

Making every day count

Case study six

6

Metropolitan secondary state school

- 1100 students
- 5% Indigenous students
- 23% English as an additional language or dialect
- Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value – approximately 960 with 81% of students in bottom and bottom middle quartiles

1. Develop a positive school culture



Recognise diversity of cultures

Highlight and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and experience at every opportunity e.g. NAIDOC week, Queensland Health's '[Deadly Choices](#)' program.

School-based Indigenous liaison officers can build relationships with Elders and families.

Create a culture of acceptance, value, respect and inclusion

Communicate with students to let them know that their presence at school is recognised and valued.

"I spoke to a child, who is now in Year 11. They said to me, 'Oh, I went to another school for 18 months and I couldn't wait to come back here because I know this is good; and everybody wants to see me every day at school.'" (Deputy Principal)

2. Communicate high expectations of attendance



Explain the correlation between attendance and achievement

Reward students with a high attendance percentage with access to 'special privileges' – extra-curricular sporting and social activities.

"Every kid in this school knows the school target is 95%, they know their own individual current percentage of attendance and they know what the actions for attending and non-attending are." (Principal)

3. Record and follow-up student absences



Use contact with parents as an opportunity to identify barriers to attendance.

"Conversations could include: 'Are you aware that your child has been arriving at school late every day this week?', 'Is there something going on at home that's preventing them from getting here?' Parents are aware that we are actually monitoring attendance, and that we are not just thinking their child is just a number, they stand out to us and that we are concerned (or we care)." (Year Coordinator)

4. Monitor student non-attendance



Regularly provide staff with attendance data

Send weekly updates to staff showing daily attendance and weekly trends. Follow up with an extended report every four weeks to identify patterns and students of concern.

"There is a concerted effort in the first 4 weeks of each year to communicate to students the impacts of absences in terms they can easily understand. Four or five days' absence might not seem a lot but all of a sudden they are down to 75%." (Principal)

5. Provide intervention and support

Consider linking attendance with specific extra-curricular events

Allow students to attend the end-of-year school carnival held on the last day of school only if they have a certain attendance rate.

