



KELLER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The community of Keller ISD will educate our students to achieve their highest standards of performance by engaging them in exceptional opportunities.

350 Keller Parkway
Keller, Texas 76248
Phone: 817-744-1053

Dustin Blank
Executive Director of Leadership

Dear Keller ISD Parents/Guardians,

Keller ISD recognizes the value of school attendance, and the impact it has on students' academic success. At the District level, we have been working to revise attendance procedures to include increased communication and assist any family that may be struggling with chronic unexcused absences. As part of our ongoing communication effort, this letter outlines important changes beginning this year.

The 84th Texas Legislature recently passed House Bill 2398, which substantially altered existing truancy laws in Texas. With the passage of the new law, former provisions that criminalized a student's truant behavior have been repealed, and a new civil process governing truancy proceedings takes effect this school year. This change means truancy proceedings against students will now be handled in a civil court. The District is required to provide a written warning to parents at the beginning of the school year informing them that if the student is absent from school for 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the parent/guardian may be subject to criminal prosecution, and as mentioned, the student is subject to referral to a truancy court for truant conduct.

Specifically, KISD will enforce the Texas compulsory attendance laws as follows:

- Campuses will place automated phone calls to parents or guardians notifying them when a student has been marked as absent. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to ensure that he/she provides 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. Further, each campus will request a conference with the student and parent or guardian for the purpose of addressing truancy prevention measures for students that exhibit attendance issues in order to improve the student's overall attendance.
- After a student has five or more days or parts of days during the school year, parents – and students, if older than 12 – will be required to participate in the Truancy Intervention Program (TIP). The TIP is an information-based intervention program offered to parents and students as a preventative measure to intervene before students receive a referral to truancy court, and 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. The TIP is offered to students and parents only once during each school year.
- If a student fails to attend school without an excuse for 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 Tarrant County. At this point, the court could also file a criminal complaint against parents or guardians who contribute to the nonattendance of his/her student, regardless of their student's age.

Presence in school is a strong indicator of future success. We encourage regular attendance and look forward to a successful 2015-2016 school year with your student.

Sincerely,

Dustin Blank

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