardian, or "any person having control of a child of compulsory school age..." Failure to have the child attend school as required can result in a criminal complaint being filed against the person responsible. Upon conviction, the parent or guardian can be sentenced to a fine or jail time. A first conviction is punished as a Class 2 misdemeanor with a maximum sentence of thirty days in jail or a fine of up to \$500, or both. Subsequent convictions are punished as a Class 1 misdemeanor and have a maximum sentence of one year in jail and a fine of up to \$2000, or both.

If your child is missing just *two days per month*, that child is "chronically absent." That's bad, as chronic absenteeism is linked to increased drop-out rates, hurts students' academic success and can lead to juvenile delinquency. Research also shows that students who don't graduate from high school miss out on lifetime earnings – making approximately \$10,000 less per year than those who receive a high school diploma. Over the course of a lifetime, that adds up

In order to ensure that every student in Watertown and Codington County has the best possible opportunity to succeed, this year the Codington County State's Attorney's Office will be working more closely with school administrators and other officials, educators, resource officers, the court system, and most importantly, parents, to do more enforcement to turn the tide on chronic absenteeism.

As the new school year begins, make it a priority to make sure your child attends school every day, or as close to every day, as possible. Make sure your child gets sufficient rest to be ready to pay attention and get as much out of every class period as possible. If you have questions or concerns or have a child that has trouble making it to school as required, contact the school. There is assistance and resources to assist you in seeing to it that your child gets the most out of their daily in-school experience.


Alison Bakken – State's Attorney


Scott Polski – Deputy State's Attorney

This letter is for information purposes only and is not a statement of Watertown Public Schools policy. The Codington County State's Attorney's Office does not represent the Watertown School District.