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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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D.A. BROWN: TEACHER ARRAIGNED ON CHARGES OF ASSAULTING STUDENT

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that a 68-year-old substitute teacher at a Jamaica, Queens, middle school has been arraigned on charges of assaulting a 13-year-old student yesterday by throwing a science book at him.

District Attorney Brown said, "Under no circumstances is it ever appropriate for a teacher to hurl objects at students. Such behavior poses a threat to the safety of all those in the classroom. In this case, it is alleged that the teacher missed the intended target of his rage and instead hit another student."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Syed A. Abdullah, 68, of 85-21 1567th Street in Fresh Meadows, Queens. The defendant, who has been working only three months as a substitute teacher for the New York City Department of Education, was arraigned today before Queens Criminal Court Judge William Harrington on charges of third-degree assault, second-degree reckless endangerment, endangering the welfare of a child and second-degree harassment. The defendant, who faces up to a year in jail if convicted, was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on December 13, 2007.

The District Attorney said that, according to the charges, the defendant was employed as a substitute teacher at IS 217, located at 85-05 144th Street in Jamaica, on the afternoon of October 29, 2007, when he hurled a science book at a student who was disrupting the class and instead hit 13-year-old Sanjay Somaiah in the back of the head, resulting in swelling and substantial pain to the student. As a precaution, the student was taken to a local hospital for observation.

It is alleged that when questioned by authorities why he struck the student, the defendant, a native of Bangladesh, stated that, "In my country, it's okay."

Abdullah was arrested by School Safety Officer Andwar Woods, of the PBQS School Safety Unit.

The District Attorney's Integrity Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of James M. Liander, Bureau Chief, and Carmencita N. Gutierrez, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that criminal charges are merely accusations and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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