



# **BEN VENUE PUBLIC SCHOOL**



**Information Booklet**

**2023**

## Directory

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Principal: Cam Pryce

Deputy Principal: Lana Howlett

Assistant Principals: Early Stage 1 - Sonya Rogers  
Stage 1 - Nicole Frost (Acting)  
Stage 2 - Amanda Swain (Acting)  
Stage 3 - Fiona Clayton (Acting) & Kellie Divall (Acting)  
Curriculum & Instruction - Elizabeth Wassman

School Administrative Staff: Amy Robinson  
Annie Waters  
Melissa Walsh  
Stephanie Murdock

# Ben Venue Public School



**Cam Pryce**  
Principal



**Lana Howlett**  
Deputy Principal

*Welcome to Ben Venue Public School.*

*We feel privileged to play such an important role in the growth and development of your child over the course of their primary schooling. Please take the time to read through the information in this booklet. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel welcome to make a time via the school office to speak with your child's class teacher.*

*We look forward to sharing in the journey of your child's primary education.*

## Communication

Our primary methods of communication with our school community are via the school newsletter, the 'BenVenews' and through School Stream. Our fortnightly newsletter is available on our school website and via School Stream. Download the School Stream app from your app store and select Ben Venue PS in order to stay up-to-date.

Paper notes are also sent home to convey information and in order to arrange permission for excursions and other activities that may incur a cost. Please ensure your child checks their bag for notes each day.

At Ben Venue Public School we value open communication and partnerships between teachers and parents or carers. Your first point of contact for matters concerning your child should be the class teacher. If you would like to speak with your child's teacher, please contact the office to make an appointment. This way, we can ensure that we can give you the time you deserve.

At times, complex issues may require our Assistant Principals, Deputy Principal or Principal to contact you. Conversely, you may wish to speak to a member of our executive team about complex or sensitive issues. In this case your inquiry will be directed to the person best placed to discuss the matter.



## School Attendance

Government legislation requires students between the ages of six and seventeen to be enrolled in a registered school and to attend school each day unless legally excused. It is the duty of the parent or carer to ensure that these obligations are fulfilled.

When students are absent from school, a note explaining the absence is required. In the case of unforeseen absences, the note is usually sent to school when the child returns. If the absence is for a period of more than two days, we ask that families phone the office to explain the absence. While exemptions may be applied for in certain circumstances, we do not encourage family holidays during the school term.

# Days missed = years lost

A day here and there doesn't seem like much, but...





## Bell Times

Our playground is supervised from 8:40am.

9:10am	-	11:10am	Lessons
11:10am	-	11:40am	Recess
11:40am	-	1:00pm	Lessons
1:00pm	-	1:40pm	Lunch play
1:40pm	-	1:50pm	Supervised eating time
1:50pm	-	3:10pm	Lessons



Big Childcare operates a before and after school care service on site. We strongly recommend that families utilise this service if students need to be dropped to school before 8:40am or collected after 3:30pm. School-based supervision is not provided outside these times.

## Visiting school

During school hours, all visitors must report to the school office in order to sign-in. This is for the safety of our students and that of visitors in the event of evacuation or other emergency drill. When collecting your child during school hours, parents/carers are asked to wait at the office for their child to meet them. This both avoids confusion when students are not in their regular classroom and supports the safety of our students and visitors.

## Food

Each day at around 9:15am students pause to eat some crunchy fruit and/or vegetables and sip on their water bottle. All students are encouraged to bring a small amount of cut fruit or vegetable. This should be packed in a separate container without cling wrap if possible.

At Ben Venue Public School we encourage healthy food options to help support your child to have the energy and concentration required for a busy school day. We ask that students bring;

- A healthy lunch with few (or no) treats such as chocolate, chips and other such packaged items,
- a separate morning tea, lunch and Crunch&Sip,
- at least one water bottle,
- reusable containers to reduce waste,
- no glassware or ring-pull tins,
- containers or packages that can be opened by your child, and
- containers that are clearly marked with your child's name.

*At Ben Venue we encourage eating 'fresh food first'. Additionally, we encourage whole foods over packaged/processed items, as the link between healthy food and positive behaviour and learning is highly evident. Young minds do not function well on junk food.*

Students are asked not to share their food as many students have allergies and food intolerances. If birthday cakes are brought in, please let the teacher know in advance and a suitable time will be negotiated. We make every attempt to cater for these occasions but we need to be mindful of individual students and his/her health and safety needs as well as minimising the disruption to learning by organising around recess or lunch breaks. Party cupcakes are a great idea. No candles please.

Currently, the Pearl Perch takeaway shop runs a Friday lunch order each week. Please see the school newsletter for further detail.

## **Paying for excursions or activities at school**

Students at Ben Venue participate in a variety of excursions and sporting activities. Parents/carers have a number of options when paying for these activities. Cash payments go to the classroom teacher, eftpos payments can be made at the office. We also have an online payment system which can be accessed through the Ben Venue website using the 'Make a payment' tab. Parents/carers are encouraged to deposit money into 'Fees in Advance' which can be utilised for any of their children at Ben Venue.

## **Library**

At Ben Venue, we have a well-resourced library for the use of all students. Children are encouraged to borrow books during their library lessons or during lunchtimes. Students are required to have a library bag and these can be purchased at the school office. A similar protective bag is acceptable should students not have a Ben Venue library bag.

## **Toys, electronics, clothing and other property**

Removable clothing must have your child's name clearly marked on it as this facilitates the return of any misplaced items. Please also clearly label your child's school bag with their name. Lost property is temporarily placed on shelving outside the library, before being checked for a name and returned to the child's class. Lost property without a name on it becomes part of our clothing pool or is disposed of appropriately. Parents are encouraged to check regularly if items are missing.

If the school gives your child replacement clothing, please return all items to school washed.

We do not encourage students to bring special items to school as sometimes toys can be broken or misplaced. Students bringing special items to school do so at their own risk. No toy weapons or electronic devices (excepting watches) are permitted. If students bring phones or any other device capable of online or mobile communication to school, they must be immediately handed to the office staff upon arrival on site, where the item will be securely stored for collection by students at the end of the day. This includes smart watches capable of sending or receiving communications.

## **Mobile phones and other communication devices**

We understand that many parents/carers support and encourage their children to carry a mobile device. Mobile devices may be of some use as a protection from danger on the way to and from school or when normal travel arrangements break down. They may also be useful when after school activities are cancelled or changed. Mobile devices, however, can easily be improperly used, lost or damaged and therefore guidelines for their use in schools must be clear.

- Students are able to bring personal mobile devices to school for health, safety or personal reasons that justify students being in possession of a mobile device.
- In the instance of a student requiring a mobile device for personal health reasons the use of the mobile device must be included in the student's individual health care and management plan.
- The school does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged student mobile devices.
- It is a parents/ carers choice to send a student to school with a mobile device therefore they take responsibility for loss or damage to the device.
- Students must sign in their mobile device at the office each morning and sign it out at the end of each day. Students are not permitted to use their device (this includes, SMS, recording audio, photographs, music and games) during the course of the school day. This includes recess and lunch breaks.

- At the end of the day, after the device has been collected from the school office students are able to check their messages or contact parents whilst on school grounds. They are not able to use their device for videos, photographs, recording, music and games.
- If a student uses a mobile device contrary to this policy the device will be confiscated and held at the school until a parent/ carer is able to collect the device.
- No mobile devices are to be taken on school camps/ excursions. If a student wishes to use a mobile device as a camera the SIM card must be removed.

## **Uniform**

Ben Venue PS has a long and proud tradition of exceptional presentation. Our uniform policy is inclusive and incorporates a range of acceptable clothing items that meet the comfort and identity needs of all students. Students are expected to attend in school uniform each day. The use of a school uniform eliminates many equity issues relating to the wearing of branded clothing and supports the development of a sense of belonging among our students.

## **School activities and functions**

Families are often invited to attend events, including but not limited to, 100 days of Kindergarten celebration, Easter activities, Book Week, NAIDOC Week, school sports, Education Week, concerts and Learning Showcases.

## **How can I participate at Ben Venue Public School?**

- Attend P&C meetings and be involved in P&C organised activities.
- Attend 'meet the teacher' evenings, or parent-teacher interviews in Term 1.
- Read the school newsletter for information about ways to become involved.

## **Immunisation**

When enrolling a student, parents or carers are required to provide an Immunisation History Statement or the NSW Health Immunisation Certificate. The Immunisation History Statement can be obtained by contacting the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809 and the NSW Health Immunisation Certificate can be sought from Medicare.

A child without either an Immunisation History Statement or the NSW Health Immunisation Certificate will not be prevented from enrolling. Under the NSW Public Health Act 1991 however, children without proof of immunisation may be asked to stay at home during an outbreak of vaccine preventable disease.

## **Illness and injury**

When students appear unwell at school either in the playground or classroom, they are directed to the front office by the classroom teacher or a teacher on playground duty. The First Aid Officer will assess the student's condition and administer first aid if required. If considered necessary, the student will be monitored in sick bay. Parents/carers will be called if required. In the case of serious injury or illness an ambulance may be called prior to contacting the child's family. There is no cost to families if the school calls an ambulance.

If your child is unwell, a note to the classroom teacher on the day of the students return to school or phone call to the school office explaining the absence is required. Absences longer than three days will require a doctor's certificate in order to be accepted as sick leave.

If your child is sick at school it is imperative that the office has your most recent contact details. Please advise the office if you change address, phone number or you wish to change your emergency contacts. If we are unable to contact parents, and your child needs to go home, we will be obliged to contact your emergency contacts.

For the comfort and health of other students and staff, families are asked to keep students home if they are unwell. Please check the latest COVID-19 guidelines and requirements with regards to student illness and any requirement for evidence of COVID testing.

If your child has gastroenteritis or vomits, we advise you to keep them home for a period of 48 hours from the last time the child had symptoms. This timeline helps to reduce the spread of gastro through the school community.

## **Stage-based learning**

The NSW syllabus is organised into stages of learning. In primary school, these are;

Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten)

Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)

Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4)

Stage 3 (Years 5 & 6)

At Ben Venue PS, our classes are organised by stages, rather than by year levels. While maintaining the integrity of the syllabus, this enables the creation of large stage-based teaching teams, facilitating a higher levels of collaboration and more effective differentiation of learning for our students.

The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are;

- English,
- Mathematics,
- Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE) [History/Geography],
- Science and Technology,
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, and
- Creative Arts

Syllabus documents can be accessed online at

## **Assessment and reporting**

A range of assessment strategies and tools are utilised throughout your child's schooling. These help teachers both to better understand the learning needs of each child, and measure the impact of learning sequences and programs. In addition to these school-based assessments, the NAPLAN tests administered in Years 3 and 5 provide an additional 'point-in-time' snapshot of student learning. Check-in assessments in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 also provide an additional source of information to guide teaching and learning programs.

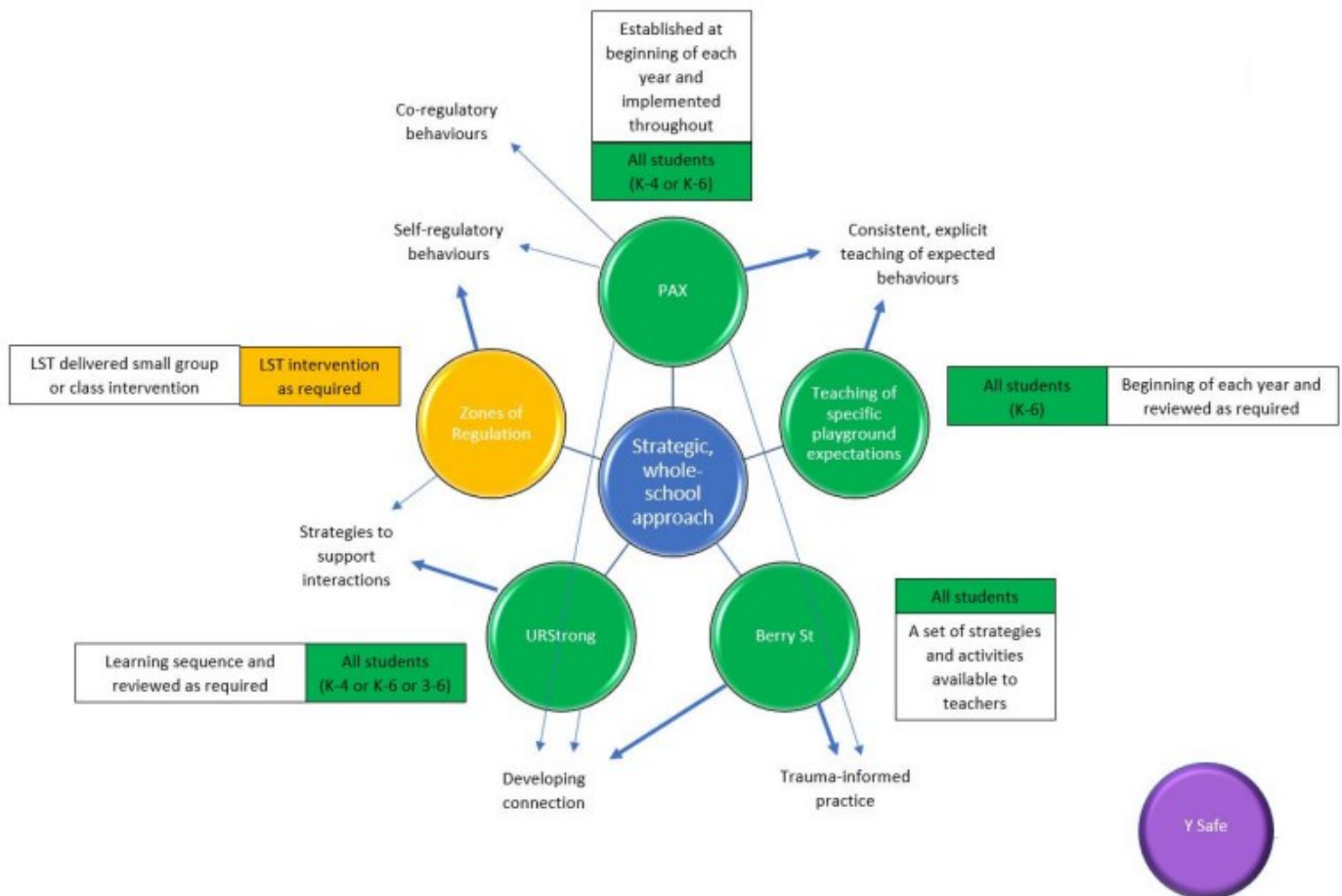
Our school reports on your child's progress with written reports twice a year. Interviews are conducted with all families in Term 1 and can also be arranged by request at any time throughout the year if you wish to discuss your child's progress.



## Supporting student wellbeing

At Ben Venue PS, we have in place a well-considered and wholistic system to support student wellbeing and positive behaviour. We are currently reviewing our practices and programs in line with the Inclusive, Engaging, Respectful Schools reform.

The diagram below represents a working draft of our updated wellbeing support system, that will work in conjunction with systems for responding to inappropriate and problematic behaviours.



## Recognising student effort and achievement

Ben Venue PS believes in applying evidence-based practice in all areas of student learning and wellbeing. This includes our approach to supporting every student to achieve, through recognition of their effort and development.

Research, our observations and feedback from our students have led us to the conclusion that while a small number of children require regular and predictable positive reinforcement in the form of extrinsic awards (e.g., stickers and merit certificates) to support positive behaviours, most students are actually disadvantaged in the long run by this approach. Research demonstrates that rewards, such as Class Awards, Year Awards, Principal's Awards and end-of-year awards bring with them a number of negative impacts to student wellbeing and motivation. These include;

- a focus on achievement of rewards, rather than on personal improvement,
- developing reliance on external motivators, rather than valuing learning and improvement as goals in themselves,
- developing a reliance on the approval of others, rather than self-confidence,

- teaching children that success is a judgement made by others, rather than supporting them to define and achieve success meaningful to themselves,
- a focus on competition, rather than collaboration, and
- recognition of few, resulting in the disappointment and demotivation of many.

At Ben Venue PS, student effort and achievement is recognised in a different way. We have individual conversations with our students, identifying the positive behaviour and the resulting benefits. We provide recognition to the student in the first person and then communication this to the child's family. Teachers may call or email parents/carers, providing the opportunity for the family discuss their child's achievement and to share in celebrating their success. This approach maintains the important process of recognising student effort, citizenship and achievement, whilst avoiding the negative long-term impacts of reliance on extrinsic reward, and the pitfalls of awards systems that place a quota on the number of students to be recognised.

### **Student leadership**

Student leadership is an important element of student wellbeing and voice at Ben Venue PS. Our Student Representative Council consists of one elected representative from each of the 18 Stage 1, 2 and 3 classes. A new council is elected every six months, providing opportunities for a large number of students to be involved either as a class representative, or through raising issues and ideas at meetings through their class representative.

Students in Year 6 have the capacity to be influential leaders in our school. Every Year 6 student who demonstrates an interest in contributing to the fabric of our school in a leadership capacity, and demonstrates prosocial and positive learning behaviours, is able to join the Leadership Team.

### **Homework**

We recognise that research evidence does not support homework as an effective strategy for raising achievement levels in primary students. We believe that the time students have outside of school hours should be spent on pursuits that enrich the lives of our young people, including play, sport, engaging with nature, socialising with friends and connecting with family. We do also recognise the value of reading outside of class time, both for skill development and enjoyment.

Teachers at Ben Venue PS do not assign homework, nor is homework provided in response to parent requests (excepting certain circumstances preventing attendance at school). Teachers may choose to assign periodic projects to enrich the learning program; however, this is infrequent. Home reading forms part of the Ben Venue PS learning program, particularly in the younger years. All students are encouraged to read broadly and regularly; however, no punitive measures are taken against students who do not engage in home reading.

