Berri Primary School

Last updated: Tue, 5 Nov 2024

Berri Primary School - Attendance Policy - 2025

Research shows that attendance at school all day and every day positively affects learning, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes for children and young people. Learning is cumulative and it is disrupted if students often miss school.

School attendance and the law

Attendance at school is compulsory. The Education and Children's Services Act 2019 states that all children must attend school from 6 until they turn 17. This could be in a school or an approved learning program.

Parents or legal guardians (carers) can be prosecuted if they do not make sure their child goes to school. This can mean being fined or getting a criminal conviction.

The department's attendance policy

The South Australian Department for Education's Attendance Policy guides the responsibilities of the whole school community to make sure that children and young people attend school. This includes school staff, parents, carers, and students.

Schools work with their community to develop positive attendance habits. This starts from the earliest years. They do this when they provide a safe, inclusive, and culturally respectful environment. They use effective and consistent local practices to monitor and manage absences.

Students at risk from missing school

Students can be away from school for many reasons. Schools use categories to identify children and young people at risk. We make sure that appropriate follow up and support is provided.

- **Habitual non-attendance:** a student has 5 to 9 days absent in a term for any reason.
- **Chronic non-attendance:** a student has 10 or more days absent in a term for any reason.

How we implement the department's attendance policy

At Berri Primary School our attendance practices align with the department's attendance policy.
We support student attendance when we:

- promote the importance of education from the earliest years of life and throughout school
- assess patterns of non-attendance and develop ways to address this
- actively engage and include all children, young people, and their families
- provide support to address the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing
- monitor attendance to make sure progress is documented and supports are in place
- evaluate the need for further or ongoing support and referral for additional support.

We use data to create our attendance improvement plans. This is in partnership with our community. Our plan includes the actions we will take to make sure all students can attend school.

Berri Primary School's attendance expectations

School starts at 8.45 am each day and finishes at 3.15 pm.
Sometimes it's different:

- Thursday finish time is 2.30pm

Parents/carers must provide an explanation if their child is late or has to leave early - either in-person, phone call, or Seesaw. Parents/carers must collect their child/ren from the front office for appointments & early departures.

Attendance responsibilities

Everyone has a role to make sure students attend school all day, every day.

Students

- Attend school every day the school is open unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Arrive at school and to all lessons and activities on time.
- Participate positively in all learning activities.
- Report to the front office for late arrivals/early departures.

Note: a student's age and circumstances affect the level of responsibility.

Parents and carers

- Make sure their child attends school every day the school is open unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Be responsible for their child's travel to and from school.
- Make sure their child arrives at school on time, between 8.25 am and 8.45 am.
- Provide their child's school with up-to-date contact details.
- Provide a reason to the school if their child is absent, late, or leaving early. The same day if possible.
- Provide a medical certificate or written explanation if their child is ill for 3 or more days in a row.
- Make appointments outside of school hours if possible. For example, dentists or National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers.
- Make appointments with NDIS providers outside of school hours.
- Monitor their child’s attendance and classwork. Help their child to meet deadlines and catch up if needed.

Teachers and leadership team

- Make sure all parents and carers are aware of attendance expectations, policies, and procedures.
- Accurately record each absence, late arrival, or early departure with the appropriate code.
- Contact parents or carers if there is no explanation for an absence, or a pattern of absences.
- Document contact with parents and carers about absences, including attempts to contact.
- Request a medical certificate from parents or carers if needed.
- Consult with the local Student Support Services if needed. For example, Social Work, Truancy.
- Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – CARL) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RAN) training and the Mandatory Reporting Guide.
- Make sure the list of absences and late arrivals are given to student services / front office each day as early as possible.
- Contact the parent or carer on the day their child is absent, for example by text message.

Authorisation of exemptions

In some circumstances, the principal has authority to approve an exemption from school. This can be for up to 1 month. It can also be for up to 12 months for a family holiday.

Before asking for an exemption, families should talk to a site leader. Students must attend school until an exemption is approved.

Our school requires an exemption for absences of more than 5 school days in a row. This does not include illness.

Parents or carers must apply in writing. The principal will advise them in writing of their decision. A copy is kept in the student record folder. Forms are available from the front office.

Exemptions of more than 1 month (excluding holidays) must be approved by the department's central office.

Note: Exemptions are counted as student absences from school.

Approved by Berri Primary School Governing Council, February 2025.

Acting Chairperson	Mrs Amanda Hill
Principal	Mrs Brenda Pfitzner