

Holidays are happy times for kids on vacation, but they can be trying times for school districts hit hard by vandals, thieves and arsonists taking advantage of empty, darkened campuses.

In fact, school districts experience more property losses in the month of December than any other time of the year, according to risk management agencies. In light of this, SCUSD is asking the community for help in keeping schools safe and secure over the long break, which begins Monday, December 20, and ends Monday, January 3.

"Most of our schools are surrounded by houses, and we need the residents of those houses to join us in protecting these valuable and sometimes vulnerable community centers," said Sacramento Police Lt. Katherine Lester, who heads SCUSD security services.

Neighbors are asked to report any suspicious activity on campuses during these two weeks. "The schools belong to the community," said Lester, "and we need the entire community to help us guard them."

For schools within Sacramento city limits call 264-5471. Residents outside city