



BUNBURY
PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Attendance

Information for Parents/Carers



Parents/carers play an important role in supporting and ensuring their child/ren attend school. To assist in answering parents questions about attendance, our School Attendance brochure is structured into frequently asked questions.

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Why are attendance and punctuality important?

- Students need to attend school regularly so they can take advantage of ALL the educational opportunities available. School enables children to build on their knowledge and skills each day, each week and each year. Every day matters.
- Consistently Poor school attendance and lateness to class can affect your child/ren's educational progress as they may fall behind in their learning.
- Patterns of punctuality and regular school attendance are developed at an early age. Good attitudes toward attendance that are well established will help prevent problems as students' progress into secondary schooling.
- School helps children build confidence in areas such as communication, teamwork, organisation and social skills. Children who frequently miss school will find it difficult to keep up friendships within the class.
- Going to school is a legal requirement.



What should I do if my child is absent?

Parents/Carers are asked to inform the school on the first day of any absence by giving a reason for the absence and a likely date of return. Please inform the school by one of the following options (only one of the options is required):



- Contacting the School via telephone: **9721 2660**
- Calling in at the school office
- Speaking with your child's teacher
- Sending a note to the teacher or the school office
- Via E-mail: Bunbury.PS@education.wa.edu.au
- Via the School App, available as a free download from Google Play and iTunes App Store, (search for Bunbury Primary School).
- If your child is unwell for a number of days a medical certificate or doctor's note should be provided



What is a Parent/Carer's Attendance Responsibilities?

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child:

- Attends school regularly
- Arrives at school on time each day
- Ensures their child is picked up from school on time or knows how they are getting home
- Is well rested and is in a fit state to learn
- Is only absent with reasonable cause and the school is informed on each occasion.



Bunbury Primary School takes school attendance and punctuality very seriously. Ensuring your child attends school regularly, punctually and is collected on time is an important part of our home/school partnership.

Attendance is recorded in half days. The school attendance register is marked at the beginning of each school day and in the afternoon. Reasons for absence are recorded. Unexplained absences are followed up with a letter to parents to find out the reason for the absence. Parents/carers are contacted if their child is frequently late.

What are 'Reasonable Causes' for Non-attendance?

Regular attendance at school is necessary to ensure success for your child. There will be times when it is advisable for your child not to attend school, however parents/carers are required to advise the school of the reasons behind non-attendance.

Absences can be authorised when your child:

- Has an infectious disease
- Is genuinely ill or injured
- Has a medical or dental appointment (many such appointments can be made outside of school hours or kept within a short period of withdrawal from school)
- Is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause or family circumstance, such as bereavement



Some knowledge of family circumstances helps us to better understand your child and any changes in their attendance or behaviour. This will enable us to support your child and their learning.

What about family holidays during the school term?

We discourage parents from taking children out of school during term time for family holidays. We appreciate advance notice and encourage a meeting with the Principal or Associate Principal prior to booking the family holiday.

Please remember that every day away from learning programs can impact on your child's achievement and progress.



Monitoring Attendance: *Arriving Late*



If children arrive late to class on a regular basis, it begins to affect their attitude to learning as well as their work. It disrupts the rest of the class and often upsets the child who has to join in after lessons have started. Students arriving late miss critical morning routines and learning activities.

School begins at 8.50am. Students who arrive after the bell are marked as arriving late. Students who arrive late are monitored by the school. Parents/carers are contacted if their child is regularly arriving late to school. This is to see if the school can work with the parent/carer to support them in improving the arrival time of their child at school.

At BPS students are required to check in at the front office if they arrive after the bell. Students will receive a pink **Late Card** which must be handed to the classroom teacher.

Monitoring of Attendance: *During the School Day*

Sometimes students need to arrive or leave during the school day. This may be for a medical or other appointment or if a child is taken ill during the day. Parent/carers are asked to inform the office if or when a student needs to leave the school. This is to ensure the safety and accountability of all students. It is recommended that wherever possible, parents schedule medical and dental appointments outside of school hours or towards the end of a school day.

At BPS parents/carers are required to personally sign out their child in the Student Sign in/Sign out Register, located in the front office. Once signed out a **Student Release Card** will then be given to the parent/carer to present to the teacher so the child can be released from their class. If the child is returning please sign them back in through the office as this informs the office of when they return to school.

How do Schools Monitor Attendance?

Teachers enter student attendance each day. If there are any unexplained absences a school letter is sent home to remind parents that they need to notify the school. Letters are also sent home during the school term to parents/carers of children who have frequent absences, regular lateness or when a child's attendance falls below Department of Education (DoE) expectations.



A statement of your child's attendance is recorded on your child's mid-year and end of year reports. Letters to parents are to raise awareness of a concern about attendance. It may be necessary to contact parents/carers to arrange to meet to discuss concerns. By working together parents and schools can avoid attendance problems developing and it impacting on your child's progress. Occasionally, students can become reluctant or fearful to come to school. Communication is the key to understanding and working on any problems should they develop.

What does Department of Education Consider to be Regular Attendance?

Department of Education considers regular attendance to be between 90-100%. Evidence indicates that missing more than 5 days in a term can affect learning outcomes for students.

Absences affect learning outcomes, whatever the reason. It is important for schools and families to work together when planning for improved attendance to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child. Regular school attendance is a legal requirement. Where there is a continuing attendance concern, the school may seek assistance from the School Attendance Officer, or offer an Attendance Panel, who will discuss with you your child's attendance concerns.

Please Note: Parents are required by the Department of Education's Student Attendance policy, to contact the school within 3 days of their child's absence.

Schools are required to follow up unsatisfactory attendance, as regular attendance is a key factor in students achieving sound academic and social progress at school. If your child attends school less than 90% of the time they are considered to be at educational risk.

If you require any further information about attendance or have difficulties getting your child to school, please talk to your class teacher or contact the school for further support.

The school appreciates your ongoing support and looks forward to working together with you.

Some Interesting Information About Attendance

To put a context around why good attendance is important for your child the following statistical data may assist. The table below illustrates how absences can translate over 7 years of schooling from PP to Year 6. There are, on average, 192 days of school each year:

Attendance		Absences			
Attendance Level	Attendance Rate	Days/Term	Days/Year	Over 7 Years of school	School Time missed
Regular: 90-100%	90%	5	20	140	72% of 1 school year
Risk Indicated: 80-89%	80%	10	40	280	1.5 years
Moderate Risk: 60-79%	70%	15	60	420	2.2 years
Severe Risk: 0-59%	60%	20	80	560	2.9 years

Another way to demonstrate this:

If a child misses:

- five days each term, they miss out on about three terms of school
- one day a week, they will miss 1½ years of school
- 1.5 days a week, they will miss just over 2 years of school
- three days a week, they will miss just over four years of school

This is just primary school – if the pattern continues in high school, and evidence suggests it will, you can almost double these figures

Remember:

- There is a direct relationship between attendance and achievement. Students who miss more than 20 days in a school year are likely to be at educational risk.
- Poor attendance makes it difficult for students to make and keep friends and form positive relationships with their peers.
- Patterns of attendance/absence are set up in the early years of schooling. Make sure your child's pattern of attendance is regular.

**Child Health Survey, 1993*





Children who attend the compulsory years of school from Pre Primary to Year 12, and miss one day of school per week will miss out on two and half years of school.

The School Education Act 1999 states that parents must send their child/ren to school unless:

- They are unwell
- They have an infectious disease
- The principal is provided with a genuine and acceptable reason.



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This Attendance Booklet was produced to support our school, teachers, parents and the community to improve student attendance.

**Franca Dillon (Associate Principal)
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