



**Point Isabel
ISD**



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Point Isabel ISD Update on Criminal Case Involving Former Substitute Teacher

February 23, 2026

Port Isabel, TX –February 23, 2026 - Point Isabel Independent School District is providing an important update regarding a serious criminal matter involving a former substitute teacher.

In September 2024, Leif Ericson Varnum was arrested on charges of indecency with a child and invasive video recording. Upon learning of the allegations and his arrest, the district immediately terminated his employment. He has not been employed by or affiliated with Point Isabel ISD since that time.

Since this matter first arose, the district has continued to review and strengthen its safety measures, including enhanced employee screening procedures, rigorous substitute onboarding protocols, ongoing staff training on mandated reporting responsibilities, and clearly defined reporting pathways for students and parents. We maintain comprehensive background check requirements and work in close coordination with law enforcement whenever concerns are brought forward.

As we have expressed and continue to express, the safety, dignity, and well-being of our students remain our highest priorities. We recognize that matters of this nature are deeply concerning to families and staff, and we do not take lightly the trust placed in us each day to provide a secure learning environment.

On February 23, 2026, we were advised that today, Varnum pled guilty to 21 felony counts related to child sexual abuse material and additional offenses. The additional offenses committed did not occur during his employment with Point Isabel ISD.

Point Isabel ISD extends sincere appreciation to the Cameron County District Attorney's Office, local law enforcement, and all investigative agencies for their diligence, professionalism, and steadfast commitment to protecting children and pursuing justice.

We remain committed to transparency, accountability, and maintaining schools where every student feels safe, supported, and protected.

For more information, please contact the Point Isabel ISD Communications Department:

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