

Making every day count

1. Develop a positive school culture

Develop a whole-school community approach

Run positive events that encourage school attendance and participation by students and the school community such as 'Ride to school day' (on a bicycle).

Reward good attendance

Include attendance in a wider school rewards program (such as VivoClass), where students can earn points for attendance, then 'spend' their accumulated points on items from a customised catalogue.

Encourage community engagement

Have a close relationship with local Aboriginal-owned companies and youth workers from organisations working with Aboriginal students through a homework club and weekly leadership and cultural mentoring program for students.

Run meal programs with assistance from volunteers from the wider community, with breakfast club for students, sandwiches in the fridge for lunches, and meals in the freezer for families in need.

Work with the local museum to embed traditional language into the school curriculum.



"[VivoClass] has allowed us to progress from waffly talk to actually tangible awards through our point system which the children then translate into currency to spend online." (Deputy Principal)

Case study four

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South East Queensland rural primary school

- 680 students
- 17% Indigenous students
- 3% English as an additional language or dialect
- Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value – approximately 940 with 79% of students in bottom and bottom middle quartiles

2. Communicate high expectations of attendance



Promote high expectations

Take a positive, not punitive, approach to address student absenteeism.

Encourage positive, respectful relationships

"Take time to check in with students at the end of the day – 'How is it today? What didn't you like today?' or, 'How did you go in the playground, who did you play with?' and 'Am I going to see you tomorrow?' – and having those conversations with them so they know that I am on their side; like I do care about it." (Teacher)

"The shift in attitude has been brought about by raising awareness with staff, with students and, through the school newsletter, with parents. We have also had a push on our school assembly." (Deputy Principal)

3. Record and follow-up student absences

Be consistent and persistent

Develop and emphasise a whole-of-staff commitment to a thorough attendance recording procedure i.e. completing roll marking on time, parent notification, including SMS messages.

Promptly follow up absences to make it harder for students to miss school without being detected and enable parents who may not be aware that their children are absent to take action.



"So now it's conversations; we are ringing parents. The teachers are taking the lead first with the conversations." (Deputy Principal)

4. Monitor student non-attendance

Send weekly attendance data to teachers to support early identification of students with poor attendance.

5. Provide intervention and support

Case manage

Establish a case management committee (Head of Special Education Services, Behaviour teacher, Deputy Principals, Chaplain, Guidance Officer and Early Intervention teacher) that meets weekly to discuss actions for individual students.

Address student learning needs to ensure success.



"As teachers, we have to look at the curriculum and know how our students learn. So we have to make sure all their learning needs are met, so they engage and address why some students might not want to be at school. Children need to come to school feeling they can accomplish something in their day. If your curriculum and planning isn't on track, you are letting them down; you are not setting them up to succeed". (Teacher)

