

ATTENDANCE Is Compulsory

Dear Parents and Caregivers

At St Benedict's Catholic Primary School (SBCPS), we seek to deliver a schooling experience that caters to the needs, abilities and interests of each student. Our staff work hard to ensure students receive a personalised, relevant and meaningful Catholic education.

There are many ways in which families can support their children to be prepared for learning at school. Making school attendance a high priority in your family would probably be the most important, but also by ensuring children get enough sleep, a good diet and regular exercise; by encouraging reading from an early age; by sharing the learning journey through an active involvement in our wonderful school, and in your child's hobbies and extra-curricular activities, and so on.

Of course, in order for students to learn at school, they need to show up. In fact, it is illegal for school-aged child not to attend school. Even more troubling though, is the learning a child will miss if they do not attend school. If a student misses as little as eight days each term, by the end of primary school they will have missed over a year of learning.

This brochure outlines the compulsory attendance guidelines from the Queensland Department of Education – guidelines that therefore apply to our school here at St Benedict's – and your responsibilities as a parent or carer.

Please take the time to read this important information and also to consider why schooling is compulsory... so your children can be active and successful learners now and in the future.

Patrick Davis
Principal
St Benedict's Catholic Primary School

ATTENDANCE Exceptions

Unexplained Absences

The *Department for Education* requires a reason for every student absence. In order for us to maintain accurate school attendance records we need to be notified by phone, Parent Portal, in person or by a signed note about your child's absence from school. The school will follow up unexplained absences in accordance with St Benedict's School Attendance Agreement Policy.

Late Arrivals/Early Pickups

If students arrive after 8.25am we ask the adult and student go directly to the school office to sign in via our online ALLE receipting procedures system. The student will receive a printed late slip to give to the class teacher. Legal Guardians of students from P-3 should accompany their child to where their class is at that time.

If a student needs to leave early the adult is asked to go to the school office prior to collection to sign the student out, via ALLE, and receive a slip to take to the class teacher when collecting the student. If another adult is collecting a student we ask for the school office to be contacted by the Legal Guardian prior to collection.

Illness/Medical Appointments

Wherever possible, dental and medical appointments should be made out of school hours. If your child is too sick to leave home, has an infectious disease or an injury preventing them from moving around school for 3 days or more then a doctor's certificate may be required.

Family Reasons

Sometimes there may be family reasons why a student is not able to attend school. However, an ongoing pattern of absences due to family reasons is concerning and may require a meeting being organised to discuss what supports can be put in place to minimise the student's time away from school.

Short Family Holidays During School Term

Parents should try to organise holidays within the school holiday period. Parents/caregivers must notify the school if an extended absence is likely and if the school needs to arrange work at home for the student.

You should know...

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

here @ SBCPS

**Compulsory School Attendance
Information for Families**



www.stbenedicts.qld.edu.au

pmangohill@bne.catholic.edu.au

3481 4600

Absentee 3481 4688



ATTENDANCE In Queensland

In Queensland, a child is considered to be of compulsory school age from 6 years and 6 months until they turn 16, or they complete Year 10 (whichever comes first). Parents of compulsory-school-aged children must: enroll them at a school and ensure they attend school on every school day, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

Acceptable Reasons

- Illness
- Essential appointment
- Injury
- Infectious disease
- Bereavement
- Principal approved absence

Unacceptable Reasons

- Birthdays
- Visiting relatives
- Outside school sports
- Helping parents at home
- Weather (i.e. too hot)
- Holidays (unless prior approval granted)

Regular attendance helps your child develop the skills needed to access the world of work and other opportunities, learn the importance of punctuality and routine and make and keep friendships.

What should you do if your child refuses to go to school?

You should immediately contact the school to seek assistance. Reluctance to attend school is sometimes an indication that a student is experiencing social or emotional problems.

Under the Education Act of Queensland, parents and/or caregivers are held responsible for the regular attendance of all children in their care. There are legal implications for those parents who are unable to demonstrate they are meeting this responsibility.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances the minimum acceptable attendance rate for the school year is 90%. If your child is, on average, missing more than 3 days per term they will not be meeting the expected minimum attendance requirements.

What if my child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance?

It is important to understand that the Qld Department of Education, on behalf of the State Minister for Education, may take further action in cases where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unacceptable absences from school.

The following actions may be taken in these cases:

- *Attendance Meetings.* Parents, and sometimes their child, can be asked to attend a meeting with school and Brisbane Catholic Education Office personnel. The aim of the meeting is to help identify strategies to support the child and family and remove barriers to non-attendance. Other agencies may also be invited, if parents agree.
- *Compulsory Attendance Conferences.* If school attendance does not improve, parents and sometimes their child, can be asked to attend a Compulsory Attendance Conference. The outcome of a Compulsory Attendance Conference is for the parties to agree to undertake certain actions to improve the child's attendance. These actions are agreed in writing in the form of an Attendance Improvement Plan.
- *Compulsory Schooling Order.* If previous attempts to resolve the issue of a child's attendance are not successful, legal compliance can be sought through an application to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order. The aim is to assist a family and/or child to address the issues preventing satisfactory school attendance.

ATTENDANCE Facts

- Missing one day a week of school from Prep to Year 10 means missing two years and one term of schooling.



- Being half an hour late to school each day from Prep to Year 10 equals missing one year and one-and-a-half terms of schooling.



- Being absent five days a term from Prep to Year 10 adds up to more than one year of missed schooling.
- There is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement.
- Frequent absences make it difficult for teachers who have to continually re-teach information and skills.
- Patterns of attendance/absence are set up in the early years of schooling.
- Poor attendance makes it difficult for students to form positive relationship with their peers.
- Research shows that students who are often absent from school are more likely to end up homeless, are over represented in the Juvenile Justice System and likely to earn less than their peers as adults.

Is regular attendance important? Yes, from the first day! If students miss the basic skills in the early years of school, they often experience difficulties later on. It has been shown that irregular attendance in the junior primary and primary years often leads to the development of poor attendance at secondary school.

We walk in God's ways where together we live, love, learn and celebrate.

