

PORT ARTHUR ISD



STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024

available online in English/Spanish

www.paisd.org

The Port Arthur Independent School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer in full compliance with the Title VI, Civil Rights Act, 1964; Title IX, Education Amendment, 1972; Section 504, and the Rehabilitation Act, 1973. It is the policy of the Port Arthur Independent School District not to discriminate based on sex, handicap, race, color, age, gender, or national origin in educational or vocational programs, activities, or employment. For additional information, please contact Dr. Mark L. Porterie, Superintendent of Schools at (409) 989-6244.

PORT ARTHUR ISD
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2023-2024

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Preface

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to the new school year!

Education is a team effort. Students, parents, teachers, and other staff members, working together, can make this a highly successful year. The *Port Arthur ISD Student Handbook* is a general reference guide that is divided into two sections:

Section I: Parental Rights will help you respond to school-related issues regarding curriculum and the school environment.

Section II: Other Important Information for Parents and Students is organized alphabetically by topic. Where applicable, it is divided by age and/or grade level.

Note: Unless otherwise noted, the term “parent” refers to the parent, legal guardian, any person granted some other type of lawful control of a student, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Student Handbook is designed to align with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct, a board- adopted document intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. The Student Handbook is **not** meant to be a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules in any given circumstance. In case of conflicts between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any Student Handbook provision, the district will follow board policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

Therefore, parents and students should become familiar with the *district’s* Student Code of Conduct. To review the Code of Conduct, visit the district’s website at www.paisd.org. State law requires that the Code of Conduct be prominently displayed or made available for review at each campus.

A hard copy of either the Student Code of Conduct or Student Handbook can be requested at your child’s school. The Student Handbook is updated annually; however, policy adoption and revisions may occur throughout the year. The district encourages parents to stay informed of proposed policy changes by attending board meetings and reviewing newsletter and other communications explaining changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions. The district reserves the right to modify the Student Handbook at any time. Notice of revisions will be provided as is reasonably practical. Although the Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, it does not create additional rights for parents and students. It does not, nor is it intended to, represent a contract between any parent or student and the district. For clarification about specific material in this handbook, please contact your child’s Principal, or Assistant Principal.

Please review the information in the Appendix section of this handbook, as well. Then, complete and return the Acknowledgment Form, on the next page, to your child’s homeroom teacher by September 27, 2023.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Table of Contents

Preface.....	
Accessibility.....	9
Section I: Parental Rights.....	10
Consent, Opt-Out, and Refusal Rights	10
Participation in Third-Party Surveys	17
Removing a Student from Instruction or Excusing a Student from a Required Component	17
Right of Access to Student Records, Curriculum Materials, and District Records / Policies	
.....	21
A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances.....	26
Section II: Other Important Information for Parents and Students.....	38
Absences / Attendance	38
Accountability under State and Federal Law (All Grade Levels)	46
Bullying (All Grade Levels).....	47
Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	49
Child Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)	
.....	50
Class Rank / Highest-Ranking Student (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	53
Class Schedules (Secondary Grade Levels Only).	54
College and University Admissions and Financial Aid (Secondary Grade Levels Only) ...	55
College Credit Courses (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	55
Communications—Automated	56
Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels).....	57
Conduct (All Grade Levels)	58
Counseling	59
Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)	61
Credit by Examination If a Student Has Taken the Course / Subject (Grades 6-12)	61
Credit by Examination for Advancement / Acceleration If a Student Has Not Taken the	
Course / Subject	61
Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels).....	63
Discrimination	63

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Distance Learning	67
Distribution of Literature, Published Materials, or Other Documents (All Grade Levels).....	67
Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)	69
Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels)	69
End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments	72
English Learners (All Grade Levels).....	72
Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations (All Grade Levels).....	73
Fees (All Grade Levels).....	74
Fundraising (All Grade Levels).....	76
Gang-Free Zones (All Grade Levels).....	76
Gender-Based Harassment...See Dating Violence pages 63-67	
Grade-Level Classification (Grades 9–12 Only).....	77
Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels).....	77
Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	78
Harassment.....	85
Hazing (All Grade Levels).....	85
Health-Related Matters.....	86
Illness.....	86
Immunization (All Grade Levels).....	90
Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels).....	94
Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels).....	96
Lost and Found (All Grade Levels).....	98
Makeup Work.....	98
Medicine at School (All Grade Levels).....	100
Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels).....	102
Nontraditional Academic Programs (All Grade Levels).....	104
Parent and Family Engagement (All Grade Levels).....	105
Physical Examinations / Health Screenings.....	106

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence (All Grade Levels).....	107
Prayer (All Grade Levels)	108
Promotion and Retention	108
Release of Students from School	109
Report Cards / Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels).....	110
Retaliation	111
Safety (All Grade Levels).....	111
SAT, ACT, and Other Standardized Tests	118
Schedule Changes (Middle / Junior High and High School Grade Levels)	118
School Facilities	118
School-sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels).....	118
Searches	118
Sexual Harassment.....	See Dating Violence pages 63-67
Special Programs (All Grade Levels)	118
Standardized Testing.....	118
Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	121
Students in Foster Care (All Grade Levels)	121
Students Who are Homeless (All Grade Levels).....	121
Student Speakers (All Grade Levels).....	122
Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention (All Grade Levels)	122
Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)	122
Summer School (All Grade Levels)	123
Tardies (All Grade Levels).....	123
Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instr. Materials..	123
Transfers (All Grade Levels)	124
Transportation (All Grade Levels)	124
Vandalism (All Grade Levels)	126
Video Cameras (All Grade Levels).....	126
Visitors to the School (All Grade Levels).	127
Volunteers (All Grade Levels).....	128
Voter Registration (Secondary Grade Levels Only)	128

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Withdrawing from School (All GradeLevels).....	128
Glossary	129
Appendix: Freedom from Bullying Policy	133
Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying	

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Port Arthur Independent School District

Parent-Student Acknowledgement and Consent Form for the Student Handbook

Please return this form to your child's homeroom teacher by **September 27, 2023**. Thank you!

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>DIRECTORY INFORMATION:</u> I give the district permission to release the designated student information for school- sponsored purposes (See Addendum in this handbook).</p>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>PK-12 SCIENCE LAB AGREEMENT:</u> We (Student/Parent) have read and discussed each of the lab safety rules. We agree to abide by the safety regulations and any additional written or verbal instructions, provided by the district, school, and my child's teacher (See Addendum in this handbook).</p>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>RELEASE of STUDENT INFORMATION:</u> I request that the district NOT release my child's name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institutions of higher learning without my prior written consent (See Addendum in this handbook).</p>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>STUDENT PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEO/AUDIO RECORD RELEASE & USE of STUDENT WORK in DISTRICT PUBLIC RELATIONS and EDUCATIONAL PLATFORMS:</u> I agree to allow my child to be photographed, videotaped and/or audio-recorded for the educational purposes stated in this handbook. I also give the district, its departments, and the school permission to use and display my child's artwork, photos, voice recordings, video recordings, or other original work on the district's websites, as well as, websites affiliated or sponsored by the district, such as a campus or classroom website, district and school social media platforms, and in district publications and promotions, such as yearbook, newspapers, newsletters, and brochures Check all that apply:</p> <p>Yes No My child's name, photo, video, and/or audio recordings</p> <p>Yes No My child's original work, including artwork</p> <p>Yes No My child's name and photo</p>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>SURVEY CONSENT:</u> I give my child permission to participate in the activities, including student surveys, analysis, or evaluation, concerning one or more of the eight areas listed as protected information surveys, under the heading of "PPRA Notice and Consent/Opt-Out for Specific Activities" (See Addendum in this handbook).</p>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>TECHNOLOGY POLICIES: ACCEPTABLE USE and RESPONSIBLE USE:</u> My child will abide by the Acceptable Use Policy, regarding the district's devices, computer systems, computer networks, software, electronic communication systems, Internet, and district-approved communication tools. I understand that PAISD uses internet filters in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (See Addendum in this handbook).</p>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p><u>CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS PROHIBITED:</u> The parent has the responsibility of submitting a signed statement to the Principal, each school year, prohibiting the use of corporal punishment with his or her child. Checking "yes" means that you, the parent, do not consent to the use of corporal punishment and will submit a written statement, prohibiting the use of corporal punishment (See Addendum in this handbook).</p>

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Yes No

GUIDELINES FOR CO-CURRICULAR/EXTRA CURRICULAR

ACTIVITIES: My child is responsible for following the student responsibilities set forth by PAISD. I acknowledge that my child will be held accountable for behavior expectations and consequences, set forth by the group or organization in which s/he participates and as outlined in the Board-approved Student Code on Conduct and Handbook, available online at www.paisd.org (See Addendum in this handbook).

Your signature reflects that you acknowledge online access to a copy of Port Arthur ISD's Student Handbook. **Failure to sign, return, or agree does not exempt a student from compliance.**

Student's Name: _____ ID #: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Port Arthur ISD

Note: References to Board Policy codes are included for ease of reference. The hard copy of the district's official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office. An electronic copy is available at www.paisd.org

Accessibility

If you have difficulty accessing this handbook because of a disability, please contact Ms. Debra Cartwright, Director of Special Education, at 989-6225.

Section I: Parental Rights

This section describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

Consent, Opt-Out, and Refusal Rights

Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation

Unless required under state or federal law, a district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without obtaining written parental consent. **Note:** An evaluation may be legally required under special education rules or by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for child abuse investigations and reports.

Annual Notifications: Port Arthur ISD does not provide human sexuality instruction.

Consent to Provide Mental Health Care Service

The district will not provide mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the district's intervention procedures except as permitted by law. The district has established procedures for recommending an intervention, to a parent, for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns, substance abuse, or suicide risk. The district's mental health liaison will notify the student's parent within a reasonable amount of time after the liaison learns that a student has displayed early warning signs and provide information about available counseling options. The district has also established procedures for staff to notify the mental health liaison regarding a student who may need intervention. Contact the School Counselor, at your child's school, for assistance. The mental health liaison can provide further information regarding these procedures, as well as, educational materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support, on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus. **HB 473** requires a threat assessment team to notify the parent of a student before conducting a threat assessment of that student. The team must provide an opportunity for the parent to participate in the assessment. The parent can participate remotely or in-person to share information. The team must provide its findings and conclusions regarding the student to the parent.

Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking (Senate Bill 9 from the 87th Legislative Session, Second Called Session): Before a middle school or high school student receives instruction on the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking, the district must obtain written consent from the student's parent. A request for written consent will be sent to parents at least 14 days before the instruction will begin. The SHAC (Student Health Advisory Committee) will make recommendations for curriculum materials. The Board reviews and adopts the materials. Parents must consent, or opt-in, prior to a student's participation in this instruction.

Port Arthur ISD

Consent to Display a Student's Original Works and Personal Information

Teachers may display a student's work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement without seeking prior parental consent. These displays may include personally identifiable student information. Student work includes:

- ✓ Artwork,
- ✓ Special projects,
- ✓ Photographs,
- ✓ Original videos or voice recordings,
- ✓ and other original works.

If you do not want your child's artwork, special projects, photographs, and the like to be displayed on the district's website, on any campus or classroom web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication, you must notify the principal in writing.

Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction if a Student is under Age 14 - A student under age 14 must have parental permission to participate in the district's parenting and paternity awareness program. This program was developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE) to be incorporated into health education classes.

Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when it:

- *Is to be used for school safety,*
- *Relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity*
- *Relates to media coverage of the school, or*
- *Relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.*

In other circumstances, the district will seek written parental consent before making a video or voice recording of a student. **Please note that parents and visitors to a classroom, both virtual and in-person may not record video or audio or take photographs or other still images without permission from the Principal of the school.**

Opting Out of Advanced Mathematics in Grades 6-8 SB 2124

The district will automatically enroll a student in grade 6 in an advanced mathematics course if the student performed in the top 40 percent on the grade 5 mathematics STAAR or a local measure that demonstrates proficiency in the student's grade 5 mathematics course work.

Enrollment in an advanced mathematics course in grade 6 will enable students to enroll in Algebra I in grade 8 and advanced mathematics in grades 9-12. The student's parent may opt the student out of automatic enrollment in an advanced mathematics course.

Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling a student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and district policy FO (LOCAL). However, in accordance with law, the district may not administer corporal punishment if a student’s parent submits a signed, written statement prohibiting its use. **A parent who does not want corporal punishment administered to his or her child must submit a written statement to the campus principal stating this decision. This signed statement must be submitted each school year. A parent may revoke this prohibition at any time during the school year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal.**

Note:

- ✓ District personnel may use discipline methods other than corporal punishment if a parent requests that corporal punishment not be used.
- ✓ If the district knows that a student is in temporary or permanent custody of the state (through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements), corporal punishment will not be administered, even when the student’s caregiver or caseworker has not submitted a signed statement prohibiting its use.

Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and District Employees

The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines. For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for his or her class to relay information regarding classwork, homework, and tests. A parent is welcome to such a page.

However, text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity must communicate with a student participating in that activity. The employee is required to include the student’s parent as a recipient on all text messages AND the employee is required to send a copy of the text message to his or her immediate supervisor’s district email address. A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a school employee should provide written notification to the campus principal.

Objecting to the Release of Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated “directory information” from a student’s education records without written consent.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

“Directory information” is information that, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Examples include:

- ✓ A student’s photograph (for publication in the school yearbook);
- ✓ A student’s name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments);
- ✓ The name, weight, and height of an athlete (for publication in a school athletic program);
- ✓ A list of student birthdays (for generating school-wide or classroom recognition);
- ✓ A student’s name and photograph (posted on a district-approved and managed social media platform); and
- ✓ The names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication (to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period).

Directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the student’s first day of instruction for this school year. [See **Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information**, included in the forms packet.]

The district requests that families living in a shelter for survivors of family violence or trafficking notify district personnel that the student currently resides in such a shelter. Families may want to opt out of the release of directory information so that the district does not release any information that might reveal the location of such a shelter.

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists—one for school- sponsored purposes and a second for all other requests. For district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information:

- Student’s name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- E-mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team
- Enrollment status

If a parent does not object to the use of his or her child’s information for these school-sponsored purposes, the school will not ask permission each time the district wants to use the information for these purposes.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

For all other purposes, the district has identified the following as directory information: student name, address, telephone listing. See Board Policy FL (Local).

Note: Review **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records**.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Unless a parent has advised the district not to release his or her student's information, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests by military recruiters or institutions of higher education to provide the following information about students:

- ✓ Name,
- ✓ Address,
and
- ✓ Telephone listing.

Military recruiters may also have access to a student's district-provided email address unless a parent has advised the district not to release this information.

See a document in the forms packet for this purpose.

Participation in Third-Party Surveys

Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally-Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation

A student will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- ✓ Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
- ✓ Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family; Sex behavior or attitudes;
- ✓ Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- ✓ Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship;
- ✓ Legally-recognized privileged relationships, such as relationships with lawyers, doctors, and ministers;
- ✓ Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent; or
- ✓ Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in or receive financial assistance under a program.

A parent can inspect the survey or other instrument and any corresponding instructional materials used in connection with such a survey. [For more information, see policy EF (LEGAL).]

“Opting Out” of Participation in Other Types of Surveys or Screenings and the Disclosure of Personal Information -**The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) requires that a parent be notified when a survey is not funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The PPRA gives parents the right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:**

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from the child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing the information to others.

A parent has a right to deny permission for his or her child's participation in:

Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Exceptions, to the aforementioned, are hearing, vision, or spinal screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

A parent may inspect:

- Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party.
- Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

The ED provides extensive information about the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, including a PPRA Complaint Form.

Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence in Grades 3–12

State law designates the week of September 17 as Celebrate Freedom Week and requires all Social Studies classes provide the following:

- ✓ Instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and
- ✓ A specific recitation from the Declaration of Independence for students in grades 3–12.

Per state law, a student may be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independent if any of the following apply:

- A parent provides written statement requesting that his or her child be excused,
- The district determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation or
- A parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the US government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK (Legal) for more information]

Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

A parent may request that his or her child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be made in writing.

State law, however, requires that all students participate in one minute of silence following recitation of the pledges.

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** and policy EC (LEGAL) for more information.]

Religious or Moral Beliefs

A parent may remove his or her child temporarily from the classroom if a scheduled instructional activity conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

The removal may not be used to avoid a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, the student must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

Tutoring or Test Preparation

A teacher may determine that a student needs additional targeted assistance for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills based on:

Informal observations,

Evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests, or

Results from diagnostic assessments.

The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible.

In accordance with state law and policy EC, districts must obtain parental permission before removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the days the class is offered.

If a district offers tutorial services to students, state law requires a student, with a grade below 70 for a reporting period, to attend.

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs, contact the student's teacher and see policies EC and EHBC. See **Standardized Testing** for information regarding required **Accelerated Instruction** after a student fails to perform satisfactorily on certain state-mandated tests.]

Right of Access to Student Records, Curriculum Materials, and District Records/Policies

Parent Review of Instructional Materials HB 1605

A parent has the right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered, whether instruction is delivered in-person, virtually, or remotely.

The district will make instructional materials available for parent review no later than 30 days before the school year begins and for at least 30 days after the school year ends. However, tests that have not yet been administered will not be made available for parent examination.

The district will provide login credentials to each student's parent for any learning management system or online learning portal used in instruction to facilitate parent access and review.

A parent is also entitled to request that the school allow the student to take home instructional materials the student uses. The school may ask the student to return the materials at the beginning of the next school day.

A school must provide printed versions of electronic instructional materials to a student if the student does not have reliable access to technology at home.

District Review of Instructional Materials

A parent may request that the district conduct an instructional material review in a Math, English Language Arts, Science, or Social Studies class in which the parent's student is enrolled to determine alignment with state standards and the level of rigor for the grade level.

The district is not required to conduct an instructional material review for a specific subject area or grade level at a specific campus more than once per school year.

For more information about requesting an instructional material review, contact the Campus Principal.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Right of Access to Student Records, Curriculum Materials, and District Records / Policies

Instructional Materials

A parent has the right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered whether instruction is delivered in-person, virtually, or remotely.

A parent is also entitled to request that the school allow the student to take home instructional materials the student uses. The school may ask the student to return the materials at the beginning of the next school day.

A school must provide printed versions of electronic instructional materials to a student if the student does not have reliable access to technology at home.

Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Non-custodial Parent

A non-custodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO (LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

Participation in Federally Required, State-Mandated, and District Assessments

In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a parent may request information regarding any federal, state, or district policy related to his or her child's participation in required assessments.

Student Records

Accessing Student Records

- ✓ A parent may review his or her child's records. These records
- ✓ include: Attendance records,
- ✓ Test
- ✓ scores,
- ✓ Grades,
- ✓ Disciplinary records,
- ✓ Counseling records,
- ✓ Psychological records,
- ✓ Applications for admission,
- ✓ Health and immunization
- ✓ information, Other medical records,
- ✓ Teacher and School Counselor
- ✓ evaluations, Reports of behavioral patterns,

PORT ARTHUR ISD

- ✓ Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected regarding any intervention strategies used with the child, as the term “Intervention strategy” is defined by law,
- ✓ State assessment instruments that have been administered to the child,
- ✓ and teaching materials and tests used in the child’s classroom.

Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and eligible students certain rights regarding student education records.

For purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is anyone age 18 or older or who attends a postsecondary educational institution. These rights, as discussed here and in the section-**Objecting to the Release of Directory Information**, are the right to:

- ✓ Inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access;
- ✓ Request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA;

Provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student’s records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent; and File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements. For more information about how to file a complaint, see <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>.

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy.

Before disclosing personally identifiable information from a student’s records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance—including grades, test results, and disciplinary records—is considered confidential educational records.

Inspection and release of student records is restricted to an eligible student or a student’s parent— unless the school receives a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student’s education records. A parent’s rights regarding access to student records are not affected by the parent’s marital status.

Federal law requires that control of the records goes to the student as soon as the

- ✓ student: Reaches the age of 18,
- ✓ Is emancipated by a court, or
- ✓ Enrolls in a postsecondary educational institution.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

However, the parent may continue to have access to the records if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and, under limited circumstances, when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student when school officials have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records.

"Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility to the school and the student; or investigating or evaluating programs.

School officials may include:

- Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals;
- Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff);
- A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer);
- A person appointed to serve on a team to support the district's safe and supportive school program;
- A parent or student serving on a school committee; or
- A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.

FERPA also permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information without written consent:

- ✓ To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General's office, the U.S. Attorney General's office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives.
- ✓ To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- ✓ To another school, district/system, or postsecondary educational institution to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which the student already is enrolled.
- ✓ In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received. To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- ✓ To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school to develop,

PORT ARTHUR ISD

validate, or administer predictive tests; to administer student aid programs; or to improve instruction.

- ✓ To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- ✓ When the district discloses directory information-designated details. [To prohibit this disclosure, see Objecting to the Release of Directory Information]

Release of personally identifiable information to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The Superintendent is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

A parent or eligible student who wants to inspect the student's records should submit a written request to the records custodian identifying the records he or she wants to inspect.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will be available to explain the record and to answer questions.

A parent or eligible student who submits a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the records.

The address of the Superintendent's office is 4801 9th Avenue, Port Arthur, Texas 77642

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the appropriate custodian of records. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If after the hearing the records are not amended, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to place a statement in the student's record.

Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the complaint process found in policy FNG (LOCAL). A grade issued by a teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the Board of Trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading guidelines. [See Finality of Grades at FNG (LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** and Complaints and Concerns]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

The district's student records policy is found at policy FL (LEGAL) and FL (LOCAL) and is available on the district's website at www.paisd.org.

Note: The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications

A parent may request information regarding the professional qualifications of his or her child's teachers, including whether the teacher:

- ✓ Has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction,
- ✓ Has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived, and
- ✓ Is currently teaching in the field of discipline of his or her certification.

The parent also has the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to the child.

A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances

Children of Military Families

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children entitles children of military families to flexibility regarding certain district and state requirements, including:

- ✓ Immunization requirements;
- ✓ Grade level, course, or educational program placement;
- ✓ Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; Enrollment in the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN); and Graduation requirements.
- ✓ The district will excuse absences related to a student visiting a parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who is:
 - ✓ Called to active
 - ✓ duty, on leave, or
 - ✓ Returning from a deployment of at least four months.

The district will permit **no more than five** excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Additional information may be found at [Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency](#).

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Parental Role in Certain Classroom and School Assignments

Multiple-Birth Siblings

State law permits a parent of multiple-birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets) assigned to the same grade and campus to request in writing that the children be placed in either the same classroom or separate classrooms.

Written requests must be submitted by the 14th day after the students' enrollment. [See policy FDB (LEGAL).]

Safety Transfers / Assignments

The board or its designee will honor a parent's request to transfer his or her child to another classroom or campus if the district has determined that the child has been a victim of bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832.

The board may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom. The board will consult with the parent of a child who has engaged in bullying before deciding to transfer the child to another campus.

Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the Principal for more information.

[See **Bullying** and policies FDB and FFI for more information.]

The district will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to a safe public school in the district if the child attends a school identified by the Texas Education Agency as persistently dangerous or if the child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds.

[See policy FDE for more information.]

The board will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to another district campus *or* a neighboring district if the child has been the victim of sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for the assault. In accordance with policy FDE, if the victim does not wish to transfer, the board will transfer the assailant.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Student Use of a Service / Assistance Animal

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a written request to the principal before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus. The district will try to accommodate a request as soon as possible but will do so within ten district business days.

A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care) –

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district will provide enrollment and registration assistance, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment, to any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care).

A student in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year. The district will assess the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district.

The district will award partial course credit when the student only passes one half of a two-half course.

A student in the conservatorship of the state, who is moved outside the district's or school's attendance boundaries—or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and moved outside the district's or school's boundaries—is entitled to remain at the school the student was attending prior to the placement OR move until the student reaches the highest grade level at that particular school.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

If a student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets its graduation criteria.

For a student in the conservatorship of the state who is eligible for a tuition and fee exemption under state law and likely to be in care on the day preceding the student's 18th birthday, the district will:

- ✓ Assist the student with the completion of applications for admission or financial aid; Arrange and accompany the student on campus visits;
- ✓ Assist in researching and applying for private or institution-sponsored scholarships; Identify whether the student is a candidate for appointment to a military academy;
- ✓ Assist the student in registering and preparing for college entrance examinations, including (subject to the availability of funds) arranging for the payment of examination fees by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS); and
- ✓ Coordinate contact between the student and a liaison officer for students formerly in the conservatorship of the state.

[See Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration, Course Credit]

A Student Who Is Homeless

A student who is homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions,

- ✓ including: Proof of residency requirements;
- ✓ Immunization requirements;
- ✓ Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness);
- ✓ Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules;
- ✓ Assessment of the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district.
Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one half of a two-half course;
Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; and
- ✓ Graduation requirements.

Federal law allows a student who is homeless to remain enrolled in the "school of origin" or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing.

If a student who is homeless in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, state law allows the student to request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

A student or parent who is dissatisfied by the district's eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision may appeal through policy FNG (LOCAL). The district will expedite local timelines, when possible, for prompt dispute resolution.

For more information on services for students who are homeless, contact the district's homeless education liaison:

Dr. Denita Jones, At-Risk Program Supervisor

denita.jones@paisd.org

4901 Ninth Avenue

Port Arthur, Texas 77642

409-989-6100

[See Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration, Course Credit, and Students who are Homeless for more information.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RTI). The implementation of RTI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individuals listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services.

This system links the students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine whether the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for Special Education or Section 504 services at any time. HB 3928 requires districts to notify parents of rights available under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, in addition to rights available under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, if the district suspects or has reason to suspect that a student may have dyslexia.

Special Education Referrals

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or to a district administrative employee of the school district, the district must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district must give the parent prior written notice of whether it agrees or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. If the district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Note: A request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally; it does not need to be made in writing. Districts must still comply with all federal prior-written notices and procedural safeguard requirements as well as the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district to respond within the 15 school-day timeline.

If the district decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

There is an exception to the 45-school day timeline. If the district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30 due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Additional information regarding special education is available from the school district in a companion document titled Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process.

District Contact Person for Special Education Referrals

Debra Cartwright, Director of Special Education at 409-989-6225.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services.

The designated person to contact for questions regarding post-secondary transitions, including the transition from education to employment for students receiving special education services.

Section 504 Referrals

Each school district must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's Section 504 program. Districts must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes:

- Notice,
- An opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records,
- An impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and
- A review procedure.

District Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is Jael Moody, District Testing Coordinator at 989-6283.

Visit these websites for information regarding students with disabilities and the family:

- ✓ [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education](#)
- ✓ [Process](#)
- ✓ [Partners Resource Network](#)
- ✓ [Special Education Information Center](#)
- ✓ [Texas Project First](#)

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Notification to Parents of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to Students in General Education

In accordance with state law, the district will annually notify parents if their child receives assistance for learning difficulties. Details of such assistance can include intervention strategies. This notice is not intended for those students already enrolled in a special education program.

A Student Who Receives Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, state law permits the parent or guardian to request that other students residing in the household be transferred to the same campus—if the grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus.

The student receiving special education services would be entitled to transportation; however, the district is not required to provide transportation to other children in the household.

The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for other children in the home. [See policy FDB (LOCAL) for more information.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Do you know ...

an infant, child or adolescent who does not learn easily? All individuals develop at their own pace, but some have more difficulty than others. There is a way to make a difference for these children and adolescents.

What is Child Find?

Child Find is a process designed to identify, locate, and evaluate individuals birth through 21 years of age with disabilities who may need special education services.

Who can begin the Child Find process?

Anyone can start the process. A parent, doctor, teacher, relative or friend can call their local school district or the Child Find contact at Region 5 Education Service Center:

Lisa Heiner
(409) 951-1727
lheiner@esc5.net

Contact the Special Education Director in your School District

Beaumont ISD	(409) 617-5277
Bob Hope	(409) 983-3244
Bridge City ISD	(409) 735-1550
Brookeland ISD	(409) 787-2338
Buna ISD	(409) 994-4895
Burkeville ISD	(409) 565-2201
Chester ISD	(409) 283-3752
Colmesneil ISD	(409) 283-3752
Deweyville ISD	(409) 746-2731
East Chambers ISD	(409) 296-8302
Ehrhart School	(409) 839-8200
Evadale ISD	(409) 276-1337
Evolution Academy	(409) 239-5553
Hamshire-Fannett ISD	(409) 794-1412
Hardin Jefferson ISD	(409) 981-6460
Harmony Science Academy	(409) 838-4000
High Island ISD	(409) 286-5313
Hull-Daisetta ISD	(936) 536-6321
Jasper ISD	(409) 384-9484
Kirbyville ISD	(409) 994-4895
Kountze ISD	(409) 246-3352
Liberty ISD	(936) 336-8701
LCM CISD	(409) 883-2232
Lumberton ISD	(409) 923-7453
Nederland ISD	(409) 724-2391
Newton ISD	(409) 420-6600
Orangefield ISD	(409) 735-4895
Port Arthur ISD	(409) 989-6225
Port Neches-Groves ISD	(409) 729-7644
Sabine Pass ISD	(409) 971-2321
Silsbee ISD	(409) 980-7844
Spurger ISD	(409) 283-3752
Tekoa Academy	(409) 982-5400
Vidor ISD	(409) 951-8710
Bmt Classical Academy	(409) 434-4549
Jasper Classical Academy	(409) 489-9222
Warren ISD	(409) 283-3752
West Hardin CISD	(409) 923-7453
West Orange-Cove CISD	(409) 882-5436
Woodville ISD	(409) 283-3752

Child Find



When your child has a special need, your school wants to point you in the right direction.



Region 5 Education Service Center
Child Find Contact:
Lisa Heiner (409) 951-1727
lheiner@esc5.net

Port Arthur Independent School District

Department of Special Education

Debra Cartwright, Director

(409) 989-6225 -debra.cartwright@paisd.org

Why should we refer an individual?

The early identification and intervention process can prevent failure and frustration. Special attention to teaching and learning strategies may help individuals overcome barriers to learning.

What happens after the individual is referred?

The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be contacted by the local school district. The parents and school will decide if an evaluation is needed. The same group may develop an evaluation plan designed to assess areas of concern. An evaluation will be conducted by qualified school district/agency personnel. Then the parents and evaluation personnel will have a meeting to talk about evaluation results, special education eligibility and services.

Who may qualify?

Help is available from your local school district for individuals who have the following disabilities according to federal and state criteria:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Hearing Impairments
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairments
- Other Health Impairment
- Emotional Disturbance
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairments
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment
including Blindness

How much do services cost?

All services provided through the school district are at no cost to the individual or parents.

What about young children?

The following programs provide services to children who are ages birth to three, delayed in their development or are born with a medical problem that is likely to cause a delay:

First Steps ECI (409) 784-5435
(Chambers, Hardin, Jefferson and Orange counties)

Burke ECI (877) 205-3630
(Jasper, Newton, Tyler counties)

The following programs provide services to children three and four:

Met Head Start (409) 246-8401
(Hardin, Chambers counties)

North Early Learning Center
(Orange county) (409) 882-5434

Wheatley School of Early Childhood
(Port Arthur ISD) (409) 984-8750

Bingman Head Start
(Beaumont ISD) (409) 617-6200

Tri-County Community Action Head Start (936) 598-6315
(Jasper, Newton, Tyler counties)

A Student Who Speaks a Primary Language Other than English

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English.

If the student qualifies for these services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504

A student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services—may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine whether the student needs services and supports under Section 504 in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as defined in federal law.

[See policy FB.]

[See **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services**]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Section II:

Other Important Information for Parents and Students

Topics in this section of the Student Handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. It is organized alphabetically to serve as a quick-reference guide. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level. Parents and children should take a moment together to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact your child's school.

Absences / Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws are discussed below - one dealing with the required presence of school-aged children in school, e.g., compulsory attendance, the other with how a student's attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit—are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

Compulsory Attendance

Prekindergarten and Kindergarten

Students enrolled in Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten are required to attend school and are subject to the compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled.

Between Ages 6 and 18

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 and 19 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of a diagnostic reading instrument.

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer if the student does not meet the passing standards on an applicable subject area state assessment.

Age 19 and Older

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If a student age 19 or older has more than five unexcused

PORT ARTHUR ISD

absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [*See policy FEA.*]

Compulsory Attendance- Exemptions

All Grade Levels

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events:

- ✓ Religious holy days;
- ✓ Required court appearances;
- ✓ Appearing at a governmental office to obtain U.S. citizenship;
Taking part in a US naturalization oath ceremony
Serving as an election clerk
- ✓ Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences related to autism services.

Absences resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, with certification by a physician.

- ✓ For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
 - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
 - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

As listed in Section I at **Children of Military Families**, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments. [*See Children of Military Families.*] HB 2892 allows for military families to request a transfer to another campus or another school district and mandates that the request be approved.

Secondary Grade Levels

The district will allow a student who is 15 years of age or older to be absent for one day to obtain a learner license and one day to obtain a driver's license, provided that the board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL). The student will be required to provide documentation of his or her visit to the driver's license office for each absence and must make up any work missed. [*See*

Driver License Attendance Verification

PORT ARTHUR ISD

The district will allow junior and senior students to be absent for up to two days per year to visit a college or university, provided:

- The board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL);
- The principal has approved the student's absence; and
- The student follows campus procedures to verify the visit and
- Makes up any work missed.

The district will allow a student 17 years old or older to be absent for up to four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school to pursue enlistment in the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days per school year to serve as:

- An early voting clerk, provided the district's board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies his or her teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences; or
- An election clerk, if the student makes up any work missed.

SB 68- The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year for a career investigation day to visit a professional at that individual's workplace to determine the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional's field, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

The district will allow a student in grades 6-12 to be absent for the purpose of sounding "TAPS" at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Compulsory Attendance- Failure to Comply

All Grade Levels

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student, who is absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed “accelerated instruction” by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities

If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student’s ARD committee or Section 504 committee will be notified, and the committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.

Between Ages 6 and 18

When a student between ages 6 and 18 incurs unexcused absences for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send a notice to the student’s parent, as required by law (**House Bill 2398**), to remind the parent that it is the parent’s duty to monitor the student’s attendance and to require the student to come to school. The notice will also inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures and request a conference between school administrators and the parent. These measures will include a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, or referrals to either in-school or out-of-school counseling or other social services. Any other measures considered appropriate by the district will also be initiated.

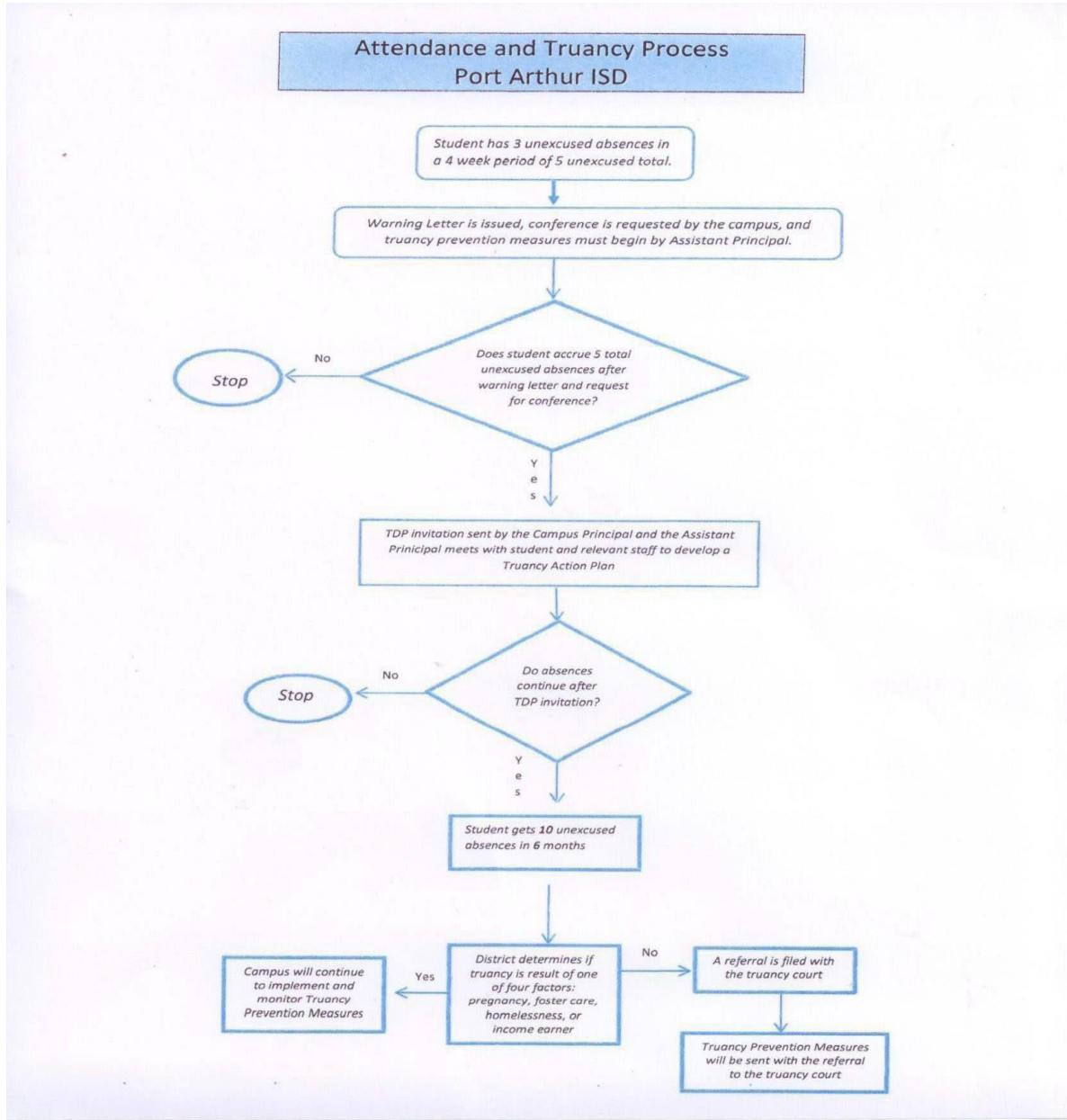
Each campus has a Truancy Prevention Team. If you have questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact your child’s Teacher, the Attendance Clerk, and Campus Behavior Coordinator, as needed.

A court of law may also impose penalties against a student’s parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student is absent without excuse from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student ages 12–18 incurs unexcused absences on ten or more days or parts of days within a six- month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

[See policies FEA (LEGAL) and FED (LEGAL).]

PORT ARTHUR ISD



PORT ARTHUR ISD

Age 19 and Older

After a student age 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district will send the student a letter as required by law explaining that the district may revoke the student's enrollment for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking a student's enrollment, the district may implement a behavior improvement plan.

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels)

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, which allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit or a final grade for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade. [*See policy FEC.*]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

With the exception of absences due to serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment, all absences, excused or unexcused, may be held against a student's attendance requirement. To determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for any absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- ✓ If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed under **Compulsory Attendance- Exemptions** will be considered extenuating circumstances for purposes of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.
- ✓ A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
Absences incurred due to the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances if the student makes up the work missed in each class.
- ✓ The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- ✓ The committee will consider whether the student or student's parent had any control over the absences.
- ✓ The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- ✓ The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and discuss ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board by following policy FNG (LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance to receive credit or a final grade will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

Official Attendance-Taking Time (All Grade Levels)

The district must submit attendance of its students to the TEA reflecting attendance at a specific time each day.

Official attendance is taken every day at second period (Secondary) and 10:00 a.m. (Elementary)

A student, who is absent for any portion of the day, including at the official attendance-taking time, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Documentation After an Absence *(All Grade Levels)*

When a student is absent from school, the student—upon arrival or return to school—must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent’s permission, will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note.

The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused.

Note: Unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence.

Doctor’s Note after an Absence for Illness *(All Grade Levels)*

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than three consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student’s absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s absence from school to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.

Certification of Absence Due to Severe Illness or Treatment – If a student is absent because of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student’s attendance infeasible, a parent must provide certification from a physician, licensed to practice in Texas specifying the student’s illness and the anticipated period of absence related to the illness or treatment.

Driver License Attendance Verification *(Secondary Grade Levels Only)*

A currently enrolled student seeking a driver’s license shall submit the Texas Department of Public Safety Verification of Enrollment and Attendance Form (VOE), signed by the parent, to the campus central office at least 10 days before it is needed. The district will issue a VOE only if the student meets class credit or attendance requirements. The VOE form is available at: _

[Dept of Public Safety Verification of Enrollment/Attendance Form](#)

Further information may be found on the Texas Department of Public Safety website:

<http://www.dps.texas.gov/section/driver-license>

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Accountability under State and Federal Law (All Grade Levels)

Port Arthur ISD is held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of the accountability requirements is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, which include:

The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings:

- ✓ A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings;
- ✓ The district's financial management report, which will include the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA; and
- ✓ Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law.

This information can be found on the district's website at www.paisd.org Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office. TEA also maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at TEA Performance Reporting Division.

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test (Grades 10-12)

A student in grades 10-12 will be offered an opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test and consult with a military recruiter. Contact the Principal for information about this opportunity.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Bullying

(All Grade Levels)

The district strives to prevent bullying, in accordance with the district's policies, by promoting a positive school culture, building healthy relationships between students and staff; encouraging reporting of bullying incidents, including anonymous reporting; and investigating and addressing reported bullying incidents.

Bullying is defined in state law as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- ✓ Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- ✓ Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- ✓ Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
- ✓ Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined by state law as bullying that is done using any electronic communication device, including through the use of:

- a cellular or other type of telephone,
- a computer,
- a camera,
- electronic mail,
- instant messaging,
- text messaging,
- a social media application,
- an internet website, or
- any other internet-based communication tool.

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include:

- Hazing
- Threats
- Taunting
- Teasing
- Confinement
- Assault
- Demands for money
- Destruction of property
- Theft of valued possessions
- Name-calling
- Rumor-spreading
- Ostracism

PORT ARTHUR ISD

The district will integrate into instruction research-based content designed to reduce bullying that is appropriate for students' age groups.

Elementary Campuses

Students in elementary grades will participate in:

Instruction designed so that students can recognize bullying behaviors and how to report them

Age-appropriate discussions that encourage peers to intervene when they observe bullying occur

Instruction that characterizes bullying as a behavior that results from the student's need to acquire more mature social or coping skills, not an unchangeable trait

Secondary Campuses

Students in secondary grades will participate in:

Instruction on the brain's ability to change and grow so the student recognizes bullying behavior can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an unchangeable trait

Discussions that portray bullying as undesirable behavior and a means for attaining or maintaining social status at school, and that discourage students from using bullying as a tool for social status

Instruction designed so that students recognize the role that reporting bullying behaviors plays in promoting a safe school community

The district will use an age-appropriate survey regarding school culture that includes relevant questions on bullying to identify and address student concerns.

Each campus has a committee that addresses bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives. The committee will include parents and secondary students. For more information on this committee, including interest in serving on the committee, contact *the campus principal*.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or witnesses the bullying of another student, the student or parent should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible. Any district employee aware of a report of a bullying incident will relay the report to an appropriate administrator. Procedures for reporting allegations of bullying may be found on the district's website.

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by *Using **Anonymous Alert App***

The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying and related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying.

If an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may, in certain circumstances, notify law enforcement. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying.

The district will provide research-based interventions, which may include counseling options, for students who engage in bullying behaviors, students who are targeted by bullying behaviors, and any student who witnessed bullying behaviors.

Any action taken in response to bullying will comply with state and federal law regarding students with disabilities.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Upon recommendation of the administration, the board may transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the board may transfer the student to another campus in the district.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

The parent of a student who has been determined to be a victim of bullying may request that the student be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [See **Safety Transfers/Assignments**]

A copy of the district's bullying policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this handbook as an appendix.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Career and Technical Education (CTE) and other Work-based Programs **(Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

The district offers career and technical education programs in the following areas:

Programs of Study: Accounting and Financial Service; Architecture and Construction; Arts, Audio/Visual Technology; Business, Marketing, and Finance; Health Science; Hospitality and Tourism; Information Technology; Law and Public Service; Manufacturing; Naval Science; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

Regional Programs of Study: Human Service; Cosmetology

Career Clusters: Accounting; Audio/Video Production; Automotive; Business Management/Marketing/Finance; Collision Repair; Computer Maintenance; Construction Technology; Cosmetology; Culinary Arts; Engineering Design and Presentation/Drafting (LSCPA); Health Science; HVAC (10th Gr LSCPA); Law and Public Safety; Precision Metal Manufacturing; and Welding (LSCPA)

Admission to these programs is based on interest and aptitude, age appropriateness, and class space available.

District policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups, as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

District policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices, as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The district will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in all educational and vocational programs.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX coordinator and the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator.

*[See **Nondiscrimination Statement** for the name and contact information for the Title IX Coordinator and ADA/Section 504 Coordinator]*

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Child Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children *(All Grade Levels)*

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and other maltreatment of children. Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking. See information below.

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse *(All Grade Levels)*

Sexual Abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has been or is being sexually abused may exhibit physical, behavioral or emotional warning signs, including:

- ✓ Difficulty sitting or walking;
- ✓ Pain in the genital areas;
- ✓ Claims of stomachaches and headaches;
- ✓ Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children; Fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender;
- ✓ Sexually suggestive behavior; Withdrawal;
- ✓ Depression;
- ✓ Sleeping and eating disorders;
- ✓ and Problems in school.

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [*See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation*]

Warning Signs of Sex Trafficking *(All Grade Levels)*

Child trafficking of any sort is prohibited by the Penal Code. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Labor trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, to engage in forced labor or services. Traffickers are often trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches. Some traffickers contact victims online.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

- ✓ Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude; Sudden appearance of expensive items (for example, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology);
- ✓ Tattoos or branding;
- ✓ Refillable gift cards;
- ✓ Frequent runaway episodes;
- ✓ Multiple phones or social media accounts;
- ✓ Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone; Unexplained injuries;
- ✓ Isolation from family, friends, and community;
- ✓ and older boyfriends or girlfriends.

Additional warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips:

Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit;

Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside permitted hours for students;

Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off;

Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours;

Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss;

Not being in control of his or her own money;

Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver; and a desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.

Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children

(All Grade Levels)

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused, sex trafficked, or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Children may be more reluctant to disclose sexual abuse than physical abuse and neglect and may only disclose sexual abuse indirectly. As a parent or trusted adult, it is important to be calm and comforting if your child or another child confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

If your child is a victim of sexual abuse, sex trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. [To find out what services may be available in your county, see [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County](#).] SB 2069 – Every school is required by state law to post a sign that includes the toll-free telephone number operated by the Department of Family and Protective Services to receive reports of child abuse or neglect. This sign must be posted in English and Spanish at each school campus in at least one high-traffic, highly and clearly visible public area that is readily accessible to and widely used by students.

Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to:

The CPS division of the DFPS (1-800-252-5400) or on the web at [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#)

Further Resources on Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)

The following **websites include resources to help raise awareness** of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children. **Type a topic into search bar.**

- Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet
- Kids Health, For Parents, Child Abuse
- Child Sexual Abuse: A Parent's Guide from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
- Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team
- Human Trafficking of School-aged Children
- National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Child Labor Trafficking

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Class Rank / Highest-Ranking Student (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

At the close of the fifth six weeks, the top ten seniors who have the highest scholastic averages shall be ranked by using the grades for all semesters of grades 9-12 (through the fifth six weeks of their senior year). The student with the highest scholastic average shall be valedictorian, and the student with the second highest average shall be the salutatorian; all semesters for grades 9-12, including the final six weeks of their senior year, will be included for this recognition. To be considered for the position of valedictorian and salutatorian, a student shall have attended Memorial High School for his or her entire 11th and 12th grade years. He or she shall have taken a full class load the entire school year with a minimum of six credits. In cases of a tie in grade averages among the top ranking students, computing the grade point average to a sufficient number of decimal places until the tie is broken shall be used as the method for determining valedictorian or salutatorian. [for further information, *see policies at EIC*]

For two school years following their graduation, district graduates who rank in the top ten percent of their graduating class are eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas. Students and parents should contact the counselor or for further information about the application process and deadlines.

Grades are weighted for computation of class rank and grade point averages as follows

Advanced Placement/ Co-Enrollment	Pre-Advanced Placement	Regular/Resource
A = 6 points	A = 5 points	A = 4 points
B = 5 points	B = 4 points	B = 3 points
C = 4 points	C = 3 points	C = 2 points
D = 3 points	D = 2 points	D = 1 points

Any course taken or repeated in grades 9–12 will be recorded and both grades earned shall be used in the calculation of grade point average (GPA) and class rank. Credit is earned the first time a course is passed. When the course is repeated, credit shall not be awarded. However, if a student retakes Algebra I or Spanish I after taking it in grade 8, the grade earned in grade 8 shall not be used in the calculation of grade point average (GPA) and class rank in high school.

SENIOR CLASS RANK

Each member of the graduating class shall be positioned according to grade point average for class rank. Official class rank shall be calculated at the close of the senior year by using the grades for all semesters of grades 9–12, ending with the sixth six weeks of the senior year. Grades for each semester in grades 9, 10, 11, and the fifth six weeks of grade 12 shall be used in the computation of class rank to determine cum laude and magna cum laude awards.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

CUM LAUDE

The top ten percent of the graduating class having the highest scholastic averages based on weighted marks by the end of the fifth six-week grading period of the senior year shall receive the cum laude award. From this group, magna cum laude students shall be selected.

MAGNA CUM LAUDE

The top three percent of the graduating class who have the highest scholastic averages shall receive the magna cum laude award.

SUMMA CUM LAUDE

Any senior who is on the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement Program who has earned an A in each course during grades 9–12 shall receive the summa cum laude award. Grades for each semester in grades 9, 10, 11, and through the sixth six weeks of grade 12 shall be used in the computation for summa cum laude status.

VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN

At the close of the senior year, the top ten seniors who have the highest scholastic averages shall be ranked by using the grades for all semesters of grades 9–12, ending with the sixth six weeks of the senior year. The student with the highest scholastic average shall be valedictorian, and the student with the second highest average shall be the salutatorian.

To be considered for the position of valedictorian and salutatorian, a student shall have attended Memorial High School for his or her entire 11th and 12th grade years. He or she shall have taken a full class load the entire school year with a minimum of six credits.

TIES

In cases of a tie in grade averages among the top ranking students, computing the grade point average to a sufficient number of decimal places until the tie is broken shall be used as the method for determining valedictorian or salutatorian.

[For further information, see policy EIC.]

Class Schedules

(Secondary Grade Levels Only)

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a full class schedule. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus principal for students in grades 9–12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day schedule.

[See Schedule Changes for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

College and University Admissions and Financial Aid (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

For two school years following graduation, a district student who graduates as valedictorian or in the top ten percent of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

- ✓ Completes the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program (a student must graduate with at least one endorsement and must have taken Algebra II as one of the four required math courses); **or**
- ✓ Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

In addition, the student must submit a completed application for admission in accordance with the deadline established by the college or university. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that he or she meets the admission requirements of the university or college that s/he submits an application for. Should a college or university adopt an admissions policy that automatically accepts the top 25 percent of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25 percent of his or her class.

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. During the summer and fall 2021 terms and spring 2022 term, the University will admit the top six percent of a high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process. **As required by law, the district will provide written notice concerning: concerning automatic college admission; the curriculum requirements for financial aid; the benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid; the *Texas First Early High School Completion Program* which requires a student to provide an official copy of assessment results and transcripts, as applicable, to receive credit for the assessments and credits required for early graduation under the program; the *Texas First Scholarship Program*, and the *Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program* (HB 4363).**

Parents and students will be asked to sign an acknowledgment that they received this information. **Students and parents should contact the school counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines.**

[See Class Rank/Highest-Ranking Student for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class, and requirements for Graduation for information associated with the foundation graduation program.]

[See Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care) for information on assistance in transitioning to higher education for students in foster care.]

College Credit Courses (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Students in grades 9–12 have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

- ✓ Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or college preparatory;

PORT ARTHUR ISD

- ✓ Enrollment in an AP or dual credit course through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN); Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with Lamar State College-Port Arthur, which may be offered on or off campus; and
- ✓ Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities

HB 8 - Under the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) Program, a student may be eligible to enroll in dual credit courses at a participating institution of higher education, at no cost to the student. The FAST program allows students, who are or have been educationally-disadvantaged, to enroll at no cost to the student, at any time during the four years preceding the student's enrollment in a dual credit course. The district will determine eligibility upon the student's enrollment in the dual credit course. High School Counselors will ensure that parent's receive notification and support with this provision.

A student may be eligible for subsidies based on financial need for AP or IB exam fees. A student may also earn college credit for certain Career and Technical Education CTE courses.

All these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved prior to enrollment in the course. Please see the school counselor for more information. Depending on the student's grade level and the course, a state-mandated end-of-course assessment may be required for graduation. It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges and universities accept credit earned in all dual credit or AP courses taken in high school for college credit. Students and parents should check with the prospective college or university to determine if a particular course will count toward the student's desired degree plan.

Communications—All Grade Levels

A parent is legally required to provide in writing the parent's contact information, including address, phone number, and email address.

A parent must provide the contact information to the district upon enrollment and again within two weeks after the beginning of each following school year while the student is enrolled in the district. If the parent's contact information changes during the school year, the parent must update the information in writing no more than two weeks after the date the information changes. A parent may update contact information by contacting the school's registrar and/or completing an online "change of information" form.

Automated Non-emergency Communications

Your child's school periodically sends information by automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communications related to the school's mission and specific to your child, your child's school or the district. Standard messaging rates of your wireless phone carrier may apply. If you do not wish to receive such communications, please contact your child's school.

Automated Emergency Communications - The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation which may include real time-time or automated messages. An emergency situation may include early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to the campus due to severe weather, another emergency, or a security threat. SB 746 requires a parent to provide in writing the parent's contact information to the district; and it is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes.

[See Safety for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed informally by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal.

For those complaints and concerns that cannot be resolved informally, the board has adopted a Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances policy FNG (LOCAL). This policy can be viewed in the district's policy the district's policy manual, available online at www.paisd.org

The complaint forms can be accessed at your child's school or at central office, located at 4801 9th Avenue, Port Arthur, Texas.

To file a formal complaint a parent or student should complete and submit the complaint form. In general, the written complaint form should be completed and submitted to the campus principal in a timely manner.

If the concern is not resolved, a parent or student may request a conference with the Superintendent.

If the concern is still unresolved, the district provides a process for parents and students to appeal to the board of trustees.

Conduct (All Grade Levels)

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus as well as on district vehicles— and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

Campus Behavior Coordinator(s) – Principals/Assistant Principals

By law, each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as, provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The contact information for each campus behavior coordinator is available on the district’s website at www.paisd.org

Deliveries

Except in emergencies, delivery of messages or packages to students will not be allowed during instructional time. A parent may leave a message or a package, such as a forgotten lunch, for the student to pick up from the front office during a passing period or lunch.

Disruptions of School Operations

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by state law, disruptions include the following:

- ✓ Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- ✓ Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- ✓ Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- ✓ Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- ✓ Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property. Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

✓ Disruption of classes or other school activities while on or within 500 feet of district property includes:

- Making loud noises;
- Trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and
- Entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.

✓ Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district is also considered a disruption.

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; and anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

Please contact the campus principal if you are interested in serving as a chaperone for any school social events.

Counseling

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

- A guidance curriculum to help students develop their full educational potential, including the student's interests and career objectives;
- A responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put the student's continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk;
- An individual planning system to guide a student as the student plans, monitors, and manages the student's own educational, career, personal, and social development; and
- Systems to support the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students.

The district will make a preview of the program, including all materials and curriculum available to parents to review, by appointment, during school hours

Academic Counseling

Elementary / Junior High School Grade Levels

The school counselor is available to students and parents to talk about the importance of postsecondary education and how best to plan for postsecondary education, including appropriate courses to consider and financial aid availability and requirements.

In either grade 7 or 8, each student will receive instruction related to how the student can best prepare for high school, college, and a career.

High School Grade Levels

High school students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each year, high school students will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities, as well as information on the importance of postsecondary education.

Each year a student is enrolled in high school, the school counselor will provide information regarding:

- The importance of postsecondary education;
- The advantages of earning an endorsement and completing the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement;
- The disadvantages of pursuing a high school equivalency exam (GED) as opposed to earning a high school diploma;
- Financial Aid eligibility and how to apply for financial aid;
- Automatic admission to state-funded Texas colleges and universities;
- Eligibility requirements for the TEXAS Grant;
- Availability of district programs that allow students to earn college credit
- Availability of tuition and fee assistance for postsecondary education for students in foster care; and
- Availability of college credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans and military service members for military experience, education, and training.

Additionally, the school counselor can provide information about workforce opportunities after graduation or technical or trade school opportunities including opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates and licenses.

Personal Counseling (*All Grade Levels*)

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal, social, and family concerns, including emotional or mental health issues, and substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should follow campus procedures. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a

PORT ARTHUR ISD

list of resources that may be of assistance. If your child has experienced trauma, contact the school counselor for more information. For more information about the Guidance and Counseling Program, contact the Counseling Program Supervisor- **Mrs. Robin Beaty, Chief Academic Officer** at 409-989-6247.

[See Mental Health Support and Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children and Dating Violence]

Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student at any grade level enrolled in a high school course will earn credit for the course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-part (two-semester, 1-credit course), the student's grades from both halves (semesters) will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. If the student's combined average is less than 70, the student will be awarded credit only for the half (semester) with the passing grade.

Credit by Examination

If a Student Has Taken the Course / Subject (Grades 6-12)

A student who has previously taken a course or subject but did not receive credit or a final grade for it may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an examination approved by the district's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Examples of prior instruction include incomplete coursework due to failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to earn credit by examination after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an examination.

If a student is granted approval to take an examination for credit, the student must score at least 70 on the examination to receive credit for the course or subject.

[For further information, see the school counselor and policy EHDB (LOCAL).]

Credit by Examination for Advancement / Acceleration

If a Student Has Not Taken the Course / Subject

A student will be permitted to take an examination to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level. The examinations offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees. Testing windows for these examinations will be published in district publications and on the district's website. A student may take a specific examination only once per testing window.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

The only exceptions to the published dates will be for any examinations administered by another entity or to accommodate a student experiencing homelessness or a student involved in the foster care system.

When another entity administers an examination, the student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity.

If a student plans to take an examination, the student or parent must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. [For more information, see policy EHDC.]

Acceleration

Students in Grades 1-5

A student in elementary school is eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if:

- The student scores at least an 80 on each examination in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies;
- A district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated; and
- The student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement

Students in Grades 6-12

A student in grade 6 or above is eligible to earn course credit with:

- A passing score of at least 80 on an examination approved by the board;
- A scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or
- A score of 3 or higher on an AP examination, as applicable.

A student may take an examination to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course, according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and central office or www.paisd.org [*See policy FFH.*]

Dating Violence

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship or any of the person's past or subsequent partners. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to: physical or sexual assaults; name-calling; put-downs; threats to hurt the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household; destroying property belonging to the student; threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship; threats to harm a student's past or current dating partner; attempts to isolate the student from friends and family; stalking; or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

A flier from the Texas Attorney General's office includes information on recognizing and responding to dating violence, including contact information for help. The counselor's office has additional information about the dangers of dating violence and resources for seeking help. For more information on dating violence, see the [CDC- Preventing Teen Dating Violence](#)

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law that negatively affects the student.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to: offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

In addition to dating violence as described above, two other types of prohibited harassment are described below.

Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to: touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact that a reasonable person would not construe as sexual in nature, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic, sexual, and other inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Gender-based harassment includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on a student's gender, the student's expression of characteristics perceived as stereotypical for the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity. Gender-based harassment can occur regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student may include but are not limited to: offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. [*See policy FFH (LOCAL) and (EXHIBIT) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.*]

Upon receiving a report of prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law and policy FFI. If the alleged prohibited conduct also meets the statutory and policy definitions for bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted [*See Bullying*]

The district will promptly notify the parent of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parent of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by *policy FFH*.

Investigation of Report

Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated.

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student. However, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with law.

If law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies the district that it is investigating the matter and requests that the district delay its investigation, the district will resume its investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During the course of an investigation and when appropriate, the district will take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct was not unlawful. All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy *FNG (LOCAL)*.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Discrimination

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation]

Distance Learning

All Grade Levels

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies such as mail, satellite, internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

The Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) has been established as one method of distance learning.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN), as described below, to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must receive permission from the principal prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) (Secondary Grade Levels)

The Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) has been established by the state as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TXVSN to earn course credit for graduation.

Depending on the TXVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. [See Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations] In addition, for a student who enrolls in a TXVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required, the student must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

A parent may ask questions or request that their child be enrolled in TXVSN course by contacting the school counselor. Unless an exception is made the district, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TXVSN course if the school offers the same or similar course.

A copy of policy EHDE will be distributed to parents of middle and high school students at least once each year. If you do not receive a copy or have questions about this policy, please contact your school counselor.

Distribution of Literature, Published Materials, or Other Documents (All Grade Levels)

School Materials

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the Principal. Such items may include school posters, newsletters, yearbooks, brochures, flyers, etc.

All school publications are under the supervision of the Principal.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Non-school Materials From Students

Students must obtain prior approval from the building Principal before posting, circulating, or distributing any written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. Principal Approval will be granted or denied within in two school days. [*See policy FNAA for more information about distribution guidelines*]

The principal has designated special areas as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students or collection by students. [*See policy FNAA for more information*]

A student may appeal a Principal's decision in accordance with policy *FNG(LOCAL)*. Any student who sells, posts, circulates, or distributes non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the **Student Code of Conduct**. Materials displayed without the Principal's approval will be removed.

[*See FNG (LOCAL) for student complaint procedures.*]

From Others

No person or group will sell, circulate, distribute, or post any district premises written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that is not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization, except as permitted by *policy GKDA*.

To be considered for distribution, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization and be submitted to the Principal, who is the person responsible for prior review/approval of non-school literature from community members. The Principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy [*See policies DGBA or GF for more information*]

Prior review will not be required for:

Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours. Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy *GKD(LOCAL)* or a non-curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with policy *FNAB (LOCAL)*.

Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law. All non-school materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)

This district's dress code teaches grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, minimizes safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that dress and grooming choices comply with the Port Arthur ISD Standardized Dress Code, approved by the Board of Trustees. **Please refer to the last section of the Port Arthur ISD Student Code of Conduct (available online at www.paisd.org) to see the Dress Code in its entirety.**

If the Principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the Principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time. Repeated or severe offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

HB 567, known as the Crown Act, prohibits discrimination in the employee and student dress code, including any extracurricular dress code, based on hair texture or protective hairstyles commonly or historically associated with race. Protective hairstyles include braids, locks, and twists.

Electronic Devices and Technology

Resources (All Grade Levels)

Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal cell phones for safety purposes; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. A student must have approval to possess other personal telecommunications devices on campus such as laptops, tablets, or other portable computers. Without such permission, teachers or an administrator will collect the items and turn them in to the Principal's office. The Principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

The use of cell phones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. The student's parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15.

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parent will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE for more information.] In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See Searches and policy FNF.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained.

Without such permission,

teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See Searches on page 83 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices

In some cases, students may be encouraged, by the Instructor and with the Principal's approval, to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook).

When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes, all devices must be turned off during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources

District-owned technology resources for instructional purposes may be issued to individual students. Use of the district's network systems and district equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as, possibly impede future endeavors of a student, we strongly encourage parents to review the district's **User Agreement** with your child, as well as, "Before You Text" Sexting Prevention Course, a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology.

In addition, any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the district's computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.

Please Note: In accordance with Senate Bill 3, the district will provide login credentials to each student's parent for any learning management system or online learning portal used in instruction to facilitate parent access and review.

SB 1893- In accordance with state law, the district prohibits the installation of or use of TikTok (or any successor application or service) on a district device, along with any other social media application or service determined by the Governor.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

[See **Graduation and Standardized Testing**]

Emergent Bilingual (All Grade Levels)

A student, who is an English Learner is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), consisting of both district personnel and at least one parent representative will determine whether the student qualifies for services. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

To determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services, and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will then designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs that the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned in the *Standardized Testing* section of this handbook, may be administered to an English Learner up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to English learners who qualify for services.

If a student is considered an English learner and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make instructional and assessment decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations (All Grade Levels)

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students. Participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor, who has obtained approval from the Principal. [*See Transportation*]

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students involved in UIL athletic activities and their parents can access the [UIL Parent Information Manual](#). A hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity upon request. To report a complaint of alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at (512) 463-9581 or curriculum@tea.texas.gov.

[*See [UIL Texas](#) for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.*]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Generally, a student who receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks. However, if a student receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course, or an honors or dual credit course in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Economics, or Languages other than English, the student remains eligible for participation in all extracurricular activities. In any academic class—other than an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Economics, or Languages other than English, student, who receives a grade below 70 may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

In addition, the following applies to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed up to ten absences, in a school year, not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.

An absence, related to participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

Standards of Behavior

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by board policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

Offices and Elections

Certain clubs, organizations, and performing groups will hold elections for student officers. Campus Policies and Procedures provide guidance

Fees

(All Grade Levels)

Basic educational program materials are provided at no charge to a student. However, a student is expected to provide his or her own supplies, such as pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks. A student may also be required to pay certain other costs, fees, or deposits, including:

- ✓ Materials for a class project that the student will keep.

- ✓ Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations
- Admission fees to extracurricular activities
- Security deposits.
- ✓ Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- ✓ Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- ✓ Voluntarily purchased student health and accident insurance.
- ✓ Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- ✓ Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student. Parking fees and student identification cards.
- ✓ Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books, textbooks, and district-issued technology equipment
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- ✓ Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- ✓ Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.

A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [*See Buses and Other School Vehicles*]

A maximum fee of \$50 for an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.

In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN).

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the Principal. [For further information, see policy FP.]

Parking and Parking Permits (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student must request a parking permit and pay any applicable fee to park in a school parking lot. So long as space is available, parking permits will be issued throughout the year. Students are not permitted to: Speed, Double-park, Park across a white or yellow line, Park in a fire lane, or Sit in parked cars during school hours. Students may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of these rules. The district may tow cars that are parked in violation of these rules.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Fundraising

(All Grade Levels)

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes in accordance with administrative regulations. [*For further information, see policies FJ and GE for more information.*]

Gang-Free Zones

(All Grade Levels)

Certain criminal offenses, including gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and any location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Grade-Level Classification (Grades 9–12 Only)

For students who entered ninth grade beginning 2010-2011 and thereafter... **6** credits required for sophomore classification, **13** credits are required for junior classification, **20** credits are required for senior classification, and **27** credits are required for Graduation

Reclassification of students will be based upon the above attainment of credits. School Counselors will do the following:

- ✓ Identify students who have fallen behind their cohort.
- ✓ If the student has earned the appropriate number of credits to be reclassified with the cohort, the student will be reclassified at the end of the Fall Semester.
- ✓ Audits, PGPs, and Transcripts will be updated and forwarded to the Lead Counselor or the assigned Counselor, per Principal, for review.
- ✓ Once the student is reclassified, the sending Counselor will forward the student's folder to the receiving Counselor.
- ✓ Counselors will provide required information- names of students and supporting documentation to the appropriate campus Registrar in a timely fashion.
- ✓ In a timely fashion and with respect to confidentiality, the Counselor will provide the student with a "Statement of Reclassification" with the Counselor's and Registrar's signatures, so that the student knows his or her academic standing.

Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)

Grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated and distributed to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by each applicable curriculum department and have been approved by the campus principal. These guidelines establish the minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period. In addition, these guidelines establish how the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, etc.). Grading guidelines also outline in what circumstances a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination for which the student originally made a failing grade. Procedures for a student to follow after an absence will also be addressed.

[See Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences for additional information on grading guidelines.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Graduation

(Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Parents and Students should visit this website for important information, concerning graduation:
[TEA's Graduation Toolkit](#)

Requirements for a Diploma

A student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma from the district:

- ✓ Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by state law; Complete the required number of credits established by the state and any additional credits required by the district;
- ✓ Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state;
- ✓ Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the district, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education (SBOE) and **Complete and submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TASFA). Detailed information about this topic must be provided to students at the beginning of grade 12 (state law). School Counselors have detailed information, resources, and opt-out procedures if applicable.**

Testing Requirements for Graduation

Students are required, with limited exceptions and regardless of graduation program, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law allows a student to meet EOC requirements by substituting satisfactory performance on approved national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessments used for entrance into Texas public universities. See the school counselor for more information on state testing requirements for graduation. If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, the district will provide remediation to the student in the content area for which the performance standard was not met. This may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours or at times of the year outside normal school operations.

In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer of the required assessments may still be eligible to graduate if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate.

[See Standardized Testing for more information.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Foundation Graduation Program

Every student in a Texas public school who entered grade 9 in the 2014–15 school year and thereafter will graduate under the “*Foundation Graduation Program*.” Within the foundation graduation program are “endorsements,” which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Business and Industry; Public Service; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student’s transcript. The Foundation Graduation Program also involves the term “*Distinguished Level of Achievement*,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits. A **Personal Graduation Plan** will be completed for each high school student.

State law and rules prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student’s sophomore year, the student and student’s parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who anticipates graduating under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement and who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether this will satisfy the admission requirements of the student’s desired college or university.

Graduating under the foundation graduation program will also provide opportunities to earn “performance acknowledgments” that will be acknowledged on a student’s transcript. Performance acknowledgments are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and bi-literacy, in a dual credit course, on an AP or IB examination, on certain national college preparatory and readiness or college entrance examinations, or for earning a state recognized or nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgments are prescribed by state rules, and the school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

A student is not required to complete an Algebra II course to graduate under the foundation graduation program, and the district will annually notify a student’s parent of this fact. However, the student and parent should be aware that not taking Algebra II will make a student ineligible for automatic admission to four-year public universities and colleges in Texas and for certain financial aid and grants while attending those institutions.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Foundation – Only – 23 Credits	Foundation + Endorsements 27 Credits.	Distinguished Level Of Achievement - 27 Credits
<p>4 credits English – ELAI, II, III, one credit in any authorized advanced English course</p> <p>3 credits Mathematics – Algebra I Geometry, one credit in any authorized advanced math course</p> <p>3 credits Science – Biology, IPC or advanced science course</p> <p>3 credits Social Studies – U.S. History, U.S. Government (.5 credit) Economics (.5 credit) World Geography or World Geography/ History</p> <p>2 credits World Language or Computer Programming</p> <p>1 Credit Physical Education</p> <p>1 credit Fine Arts</p> <p>.5 credit Communication Applications</p> <p>5.5 credits in electives (may include CTE or certification courses)</p> <p>Credit requirements specific to at least one endorsement</p>	<p>4 credits English – ELA I, II, III, one credit in any authorized advanced English Course</p> <p>4 credits Mathematics – Algebra I, Geometry, two credits in any authorized advanced math course</p> <p>4 credits Science – Biology, IPC, or advanced science course</p> <p>3 credits Social Studies – U.S. History, U.S. Government (.5 credit) Economics (.5 credit) World Geography or World Geography/ History</p> <p>2 credits World Language or Computer Programming</p> <p>1 Credit Physical Education</p> <p>1 credit Fine Arts</p> <p>.5 credit Communication Applications</p> <p>7.5 credits in electives (may include CTE or certification courses)</p> <p>Credit requirements specific to at least one endorsement</p>	<p>4 credits English credit in any authorized advanced English Course</p> <p>4 credits Mathematics – Algebra II Geometry, two credits in any authorized advanced math course</p> <p>4 credits Science – Biology, advanced science course</p> <p>3 credits Social Studies – U.S. History U.S. Government (.5 credit) Economics (.5 credit) World Geography or World Geography/ History</p> <p>2 credits World Language or Computer Programming</p> <p>1 Credit Physical Education</p> <p>1 credit Fine Arts</p> <p>.5 credit Communication Applications</p> <p>7.5 credits in electives (may include CTE or certification courses)</p> <p>Credit requirements specific to at least one endorsement</p>

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Additional considerations apply in some course areas, including:

- ✓ Mathematics. To obtain the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program, which will be included on a student's transcript and is a requirement to be considered for automatic admission to a Texas four-year college or university, a student must complete an endorsement and take Algebra II as one of the 4 mathematics credits.

- ✓ Physical Education- A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, or another locally determined credit-bearing course for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student's ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.

- ✓ Languages other than English- Students are required to earn 2 credits in the same language other than English to graduate. Any student may substitute computer programming languages for these credits. A student may satisfy one of the two required credits by successfully completing in elementary school a dual language immersion program or a course in American Sign Language. In limited circumstances, a student may be able to substitute this requirement with other courses, as determined by a district committee authorized by law to make these decisions for the student.

Available Endorsements

A student must specify upon entering grade 9 which endorsement he or she wishes to

- ✓ pursue: Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM),
- ✓ Business and industry,
- ✓ Public service,
- ✓ Arts and humanities,
- ✓ or Multidisciplinary studies.

For the 2021-2022 school year only, SB 1697 authorizes a parent to elect in writing for a student to repeat a high school credit course taken in the 2020-2021 school year even if the student received credit for the course. Unless the district adopts a policy to a different effect, a student will retain the passing grade or credit earned in the 2020-2021 school year.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Personal Graduation Plans

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student. The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four-year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class. The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and his or her parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and his or her parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that includes a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, as well as facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. The student's personal graduation plan will denote an appropriate course sequence based on the student's choice of endorsement. A student may, with parental permission, amend his or her personal graduation plan after the initial confirmation.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Before graduating from high school, each student must complete and submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TASFA). A student is not required to complete a FAFSA or TASFA if: The student's parent submits a form, provided by the district, indicating that the parent authorizes the student to opt out; A student who is 18 years old or older or a legally independent minor submits a form, provided by the district, indicating that the student opts out; **or** a school counselor authorizes the student to opt out for good cause. Please contact the school counselor for more information.

The district will confirm that a student has completed and submitted a FAFSA in accordance with TEA guidance.

Available Course Options for All Graduation Programs

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area will be distributed to students each spring to enroll in courses for the upcoming school year.

Note: The district may require the completion of certain courses for graduation even if these courses are not required by the state for graduation.

Please be aware that not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who wants to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the school counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer for those students to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technical education (CTE), the district will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

Certificates of Coursework Completion

A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a student who has successfully completed state and local credit requirements for graduation but has not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on the state-mandated tests required for graduation.

Students with Disabilities

Admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees will make instructional and assessment decisions for students with disabilities who receive special education services in accordance with state law.

Upon the recommendation of the ARD committee, a student with a disability who receives special education services may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program (IEP) and in accordance with state rules. A student who receives special education services may earn an endorsement under the foundation program. If the student's curriculum requirements for the endorsement were modified, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the modified curriculum is sufficiently rigorous for purposes of earning the endorsement. The ARD committee must also determine whether the student must perform satisfactorily on any end-of-course assessment instrument required to earn an endorsement. A student who has receives special education services and has completed four years of high school but has not met the requirements of his her IEP may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. The student may then remain

PORT ARTHUR ISD

enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma but will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

Graduation Activities

Graduation activities will include Commencement Activities and Ceremonies

Graduation Speakers

The District hereby creates a limited public forum with regard to Commencement Activities and Ceremonies. Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to have speaking roles at graduation ceremonies.

A student must meet local eligibility criteria, which may include requirements related to student conduct, to have a speaking role. Students eligible for speaking roles will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer.

[See FNA (LOCAL) and the Student Code of Conduct. For student speakers at other school events, see Student Speakers]

Graduation Expenses

Because students and parents will incur expenses to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both the student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See Fees]

Scholarships and Grants

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the foundation graduation program, may be eligible under the TEXAS Grant Program and the Teach for Texas Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions.

Contact the School Counselor for information about other scholarships and grants available to students.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Harassment

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation]

Hazing

(All Grade Levels)

Hazing is defined by Section 37.151 of the Education Code as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in Education Code 37.151, including:

- ✓ Any type of physical brutality;
- ✓ An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances;
- ✓ An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code; and
- ✓ Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated.

Hazing will not be tolerated by the district. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the Principal or Superintendent.

[See **Bullying** and policies FFI and FNCC.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Health-Related Matters

Student Illness

(All Grade Levels)

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools are required to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school.

A parent should contact the school nurse, immediately, if a student has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or may have COVID-19. In this case, the student will be excluded from attending school and exclusion will continue until re-admission criteria is met.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. If the nurse determines that the child should go home, the Nurse will contact the parent.

The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions.

Contact the School Nurse if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether or not your child should stay home.

Bacterial Meningitis

(All Grade Levels)

State law requires the district to provide information about bacterial meningitis:

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common, and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red- purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases, it can be fatal, or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing, or sneezing).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis. The vaccines are safe and effective (85–90 percent). They can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the websites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), particularly the CDC's information on bacterial meningitis, and the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Note: DSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination on or after the student's 11th birthday, unless the student received the vaccine at age 10. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

[*See Immunization for more information.*]

Food Allergies (*All Grade Levels*)

The district requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, based on the following guidance from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS): "Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis." The district's management plan addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed on the Child Nutrition website at www.paisd.org

The complete text of the "Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis" can be found on the DSHS website at Allergies and Anaphylaxis.

[Food Allergies- Guidelines for Prevention/Preparedness](#)

[*See policy FFAF.*]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Head Lice

(All Grade Levels)

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to determine whether the student will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return.

Notice will also be provided to parents of elementary school students in the affected classroom. More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website *Managing Head Lice in school settings and at home.* [*See policy FFAA.*]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Immunization (All Grade Levels)

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at [Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization](#). The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis; Polio, Measles, Mumps, and Rubella; Hepatitis A; Hepatitis B; Varicella (chicken pox); and Meningococcal. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by TDSHS. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. registered and licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a lifelong condition.

As noted in the section on **Bacterial Meningitis**, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this requirement.

[For further information, see policy FFAB (LEGAL) and the DSHS website: [Texas School & Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements](#).]

Other Health-Related Matters **(All Grade Levels)**

Physical Activity Requirements

Elementary School

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in full- day prekindergarten–grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

For additional information on the district's requirements and programs regarding elementary school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

Junior High / Middle School

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters OR at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within each two-week period for at least four semesters.

For additional information on the district's requirements and programs regarding junior high and middle school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

Temporary Restriction from Participation in Physical Education

Students who are temporarily restricted from participation in physical education will remain in the class and shall continue to learn the concepts of the lessons but not actively participate in the skill demonstration.

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) *(All Grade Levels)*

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held four meetings.

The Duties of the SHAC include:

Making recommendations regarding physical and mental health curriculum.

Developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program, encompassing issues such as school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, improving student fitness, mental health concerns, substance abuse prevention, and employee wellness.

Making recommendations for increasing parents' awareness of warning signs of suicide and mental health risks as well as community mental health and suicide prevention services.

Additional information regarding the District's SHAC is available on the district's website www.paisd.org under the Federal Funding tab.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Seizures

(All Grade Levels)

To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year or upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following a diagnosis of a seizure disorder for the student. For more information, contact the School Nurse.

For more information, see “**A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504**”

Student Wellness Policy / Wellness Plan

(All Grade Levels)

Port Arthur ISD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board- adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy.

Physical Fitness

Assessment (Grades 3–12)

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12 who are enrolled in a physical education course or a course for which physical education credit is awarded. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to Principal or his designee to obtain the results of his or her child’s physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

Vending Machines (All Grade Levels)

The district has adopted and implemented the state and federal policies and guidelines for food service, including the guidelines to restrict student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines, see policies at CO and FFA.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited (All Grade Levels and All Others on School Property)

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarettes (e- cigarettes), or any other electronic vaporizing device, while on school property at any time or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or any other electronic vaporizing device, by students and all others on school property and at school- sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

Asbestos Management Plan (All Grade Levels)

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos. A copy of the district's Asbestos Management Plan is available in the Superintendent's office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact **Mr. Radermon Scypion, Director of Maintenance/Operations** at 409-989-6202

Pest Management Plan (All Grade Levels)

The district is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free school environment. All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact **Mr. Edgar Redeaux, Director of Maintenance/Custodial Services** at 409-989-6202.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels)

Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- ✓ The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- ✓ The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- ✓ The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

Students Taken into Custody

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- ✓ To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- ✓ To comply with the laws of arrest
- ✓ By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- ✓ By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
- ✓ By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs to establish a student's identity, where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away.
- ✓ By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Students Taken into Custody Continued:

- ✓ By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services (CPS), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- ✓ To comply with a properly issued directive from a juvenile court to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a legally authorized person, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

- ✓ All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been taken into custody, arrested, or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- ✓ All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors that occur in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property. These personnel will also be notified if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe the student has engaged in certain conduct.
- ✓ All appropriate district personnel regarding a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

[For further information, see policy GRAA (LEGAL).]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Leaving Campus **(All Grade** **Levels)**

Please remember that student attendance is crucial to learning. Appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours if possible. Absent extenuating circumstances students will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The district has put the following procedures in place to document parental consent:

- ✓ For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.
- ✓ For students in high school, the same process will be followed. If the student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

- ✓ If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a student in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult, authorized by the parent.

During Lunch

Port Arthur ISD campuses are closed campuses; and students are not allowed to leave during lunch without his or her parent. The Parent is required to check the student out of school through the front office first.

At Any Other Time during the School Day

Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the Principal and appropriate documentation.

Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Lost and Found **(All Grade Levels)**

A “lost and found” collection box is located in the campus office. If your child has lost an item, please encourage him or her to check the lost and found box. The district discourages students from bringing personal items of high monetary value to school, as the district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

Makeup Work

Makeup Work Due to Absence **(All Grade Levels)**

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any makeup work. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold regarding the state laws surrounding “attendance for credit or final grade.”
[*See Attendance for Credit or Final Grade*]

A student involved in an extracurricular activity must notify his or her teachers ahead of time about any absences.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with timelines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

DAEP Makeup Work

Elementary and Middle / Junior High School Grade

Levels Grades 9–12

A high school student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL).]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

In-School Suspension (ISS) and Out-of-School-Suspension (OSS) Makeup Work (All Grade Levels)

Alternative Means to Receive Course Work

While a student is in ISS or OSS, the district will provide the student with all course work for the student's foundation curriculum classes that the student misses as a result of the suspension.

Opportunity to Complete Courses

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO(LEGAL).]

Medicine at School

(All Grade Levels)

Medication that must be administered to a student during school hours must be provided by the student's parent. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the nurse's office and administered by the nurse or another authorized district employee, unless the student is authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student. District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

Only authorized employees, in accordance with policy FFAC, may administer:

- ✓ Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- ✓ Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container. Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. Note: Insect repellent is considered a nonprescription medication. Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

SB 629 requires each school district to adopt and implement a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of opioid antagonists at each campus in the district that serves students in grades 6-12.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Students whose schedules provide for regular time spent outdoors, including for recess and physical education classes, should apply sunscreen before coming to school.

For students at the elementary level, the student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to a student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and requests assistance with the application of the sunscreen. Nothing prohibits a student at this level from applying his or her own sunscreen if the student is able to do so.

For students at the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student will need assistance with this application, please address the need for assistance with the school nurse.

Whether a student is at the elementary or secondary level, if sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [*See policy FFAF (LEGAL).*]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

Psychotropic Drugs

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policy FFAC.]

Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels)

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, the district does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The district provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

PORT ARTHUR ISD

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX Coordinator (**see below**), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Other federal laws that prohibit discrimination include Title VI, Section 504, the Age Discrimination Act, the Boy Scouts Act, and Title II.

The district has designated and authorized the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or gender-based harassment:

Dr. Melvin Getwood, Assistant Superintendent, 4801 9th Avenue, Port Arthur, Texas 77642, 409-989- 6224, mgetwood@paisd.org

Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone, or email. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Upon the district receiving notice or an allegation of sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described at FFH(LOCAL).

The following District representatives have been designated to address concerns or inquiries about other kinds of discrimination:

- Title VI Concerns or Inquiries: **Mr. Jimmy Wyble, Executive Director of Human Resources**, 4801 9th Avenue, Port Arthur, Texas 77642, 409-989-6169, jimmy.wyble@paisd.org
- Section 504 Concerns or Inquiries: **Ms. Jael Moody, 504 Coordinator/District Testing Coordinator**, 4801 9th Avenue, Port Arthur, Texas 77642, 409-989-6283, jael.moody@paisd.org
- ADA Concerns or Inquiries: **Ms. Debra Cartwright, Director of Special Education**, 4801 9th Avenue, Port Arthur, Texas 77642, 409-989-6225, debra.cartwright@paisd.org
- Homelessness Concerns or Inquiries: **Dr. Melvin Getwood, Assistant Superintendent**, 4801 9th Avenue, Port Arthur, Texas 77642, 409-989-6224, mgetwood@paisd.org
- For all other Concerns or Inquiries, regarding discrimination: **Dr. Mark Porterie, Superintendent of Schools**, 4801 9th Avenue, Port Arthur, Texas 77642, 409-989-6244, mporterie@paisd.org
- [*See policies FB, FFH, and GKD for more information.*]

PORT ARTHUR ISD

NON-TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The District shall provide, to the extent possible within available public and private resources, adult education programs designed to meet the education and training needs of adults.

The following essential program components shall be provided:

1. Adult basic education;
2. Programs for adults of Limited English proficiency;
3. Adult secondary education, including programs leading to the achievement of a high school equivalency certificate and/or high school diploma;
4. Instructional services to improve student proficiencies necessary to function effectively in adult life, including accessing further education, employment- related training, or employment;
5. Assessment and guidance services related to 1-4, above

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Parent and Family Engagement (All Grade Levels)

Working Together

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement and engagement in this partnership may include:

- ✓ Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child every day to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- ✓ Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- ✓ Becoming familiar with all your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district. Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- ✓ Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- ✓ Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling**]
- ✓ Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences**]
- ✓ Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and **Volunteers**]
- ✓ Participating in campus parent organizations such as PTA.
- ✓ Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. [For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB.]
- ✓ Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook on **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**]
- ✓ Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- ✓ Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- ✓ Attending Board Meetings to learn more about district operations. Regular Board Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30p.m. An agenda is posted no later than 72 hours before each meeting. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Physical Examinations / Health Screenings

Athletics Participation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

For certain extracurricular activities, a student must submit certification from an authorized health-care provider. The certification must state that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the relevant program, including the District's Athletics Program
District's Marching Band
Any District extracurricular program identified by the Superintendent of Schools

Students should be aware of the rare possibility of sudden cardiac arrest, which in athletes is usually caused by a previously unsuspected heart disease or disorder.
For more information, see the [Sudden Cardiac Arrest UIL Texas Athletics Forms](#)

The District requires annual Physicals that must be submitted to the District.

Spinal Screening Program

School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature and refer them for appropriate follow-up by their physician. Screening can detect scoliosis at an early stage, when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities.

All students who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, see policy FFAA(LEGAL) or contact the superintendent.

Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted following the most recent, nationally accepted and peer- reviewed standards for spinal screening.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence (All Grade Levels)

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags]

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day

[See policy EC for more information.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Prayer

(All Grade Levels)

Each student has a right to pray individually, voluntarily, and silently or to meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

Promotion and Retention

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency. In making promotion decisions, the district will consider: Teacher Recommendation; Grades; Scores on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessments, and any other necessary academic information as determined by the district.

For the 2021-2022 school year, a parent may request in writing that a student repeat PK, Kindergarten, or Grades 1, 2, or 3. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

Elementary and Middle / Junior High Grade Levels

In grades 1–8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in three of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Grade-level advancement for students in grades 9–12 shall be earned by course credits. [*See EI*]

For the 2021-2022 school year, a parent may request in writing that a student repeat grade 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 that the student was enrolled in during the 2020-2021 school year. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

High School Grade Levels

To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See Grade Level Classification]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See Graduation on page 57 and Standardized Testing on page 85 for more information about EOC assessments.]

For the 2021-2022 school year, a parent may request in writing that a student repeat a course taken for high school credit that the student took and received credit for during the 2020-2021 school year. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

Release of Students from School

[See **Leaving Campus**]

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Report Cards / Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels)

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every 9 weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks and six weeks of a grading period, parents will receive a progress report if their child's performance in any course/subject area is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the Superintendent pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL) and **Grading Guidelines**]

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher. If the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report or other school notification will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports, requesting a signature, must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within three days. The district may use an electronic program to communicate academic information about your child, including for report card and progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature of the parent will be accepted by the district, but you are entitled to request the option to provide a handwritten signature of acknowledgment instead.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Retaliation

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation]

Safety

(All Grade Levels)

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and on district vehicles is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student is expected to:

- ✓ Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- ✓ Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, campus behavior coordinator, teachers, or bus drivers.
- ✓ Remain alert to any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member and promptly report any incidents to a district employee. A student or parent may make anonymous reports about safety concerns by using the district's online reporting tool, located at www.paisd.org
- ✓ Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- ✓ Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Accident Insurance

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

Insurance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

The district may purchase accident, liability, or automobile insurance coverage for students and businesses involved in the district's CTE programs.

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies

Occasionally, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Preparedness Training: CPR and Stop the Bleed

The district will annually offer instruction in CPR at least once to students enrolled in grades 7–12. The instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR certification.

The district will annually offer students in grades 7–12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see [Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed](#) and [Stop the Bleed Texas](#).

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

All parents are asked each year to complete medical care authorization form, providing written parental consent to obtain emergency treatment and information about allergies to medications or drugs. Parents should contact the school nurse to provide emergency care information (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies etc.)

The district may consent to medical treatment, including dental treatment, if necessary for a student if:

- The district has received written authorization from a person having the right to consent
- That person cannot be contacted; and
- That person has not given the district actual notice to the contrary.

The emergency care authorization form will be used by the district when a student's parent or authorized designee is unable to be contacted. A student may provide consent if authorized by law or court order.

Regardless of parental authorization for the district to consent to medical treatment, district employees will contact emergency medical services to provide emergency care when required by law or when deemed necessary such as to avoid a life-threatening situation

Emergency School-Closing Information

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early or opening is delayed because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat or another emergency cause.

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed. State law requires parents to update contact information within two weeks after the date the information changes.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways: Local Media, Official District/Campus Social Media, Automated Call-outs, District's Website

[See Communications-Automated, Emergency]

SAT, ACT, and Other Standardized Tests [See Standardized Testing]

Schedule Changes [See Counseling]
(Middle / Junior High and High School Grade Levels)

School Facilities

Use by Students Before and After School (All Grade Levels)

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes, when the Principal, Sponsor or Teacher, and Parent (all) have approved the student's participation.

Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing an activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless a student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult, or unless students are granted permission to remain on campus in accordance with policy FNAB, students must leave campus immediately.

Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels)

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

Use of Hallways during Class Time (All Grade Levels)

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Food and Nutrition Services (All Grade Levels)

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law.

Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need or household situation. Information about a student's participation is confidential. The district may share information such as a student's name and eligibility status to help enroll eligible children in Medicaid or the state children's health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student's parent notifies the district that a student's information should not be disclosed.

Participating students will be offered the same meal options as their peers and will not be treated differently from their peers.

See the Child Nutrition Webpage at www.paisd.org to apply for free or reduced-price meal services. See Board Policy CO for more information.

Parents are strongly encouraged to continually monitor their child's meal account balance. When a student's meal account is depleted, the district will notify the parent. The student will be allowed to continue purchasing meals according to the grace period set by the school board, and the district will present the parent with a schedule of repayment for any outstanding account balance and an application for free or reduced meals. If the district is unable to work out an agreement with the student's parent on replenishment of the student's meal account and payment of any outstanding balance, the student will receive a meal. The district will make every effort to avoid bringing attention to the student.

Library (All Grade Levels)

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials, available for classroom assignments, projects, and independent reading, based on interest. A signed Acceptable Use Agreement is required to utilize computers. Please visit with the school librarian for detailed information on check-out procedures and other procedures, associated with library services.

Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Student-organized, student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB(LOCAL).

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

School-sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)

The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes. A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip.

The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip that is not required as part of a basic educational program or course to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need. The district is not responsible for refunding fees paid directly to a third-party vendor.

Searches

District Property **(All Grade Levels)**

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice. Students have no expectation of privacy with district property.

Students are responsible for any item, found in district property provided to the student that is prohibited by law, district policy, or the Student Code of Conduct.

Searches in General **(All Grade Levels)**

In the interest of promoting student safety and drug-free schools, district officials may occasionally conduct searches.

District officials may conduct searches of students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with law and district policy. Searches of students will be conducted without discrimination, based on, for example, reasonable suspicion, voluntary consent, or pursuant to district policy providing for suspicionless security procedures, including the use of metal detectors.

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings or in vehicles parked on district property. If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person, belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a district official may conduct a search in accordance with law and district regulations.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Vehicles on Campus (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the district will contact the student's parents. If the parents also refuse to permit the vehicle to be searched, the district may contact law enforcement officials and turn the matter over to them. The district may contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

Metal Detectors (All Grade Levels)

To maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment, the district reserves the right to subject students to metal detector searches when entering a district campus and at off-campus, school-sponsored activities.

Trained Dogs (All Grade Levels)

The district will use trained dogs to screen for concealed, prohibited items, including drugs and alcohol. Screenings conducted by trained dogs will not be announced in advance. The dogs will not be used with students, but students may be asked to leave personal belongings in an area that is going to be screened, such as a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle. If a dog alerts to an item or an area, it may be searched by district officials.

Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices (All Grade Levels)

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

[See policy FNF (LEGAL) and Electronic Devices and Technology Resources for more information.]

Sexual Harassment

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation]

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Special Programs (All Grade Levels)

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, students who are homeless, students in foster care, bilingual students, migrant students, English learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact Central Office at 409-989-6100 to connect with the Program Director or Supervisor.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission's Talking Book Program, which provides audiobooks free of charge to qualifying Texans, including students with visual, physical, or reading disabilities such as Dyslexia.

Standardized Testing Secondary Grade Levels

SAT / ACT

(Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the school counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate examination to take; these examinations are usually taken at the end of the junior year. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT, and more information can be obtained on these assessments from the school counselor.

Note: Participation in these assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance acknowledgment on his or her transcript under the foundation graduation program and may qualify as a substitute for an end-of-course testing requirement in certain circumstances. A student's performance at a certain level on the SAT or ACT also makes the student eligible for automatic admission to a Texas public institution of higher education.

TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course offered through the district as well. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment for college readiness may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic

Readiness) Grades 3–8

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels are required to take the state assessment, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

- ✓ Mathematics, annually in grades
- ✓ 3–8 Reading, annually in grades
3–8
- ✓ Science in grades 5 and 8
- ✓ Social Studies in grade 8

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain state-established criteria as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR Spanish is available for eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on STAAR Reading or STAAR Math

If a student in grades 3-8 does not perform satisfactorily on the state assessment, the district will provide Accelerated Instruction (AI) for the student. A student, who does not attend Accelerated Instruction may violate school attendance requirements.

For a student who does not perform satisfactorily on the math or reading state exams in grades 3, 5, or 8, the district will establish an Accelerated Learning Committee (ALC) which includes the student's parents in order to develop an educational plan for Accelerated Instruction that enables the student to perform at the appropriate grade level by the conclusion of the next school year. The district will document the educational plan in writing and provide a copy to the student's parent.

The parent of the student, in grades 3, 5, or 8, who fails to perform satisfactorily on the math or reading assessment may:

Request that the district consider assigning the student to a particular classroom teacher in the applicable subject area if more than one classroom teacher is available and another class assignment is feasible.

File a grievance or complaint regarding the content or implementation of the ALC's educational plan. See Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels) and FNG (Local).

Standardized Testing for a Student Enrolled Above Grade Level

If a student in grades 3-8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state-mandated assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

A student in grade 3-8 shall be assessed at least once in high school with the ACT or the SAT if the student completes the high school end-of-course assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, or science prior to high school.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Personal Graduation Plans- Middle or Junior High School Students

For a middle school student, who does not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated examination, a school official will prepare a personal graduation plan (PGP).

School officials will also develop a PGP for a middle school student who is determined by the district to be unlikely to earn a high school diploma within 5 years of high school enrollment. The plan will among other items:

Identify the student's educational goals

Address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and

Outline an intensive instruction program for the student

[See Policy EIF (Legal) for more information]

For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee. [See Personal Graduation Plans for information related to the development of personal graduation plans for high school students]

High School Courses—End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following

- ✓ courses: Algebra I
- ✓ English I and English II
- ✓ Biology
- ✓ U.S. History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, unless otherwise waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules.

There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain criteria established by the state as determined by the student's ARD committee.

An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student receiving special education services will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation within the parameters identified in state rules and the student's personal graduation plan (PNP).

HB 1225

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

[See **Graduation**]

Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on an EOC

If a student does not perform satisfactorily on an EOC, the district will provide accelerated instruction. Failure of student to attend accelerated instruction may result in violations of required school attendance.

Steroids

(Secondary Grade Levels Only)

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

Students in Foster

Care (All Grade

Levels)

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district will assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care) with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment in the district.

Please contact **Dr. Annie Barkers, Social Worker**, who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison for secondary students, at 409-984-4000 and **Mrs. Priscilla Yowman, Social Worker**, who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison for elementary students, at 409-984-8600 with any questions. [See **Students in the Conservatorship of the State**]

Students Who Are Homeless

(All Grade Levels)

A parent is encouraged to inform the district if his or her child is experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources that may be able to assist families.

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the District's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth - **Dr. Melvin Getwood, Assistant Superintendent**, at (409) 989-6224.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Student Speakers (All Grade Levels)

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: school football games, student assemblies, and after-school sporting or ceremonial events, as *Introductory Speakers*. If a student meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to introduce one of the school events listed above, the student should submit his or her name in accordance with policy FNA (LOCAL).

[See policy FNA (LOCAL) regarding other speaking opportunities and Graduation for information related to student speakers at graduation ceremonies.]

Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention (All Grade Levels)

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using, or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to you. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its website: Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please visit **Texas Suicide Prevention** or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

You may also contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Summer School

(All Grade Levels)

Your child's teacher(s) will share information, with you, concerning your child's academic strengths and needs, as well as, required or recommended summer programs for continued academic growth.

Tardies

(All Grade Levels)

A student who is tardy to class by more than 15 minutes may be assigned to detention hall or given another appropriate consequence.

Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)

Textbooks and other district-approved instructional materials are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Any books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. Electronic textbooks and technological equipment may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives.

If the district does not issue graphing calculators for a course requiring their use, a student may use a calculator application with the same functionality as a graphing calculator on a phone, laptop, tablet, or other computing device.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to his or her instructor immediately.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage paid for by the parent. However, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

Transfers

(All Grade Levels)

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another. [See Safety Transfers/Assignment, Bullying, and Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services for other transfer options.]

Transportation

(All Grade Levels)

School-sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. As approved by the principal, a coach or sponsor of an extracurricular activity may establish procedures related to making an exception to this requirement when a parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent. [See School-sponsored Field Trips for more information.]

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school and any students who are homeless. This service is provided at no cost to students.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually, and any subsequent changes will be posted at the school and on the district's website. For the safety of the operator of the vehicle and all passengers, students must board buses or other vehicles only at authorized stops, and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school and on the district's Web site. Further information may be obtained by calling the Transportation Department at (409) 989-6190. **Mr. Corey Metts serves as the Director of Transportation.**

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact the Transportation Department at 409-989-6190.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, including buses, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of

Conduct. Students must:

- ✓ Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- ✓ Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated
- ✓ stop. Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- ✓ Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
- ✓ Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle.
- ✓ Not possess or use any form of tobacco or e-cigarettes in any district
- ✓ vehicle. Observe all usual classroom rules.
- ✓ Be seated while the vehicle is
- ✓ moving. Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- ✓ Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the
- ✓ vehicle. Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; the privilege to ride in a district vehicle, including a school bus, may be suspended or revoked.

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Vandalism **(All Grade Levels)**

The taxpayers of the community have made a substantial financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended — both this year and for years to come — littering, defacing, or damaging school property will not be tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Video Cameras **(All Grade Levels)**

For safety purposes, video and audio recording equipment is used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video and audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. For more information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment in certain self-contained special education classroom, please contact Debra Cartwright, Director of Special Education at 409-989-6225

[See *EHBAF (LOCAL)*]

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Visitors to the School (All Grade Levels)

General Visitors

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. **For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the main office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification.**

Please Note: In the interest of student and staff safety, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, guidelines/procedures for district and campus visitation were modified. Until otherwise directed by the Superintendent of Schools, we will adhere to guidelines/procedures in the Port Arthur ISD Re-opening Plan, posted on the district's website. www.paisd.org

Individuals may visit classrooms during instructional time only with the approval of the Principal. Visitors may not interfere with instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. Even if the visit is approved, by the Principal, prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office first.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or violations of student privacy will not be permitted. The Principal or the Principal's Designee may accompany the visitor to the classrooms.

Unauthorized Persons

In accordance with Texas Education Code 37.105/GKA (Legal) and (Local) a school administrator, school resource officer (SRO), or district police officer has the authority to refuse entry or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably upon request **and**:

- ✓ The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or
- ✓ The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and the person persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or ejection.

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with FNG (LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL). HB 3 requires each Board to determine the appropriate number of armed security officers for each district campus and, absent a good cause exemption, ensure at least one, armed security officer is present during school hours.

[See the Student Code of Conduct.]

Visitors Participating in Special Programs for

Students Business, Civic, and Youth Groups

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

The district may invite representatives from patriotic societies listed in Title 36 of the United States Code to present information to interested students about membership in the society.

Career Day

On High School Career Day, the district invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

Volunteers

(All Grade Levels)

We appreciate so much the efforts of parent and grandparent volunteers that are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact your child's school office for more information about the processes for obtaining and completing an application, specifying eligibility requirements, and processes such as Criminal Background Checks.

Voter Registration

(Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

Withdrawing from

School (All Grade

Levels)

When a student under age 18 withdraws from school, the parent or guardian must submit a written request to the principal, specifying the reasons for withdrawal and the final day the student will be in attendance. Withdrawal forms are available from the principal's office or his designee.

A student who is age 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

Please provide the school at least three days' notice of withdrawal so that records and documents may be prepared.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Glossary

Accelerated Instruction, also referred to as supplemental instruction, is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level. It is required when a student does not meet the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

ACT, or the American College Test, is one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admission to certain colleges or universities.

ACT-Aspire refers to an assessment that took the place of ACT-Plan and is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

ARD stands for admission, review, and dismissal. The ARD committee convenes for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

Attendance Review Committee is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 percent, of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

CPS stands for Child Protective Services.

DAEP stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

DFPS is the Texas Department of Family Protective

Services. **DPS** stands for the Texas Department of

Public Safety.

EOC (end-of-course) assessments are state-mandated and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments are required for graduation. These examinations will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

ESSA is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act passed in December 2015.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP stands for individualized education program and is the written record prepared by the

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or districtwide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

IGC is the individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, to determine a student's eligibility to graduate when the student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory performance on no more than two of the required state assessments.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

PGP stands for personal graduation plan, which is required for high school students and for any student in middle school who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

PSAT is the preparatory and readiness assessment for the SAT. It also serves as the basis for the awarding of National Merit Scholarships.

SAT refers to the Scholastic Aptitude Test, one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

SHAC stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to assist the district in ensuring that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, along with providing assistance with other student and employee wellness issues.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

STAAR is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state’s system of standardized academic achievement assessments.

STAAR Alternate 2 is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student’s ARD committee.

STAAR Spanish is an alternative state-mandated assessment administered to eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

State-mandated assessments are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Except under limited circumstances, students must pass the STAAR EOC assessments to graduate. Student have multiple opportunities to take the tests, if necessary, for graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student’s violation of one of its provisions.

TAC stands for Texas Administrative Code.

TEA stands for Texas Education Agency.

TEC stands for Texas Education Code.

TELPAS stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

PORT ARTHUR ISD HANDBOOK

TSI stands for the Texas Success Initiative, an assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

TXVSN stands for the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors, and courses are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

UIL refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide, voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Appendix: Freedom from Bullying Policy

Note: School Board Policies may be revised at any time.

Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying

Visit www.paisd.org and select Board Policies to access Local Policy FFI, adopted on 11/14/2017. Bullying is defined in state law as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- ✓ Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- ✓ Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- ✓ Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
- ✓ Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.
- ✓ Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined by state law as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool.
- ✓ The district is required to adopt policies and procedures regarding:
- ✓ Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
- ✓ Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- ✓ Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor- spreading, or ostracism.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying. A student or parent may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by using the district's online reporting tool.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that the student be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [See Safety **Transfers/Assignments**]

A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this handbook in the form of an appendix. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on the district's website.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

ADDENDUM

Directory Information and Release of Student Information

State law requires the district to give you the following information:

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Port Arthur Independent School District to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing within ten school days of child's first day of instruction for this school year.

In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may or may not use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this information so you can communicate your wishes about these issues. [See section concerning **Directory Information** in this handbook for more details.]

For school-sponsored purposes: [list has been identified in FL (LOCAL)], the Port Arthur Independent School District has designated the following information as directory information:

Student's name

Address

Telephone listing

E-mail address

Photograph

Date and place of birth

Major field of study

Degrees, honors, and awards received

Dates of attendance

Grade level

Most recent school previously attended

Participation in officially recognized activities and sports

Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team

Enrollment status

Directory information identified only for limited school-sponsored purposes remains otherwise confidential and will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible student.

Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education
Federal law requires that the district release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the district not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent. [See **Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education** for more information.]

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Survey Activities Consent/Opt-Out Form

Dear Parent:

The district is required by federal law to notify you and obtain your consent for or denial of (opt-out) for your child's participation in certain school activities. The activities include any student survey or analysis known as a "protected information survey" that addresses one or more of the following eight areas:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom the student has a close family relationship;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

This notice and consent/opt-out requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information for marketing purposes ("marketing surveys"), and to certain physical exams and screenings.

Parent Statement Prohibiting Corporal Punishment

A parent has the responsibility of submitting a signed statement to the principal each year if he or she wishes to prohibit the use of corporal punishment with his or her child. A parent may reinstate permission to use corporal punishment at any time during the school year by submitting a signed statement to the principal. Corporal punishment will be administered in accordance with the law, district policy, and the Student Code of Conduct (SCOC). [**See Board Policy FO LOCAL and the SCOC**].

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Science Laboratory Safety Contract Grades 1 – 12

- I will act responsibly at all times in the science laboratory and classroom
- I will follow all instructions about lab procedures given by the teacher.
- I will keep my work area clean and clutter-free.
- I will wear safety goggles and protective clothing at all times when necessary.
- I know what to do in case of a fire.
- I will immediately notify the teacher of any emergency.
- I will tie back long hair, remove dangling jewelry, and secure loose clothing.
- I will not take chemicals or equipment out of the lab without direct permission from the teacher.
- I will never eat or drink in the laboratory unless instructed to do so by the teacher.
- I will only handle living organisms or preserved specimens when authorized by the teacher.
- I will not enter the storage area unless directed by the teacher.

Science Laboratory Safety Agreement Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Dear Parents,

Please read and sign the following:

1. The Pre-Kindergarten Science Curriculum includes lessons on:
 - how to recognize and avoid poisons
 - fire safety
 - plants and animals
 - safe use of sharp objects
2. Students are expected to follow all safety rules taught in the classroom.

I understand that my child will be taught safety rules and will be expected to comply with these rules at all times. Parents should sign the safety contract and return it to their child's teacher. The teacher should keep the front page on file for the entire year. The rules/symbols should be placed in the student's science/lab notebook for easy reference.

Parent's Signature

PORT ARTHUR ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK

Port Arthur Independent School District

Technology Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures

Revised 8/03/07

PARENT LETTER FOR SYSTEM USERS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child has been selected to participate in PAISD'S electronic communications system and needs your permission to do so. Your child will be able to communicate with other schools, colleges, organizations and individuals around the world through Internet and other electronic information systems/networks. Through the District's electronic communication system, your child will have access to hundreds of databases, libraries, and computer services all over the world.

With this educational opportunity also comes responsibility. It is important that you and your child read the enclosed District policy, administrative regulations and agreement form and discuss these requirements together. Inappropriate system use will result in the loss of the privilege to use this educational tool.

Please note that the Internet is an association of diverse communication and information networks. It is possible that your child may run across areas of adult content and some material you might find objectionable. While the District will take reasonable steps to preclude access to such material and does not encourage such access, it is not possible for the District to absolutely prevent such access.

Please return the attached agreement form indicating your permission or denial of permission for your child to participate in the District's electronic communication system.

Sincerely,

Port Arthur ISD

**ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS AND
NETWORKS STUDENT'S
AGREEMENT**

In order to make sure that all member of the PAISD community understand and agree to these rules of conduct, PAISD ask that you as a student user sign the following statement.

I understand and will abide by the district guidelines and conditions for the use of the facilities of Port Arthur Independent School District and access to the Internet. I further understand that any violations of the district guidelines are unethical and may constitute a criminal offense.

Should I commit any violation, my access privileges will be revoked. School disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action will be taken.

I agree not to hold PAISD, or any of its employees, or any of the institutions for networks providing access to PAISD responsible for the performance of the system or the content of any material accessed through it.

Student's Signature

Revised 8/03/07

**ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS AND NETWORKS
PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S AGREEMENT**

In order to make sure that all members of the PAISD community understand and agree to these rules of conduct, PAISD asks that you as a parent/guardian sign the following statement.

I agree not to hold PAISD, or any of its employees, or any of the institutions or networks providing access to networks responsible for the performance of the system or the content of any material accessed through it.

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Terms and Conditions for the PAISD facilities use and Internet access. I understand that this free access is designed for educational purposes. However, I also recognize that it is impossible to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold PAISD responsible for materials acquired or sent via the network.

This form will be retained on file by authorized faculty designee for the duration of applicable computer/network/internet use.

Parent / Guardian Signature