



Dr. Mark Porterie  
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Port Arthur ISD Parents/Guardians,

Port Arthur ISD recognizes the importance of school attendance and is privileged to provide your children with the best education possible during the 2024-2025 school year. We have been working to revise attendance procedures so that communication is increased and assistance is given to any family inundated with long-lasting unexcused absences. As part of our ongoing communication, this letter serves as a vehicle to keep you informed of significant changes beginning this school year.

In accordance with HB 2398, the Port Arthur ISD will enforce the Texas compulsory attendance laws as follows:

- Automated phone calls will be placed to parents or guardians notifying them when a student has been marked as absent. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility; therefore, it is critical that they provide current and up to date contact information to the school.
- All students will be issued a warning notice when attendance records reflect that the student has absences without an excuse on three days or parts of days in a four-week period or five or more days or parts of days during the school year. Also note, the Port Arthur ISD Police Dept. will make home visits when students reach the above indicated number of absences. Further, each campus will request a conference virtually or via phone with the student and parent or guardian for the purpose of addressing truancy prevention measures for students who exhibit attendance issues in order to improve the student's overall attendance.
- After a student has unexcused absences for five or more days or parts of days during the school year, parents - and students, if older than 12 - will be required to attend the Truancy Diversion Program (TDP). The TDP is an information-based intervention program offered to parents and students as a preventative measure to intervene 1) before students receive a referral to truancy court; and 2) to educate parents or guardians and students who are experiencing truancy problems about the consequences associated with unexcused absences. In addition, the program identifies available and appropriate resources for families who are experiencing issues that may be contributing to a student's truancy.
- If a student fails to attend school without an excuse on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year and those absences have been verified by the campus as unexcused, students 12 and older may be referred to the prosecutor of the truancy court of Jefferson County. At this point, the court could also file a criminal complaint against parents who contribute to the nonattendance of their child, regardless of their child's age.

**Exemptions:** If a student accrues ten unexcused absences in a six-month period, whether the student/parent has attended TDP or not, a truancy referral will be sent to the appropriate authority, unless the student is eligible for one of the four exceptions under the law. If truancy is the result of pregnancy, foster care, homelessness, or if the student is his or her household's primary income earner, a referral will not be made. Truancy prevention and support services will continue to be offered at the campus level. To learn more, go to [www.paisd.org](http://www.paisd.org).

Please refer to the District's 2024-2025 Student/Parent Handbook for additional information, or contact the campus attendance clerks. Should you or your student(s) need special assistance, experience extenuating circumstances or have questions beyond the campus level, you may also contact the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Programs & Post-Secondary Education at (409) 989-6224. I look forward to partnering with you as we continue to work on our District's mission, which as the primary source of public education in the community, is to meet the unique educational needs of our diverse population by providing a comprehensive quality education for students of the Port Arthur Independent School District. We are all very excited about the year and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mark Porterie  
Superintendent of Schools  
Port Arthur Independent School District