



Every day counts

Step 1: Develop a positive school culture

The information below expands on advice to improve student attendance provided in [A model for making every day count](#).

Students are more likely to attend and achieve at school if they feel accepted, valued, respected and included.

Research suggests that staff morale also has a significant impact on student attendance.

Schools should promote positive relationships between and amongst students, staff, and parents. Anti-bullying strategies and programs that develop social and emotional skills can help nurture a safe, caring and connected school environment.

Positive relationships with parents can also assist in supporting their children's attendance at school.

Ideas¹

- Ensure the school has established appropriate policies that support a safe and welcoming environment e.g. learning and wellbeing strategies, anti-bullying policies, behaviour programs.
- Promote, encourage and support positive and respectful relationships between staff and students. Talk with students. Ensure students know that staff at the school care about them.
- Implement strategies to address issues such as learning difficulties.
- Encourage students to look after each other. Establish peer tutoring or mentoring programs.
- Let students know that you want them to come to school. Greet students by name as they arrive at school.
- Plan activities that students look forward to participating in.
- Structure opportunities for all students to be successful and to be celebrated.
- Schedule surprise special events on days with high absences (usually Fridays and the last day of term).
- Establish relationships with feeder schools so that students and parents feel part of the school community before enrolling. Encourage parents to bring younger siblings along to school events.
- Set and communicate high expectations of all students.
- Provide a wide range of learning experiences and variety in the curriculum e.g. access to vocational education and training options, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, work experience, guest speakers, excursions, incursions.

¹ These ideas have been collected from Queensland schools, as well as other national and international schools. Schools will need to consider local circumstances, priorities, age of students etc in determining which (if any) of these ideas might be useful in the local context.

Ideas (continued)

- Establish partnerships with universities and industries to help students develop long-term aspirational career goals.
- Allow students to influence what is taught or how it is taught. Consider the learning styles and needs of all students when planning lessons.
- Promote activities that give students additional motivation to attend (e.g. science week, book week).
- Encourage parents to be involved in the school through the P&C, as tuckshop volunteers, mentoring children with homework, assisting in the classroom.
- Involve parents appropriately in school decision-making.
- Hold events such as 'meet the parents' evenings, parent orientation, coffee mornings, open afternoons, new family inductions, new family BBQs, P&C picnics, grandparents' day, parent and teacher interviews, or parent and community forums.
- Encourage parents to be positive about attending school and to establish routines that help students get to school on time.
- Respect and celebrate the cultural diversity represented at the school through special events such as Harmony Day, NAIDOC week, welcoming ceremonies, greetings in various languages at the school entry, in classrooms and on parade.
- Welcome parents and cultural organisations to work with students on relevant curriculum activities (e.g. language, science, indigenous perspectives, cooking) to build bridges amongst home, school and the community.
- Consider establishing programs that may encourage students to attend school (e.g. breakfast program, coding club, kitchen garden, support animals).

