

NEW CANEY ISD



Bens Branch Elementary School Parent Handbook 2020-2021



24160 Briar Berry Lane
Porter, Texas 77365

PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to Bens Branch Elementary School. I am excited about starting this school year and meeting you. It is my intent that you and your child have a rewarding experience while being a part of our learning community.

In order for school to be a place for children to grow and learn, a place to respect and be respected, a place to experience the excitement of learning, it is important that the students, parents and school staff form a tri-partnership. Working together, there is no limit to what we and our children can achieve.

This parent/student handbook is the introduction to your child's school. After reviewing it for general information, I encourage all parents and students to become actively involved in our community of learning.

Best wishes for an exciting and rewarding school year.

Sincerely,

Catherine Olano, Principal

VISION STATEMENT

We are a community of fearless learners with the courage to continuously grow.

MISSION STATEMENT

Bens Branch Elementary will provide a safe, creative environment that nurtures and educates the whole child. We foster a collaborative partnership with students, staff, families, and our community in order to prepare students so they may succeed in our diverse and ever-changing world.

SCHOOL MOTTO

A Journey Of A Thousand Miles Begins With A Single Step

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Principal - Catherine Olano

Assistant Principal - Valentina Majeski

Counselor - Melissa Gomez

Instructional Coach - Anjelica Price

EL Specialist - Yolanda Tavares

Media Specialist - Stephanie Sapp

RtI Specialist - Ashley Dixon

Dyslexia Specialist - Crystal May, Katherina Sitton

Nurse - Stephanie Santo

School Address: 24160 Briar Berry Lane
Porter, TX 77365

Daily Schedule:

6:45 a.m.	Doors open. Students allowed to enter campus.
6:45 a.m. - 7:20 a.m.	Breakfast
7:30 a.m.	Tardy
10:30 a.m.	Morning Pre-K dismissal
11:30 a.m.	Afternoon Pre-K arrival and lunch
12:00 p.m.	Afternoon Pre-K Instruction Begins
3:00 p.m.	Grades Pre-K - 5 Dismissal



Office Hours

The office will **open each day by 6:45 a.m. and will close at 3:30 p.m.** If parents need to see their child's teacher or the principal before or after these hours, they must arrange this in advance with the teacher or principal. All visitors must always report to the office before meeting with a staff member.

School Attendance

Absences from class may result in a serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, please make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Students are required to bring an excuse on the day they return to school. Daily attendance is taken at 9:45am and students must be present in order to receive credit for that day. Remote students are expected to log in daily to Canvas in order to receive credit for attendance each day.

What the 90% Rule Means for Your Child

The Texas attendance rules say that a student has to be in a class at least 90% of the time if they want to be sure to get credit for that class. This rule applies even if your child has an [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#) or [Section 504 plan](#).

The average school year is 180 days. So, your child can only miss 18 days of school or 18 days of a specific class (or 9 days if they're on a semester schedule) before the 90% rule affects their class credit.

For elementary school students, this means they could repeat a grade if they are in school less than 90% of school days. A middle- or high-school student might have to repeat a certain class if they didn't attend at least 90% of the days of that class. You can read more about this rule on

the Texas Education Agency website's [Attendance, Admission, Enrollment Records, and Tuition 2015-16 page](#). Your school district might also have information on their website.

How do you keep your child from missing this much school? Here are some ideas:

- If your elementary- or middle school-aged child has an appointment with a doctor or therapist, but goes to school for any part of the day or attends any part of a class, they get credit for being there the whole time. Think about that when making appointments.
- Switch between morning and afternoon appointments so your child doesn't miss the same class all the time.

If your child has missed more than 5 days of school, the school will send you a letter asking you to come to a meeting or to write a letter explaining why your child has missed so much school. You can bring the notes from your child's doctor and your other records of why they missed school to that meeting or include copies with your letter.

Tardy

Students are considered **TARDY at 7:30 a.m.** Staff members are not on duty outside after 7:30 a.m. If your child arrives to school at 7:30 a.m. or later, parents or guardians must escort the child into the building and sign them in.



Attendance Awards

Every nine-weeks we recognize our **N.E.A.T. KIDS**. This stands for Never Ever Absent or Tardy (or Early Pick-Ups). In addition to our NEAT award, we recognize students with perfect attendance for each semester as well as all year.



Birthdays

If you would like to provide a birthday snack, please make arrangements with the teacher. However, school is not the primary place for birthday celebrations and we encourage you to have parties outside of school. Due to nutritional guidelines and regulations, you may only provide **treats through Child Nutrition**.

Breakfast

Students have the opportunity to have breakfast at their designated time. The schedule was created in order for students to not be in the cafeteria at the same time.

6:45-7:20- PK, Kinder, Fourth, Applied Skills

7:20-7:50- First and Third grade

8:00-8:30- Second grade

8:10-8:40-Fifth grade

Dress Code

Please see the district dress code policy. At Bens Branch Elementary, we often have dress up days that we encourage students to take participate in.



Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Car Riders

In the mornings, the students may be dropped off by the cafeteria entrance to the school through the car lines. The school doors will open at **6:45 a.m.** to let the students in. We will have staff members stationed at the cafeteria entrance to help children enter the building. You may also drop students off in the front of the school, however the buses will be unloading beginning at 6:45. There are two staff members stationed in the front to assist car riders after the buses have unloaded. **PLEASE, for the safety of all, do not drop students off behind parked cars or buses and have them cross moving traffic to save a few extra minutes of time.**

The tardy bell rings at 7:30 a.m. Staff members are not available after 7:30 to let your child in the building. If your child arrives to school at 7:30 a.m. or later, parents or guardians must escort the child into the building and sign them in and they will be considered tardy.

In the afternoons, car riders will be picked up by the cafeteria through the car lines. For the safety of our students, we are asking that you stay in your vehicle at all times. We will have staff members stationed in several places to help your child get in your vehicle. Parents must have a 2020-2021 car rider tag on the dashboard in order for staff to release the student. Please ensure the sign is visible until

after your student is loaded into the car. If you do not have a car rider tag, you will be asked to enter the building and sign your child out after showing ID.

Bus Riders

Students will be dropped off in the morning and picked up in the front of the building.

Walkers

Walkers exit through the front of the building and use the sidewalk to reach the stop sign at the driveway. Students will be crossed at that point only. Please **do not park** and walk to pick up your child. On days when we have heavy rain and/or lightning, walkers will be car riders. Please follow car rider procedures on rainy days.



We keep learning until dismissal.

Dismissal Changes

All changes for dismissal **MUST** be made before 2:30 p.m. This allows us to ensure the changes are communicated to the teachers. For the safety of your child we will not take transportation changes over the telephone. Please email to bbtransportation@newcaneyisd.org. It is a safety concern when transportation changes are made after 2:30 p.m. We ask you to please keep this in mind when making a change.

Early Pick-Up

Please avoid signing your child out early unless it is absolutely necessary. Instruction time is important and goes until the last minute of the day. If you must pick your child up early, it must be prior to 2:30 p.m. and please be prepared to show your I.D. Please see compulsory attendance law in district handbooks.



Please be on time, I'm sad when I'm the only student at school

Dismissal Time

We dismiss at 3:00 p.m. Please make arrangements to arrive no later than 3:15 p.m. Our students have long school days and they are tired and ready to go at the end of the day. There is no staff available to remain with a student after 3:30 p.m. Each time that a student has not been picked up after 3:30pm, that parent or guardian will be asked to sign a Late Pick Up Form. After three late pickups, the student will be sent home on their designated bus and will no longer be allowed to be a car rider.



Bens Branch Elementary -

Due to Covid 19 certain restrictions have been placed on our campus and the implementation of remote learning. Complete information regarding instruction and safety protocols can be found on the New Caney ISD website.

2020-2021 Homework Policy

At Bens Branch we want to make sure your students have the best educational experience possible both at school and at home. This year we will continue with a *NO HOMEWORK* policy for in- person instruction. A teacher can provide some material to work on at home if requested.

Why are we doing this?

Recent research has shown a very weak correlation between elementary students completing homework and increased academic achievement. We want to encourage family involvement and other activities that will support a positive educational experience.

What can I do with my child at home to help?

We encourage you to read, read, read with your child nightly. Whether you read orally to them or they read to you, this is proven to increase literacy development. Math facts can be practiced nightly as well. We also encourage our students to spend time playing outside and spend time with their family. Eating meals together or even playing games promotes communication and cooperation skills that are important to promoting success in school.

How will I know what my child is working on at school?

Teachers will share with parents an overview of topics/skills being covered at school through weekly folders and the teacher website page. Teachers will also provide information on how to get connected with Canvas so that you can monitor instruction that is being rolled out through that platform. Please feel free to contact the teacher at any time if you have questions about the academic content.

Canvas

Students in grades PK - 5 will be using Canvas Learning Management System. Students can access course materials, as well as educational apps and resources. Students in grades 3-5 will submit assignments, receive feedback, and collaborate with peers in Canvas. Parents can observe student progress in Canvas with a Parent Canvas account in a web-based browser or by downloading the Parent Canvas App. When your student is logged into Canvas, ask to view "Account" and click Settings. On the right side of the screen look for "Pair with Observer". Copy the six-digit alphanumeric pairing code to enter into your mobile device or web-based browser. Parents will receive notifications when assignments are completed and graded. Learn more about the Canvas Parent Features at this link: [Canvas Parent Mobile Features](#). Please note that Skyward is the grade book of record. It is highly recommended that parents monitor their child's grades using the Skyward App or website.



Lunch with Your Child

It is our goal to adhere to the Food and Nutrition Policies established by the Texas Department of Agriculture for the safety of all students within the school. The policy does not restrict what parents may provide for their own child's lunch or snacks. Parents may provide outside meals (McDonalds, Burger King, Sonic, etc.) and snacks for their own child's consumption, but may not provide items to other students.

Medication

Any medication to be administered at school to students must be delivered by the parent or guardian to the nurse. Medication may not be sent with students.

Safety

New Caney ISD is committed to safety on every campus, district facility and school bus. Safety is a top priority for New Caney ISD and we will do everything in our power to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

- Currently no visitors are allowed on campus.
- Currently no volunteers are allowed to volunteer in classrooms.
- All employees are required to wear NCISD photo identification badges.
- All exits/entrances are locked throughout the school day. If you notice a door unlocked that shouldn't be, please notify the front office.
- Secondary campuses have a police officer assigned to them from the District Police Department. Both high schools also have two safety officers who patrol the campus and parking lots.
- The district has a K-9 Police Officer who visits every campus throughout the school year searching for contraband.
- All campuses have video surveillance cameras on both the interior and exterior of the buildings.
- NCISD utilizes an emergency notification system to communicate with staff and parents through emails, phone calls, text messages and social media.
- NCISD schools have regular safety drills throughout the school year involving both students and staff. Campuses keep a log of all practice drills.

- The district has a Crisis Management Plan that is evaluated and updated regularly.
- NCISD consults regularly with local law enforcement and first responders about school safety.
- Every other year the district participates in a district-wide security audit.

New Caney ISD believes that students learn best when they are in a safe environment.

Teacher Certification

If you would like information regarding the certification of your child's teacher(s) please contact the front office.

Transportation Changes

For the safety of your child we will not take transportation changes over the telephone. Please email to bbetransportation@newcaneyisd.org. It is a safety concern when transportation changes are made after 2:30 p.m. We ask you to please keep this in mind when making a change.

If you are making a permanent address change, that can be done through an administrator, however these changes are only completed if there is a change in daycare, parent or guardian residence change and can not be temporary or reversed.