

Making every day count

Case study five

5

North Coast secondary school

- 750 students
- 7% Indigenous students
- 10% English as an additional language or dialect
- Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value – approximately 1000 with 72% of students in bottom and bottom middle quartiles

1. Develop a positive school culture

Schedule special events to incentivise attendance

Hold surprise events on days with high absences (usually Fridays and the last day of term) e.g. dance crews or BMX stunt people, with the intention that students will have a 'fear of missing out' if they are absent.

Promote student leadership

Arrange for the Year 11 prefects to meet with the Year 11 coordinator weekly. Their role includes support through a peer mentoring program



"We have Chat and Chew at our school where every teacher goes out with their lunch and just sits down next to a group of student or talks to students. We try to engage with kids, and we try to have the positives as a focus."
(Deputy Principal)

2. Communicate high expectations of attendance

Use consistent messaging

Promote the importance of attending to students, parents, staff and other members of the school community at every opportunity.



"Sometimes people focus so much on attendance, they forget that it's got to go beyond attendance; just having kids turning up in body to school. We have got to get them engaged while they are there." (Deputy Principal)

3. Record and follow-up student absences



"We don't give up on kids. Sometimes the restorative process isn't just one meeting; it is more interventions, and kids have to communicate if there's still problems."
(Administrative Officer)

4. Monitor student non-attendance

Discuss attendance data to identify trends and at-risk students

Target interventions by student attendance category – red zone students are those with attendance below 80% and yellow 80-85%. Have year level coordinators meet fortnightly with deputy principals to highlight students who may be of concern.

5. Provide intervention and support

Identify students who need extra assistance or encouragement

Identify issues, possible responses, and determine which staff have the best relationship with particular students through the student support team.



"The school student support officer is the one who got me work experience. He helps me out with my resume and post-school options. Whenever I am having a bad time or anything, he always helps me out, he's always been there for me."
(Student)



"We work with different groups that might support students at risk, like our employment services, employment agencies, apprenticeship/traineeship providers and local businesses who might be suitable for work experience." (Principal)

