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For many Sacramento families summer is a time of fun as school-year schedules give way to more leisurely days. But for school officials on tight budgets, summer can be a time of high anxiety as worry sets in over the safety of vacant campuses.

Vandals, arsonists and thieves are of particular concern, especially those who cripple school air-conditioning and electrical systems by stealing copper and aluminum parts – crimes that cost taxpayers money and take away needed school resources.

To combat costly crimes, Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) is asking the community for help in keeping schools safe and secure over the summer. School will be back in session on Tuesday, September 6.

“Most of our schools are surrounded by homes and we need those neighbors 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 be on the lookout for suspicious activity on SCUSD campuses and to report it. “The schools belong to the community,” said Lester, “and we need the entire community to help us guard them.”

Additionally, parents are asked to remind their children to be safe and to report any suspicious activity to their parents or school officials.