



Robina SHS

Attendance spotlight

Increasing attendance targets

Disappointed at missing out on hitting attendance targets by 1% in 2014, the Robina State High School administration team committed to hitting the headline indicator of 90% in 2015.

Combining this determination with their 2015 priorities, the team communicated the message to the school community that to meet the priorities it was imperative that every child was at school every day, learning.

Strategies for Junior Secondary

In 2014, the Junior Secondary department implemented a concept of attendance traffic lights to be displayed to all staff and students and clearly showed each child what their attendance at school looked like. The attendance traffic lights were formed using ID Attend as the collection source.



Two sets of traffic lights were formed for each year level. One set showed their actual present percentage data (PPD) and the other set their present and explained percentage data (PEPD). From here the PPD was sorted from smallest to largest and the PEPD was sorted from largest to smallest. Both sets of data were colour coded into three categories.

RED – 0 – 84.9%

YELLOW – 85% - 89.9%

GREEN – 90% - 100%

Every week the Junior School Deputy Principal and Head of Department for Junior Secondary would produce the traffic lights. Students in the 'red' zones of both PPD and PEPD would be monitored by the Deputy Principal. A discussion would occur with the student, with a phone call home to request an explanation of absences and contact encouraged with the school.

Students in the yellow zone were monitored by the Head of Department and Year Leader: Discussion occurred with the student and a print out of absences was given to the student to take home. Students were required to return an explanation for their absence to the school.

Every three weeks the PEPD traffic lights were produced for each of the student cohorts. Traffic lights were discussed on parade and displayed in year level areas, home rooms, Head of Department Junior School office window and Junior School Deputy Principal School office, for students to check.

Students became very aware of the process and were keen to explain their absences. This process helped to significantly raise Junior Secondary attendance in 2014 and started building the Every Day Counts culture.

Whole school approach

In 2015 the other areas of the school embarked on the same explicit journey, developing a whole school approach to attendance improvement with students, teachers and parents working together to achieve the same goal: 95% attendance.

Communicating expectations

The school has embedded the Every Day Counts mantra at every given opportunity. Clear communication of the school's high expectations towards attendance has been given priority and expressed in a variety of ways.

Firstly, it was imperative that the entire school community was on board with this drive. The process of the traffic light system was articulated to staff to encourage all teachers to be involved with discussions around attendance with all students.



Secondly, Year level leadership teams were organised in three groups, led by a Deputy Principal, Head of School, two Year Leaders and the twenty Pastoral Care teachers. Everybody in the school knew their role.

Communicating the attendance expectation to the community was a very deliberate and constant act. Expectations were discussed at year level parades and before any whole school events such as a swimming carnival, sports carnival or when the local primary schools had festival days. Students and parents are communicated with via text message, email, newsletter, and phone call to promote the expectations and the support that can be provided for students.

Social media supports the drive by the posting of term dates and clear messages of attendance during term time. Communication and accountability has really been the key to success at Robina SHS.

The colouring of the traffic lights has really made the expectation visible for everyone and highlighted to students not in the green where they need to be in relation to attendance.

Rewards and celebrations

Robina SHS celebrates attendance with students on a daily basis. This has been vital in their success. All students know that the school knows about their attendance. By challenging students to be at school and not pretending that it wasn't the school's problem, students and parents have been engaged and understand that every day at school really does count.

No student wants to be in the yellow or red. Every student strives to be in the green. The traffic lights have given everyone an effective tool to encourage good levels of attendance. This is celebrated by awarding students with a \$20 voucher for 100% attendance. Celebrations occur with a year group, staff and parents when everyone is in the green zone.

Robina SHS's push for improved attendance was a push across the whole school. All areas of the school community needed to be on the same page, sending the same message and celebrating the same success. Success has been a collaborative approach of hard work and dedication from all involved, and a process of clear communication of expectations and quality accountability.

To learn from their actions, Robina SHS reviewed their attendance strategies and these are summarised below.

Attendance strategy review

Actions

- Initiated daily partial attendance monitoring.
- Initiated Present and Explained Absence system: Green = 90% - 100%, Yellow = 90% - 85%, Red = below 85%.
- Delivered the traffic light processes to school community.
- Non-attenders identified, contact made, plans put in place.
- Deputy Principal to follow up on red area.
- Created whole school plan.

Outcomes

- Every teacher addressing attendance.
- Every student has a clear understanding of attendance expectations.
- Every student across the school can identify their attendance percentage at any given time.
- Partial truants quickly identified.
- Attendance issues quickly identified and process put in place.
- Students and parents guided to appropriate pathway and alternate programs to ensure success.

Learnings

- Difficult for the year leaders to sustain the monitoring of daily partial truants.
- Home room teachers to be more involved and take more responsibility for encouraging explanation of absences.
- Year leaders and home room teachers to follow up on yellow area.

If you would like further information on any of the strategies discussed in this spotlight, please contact the school directly.

