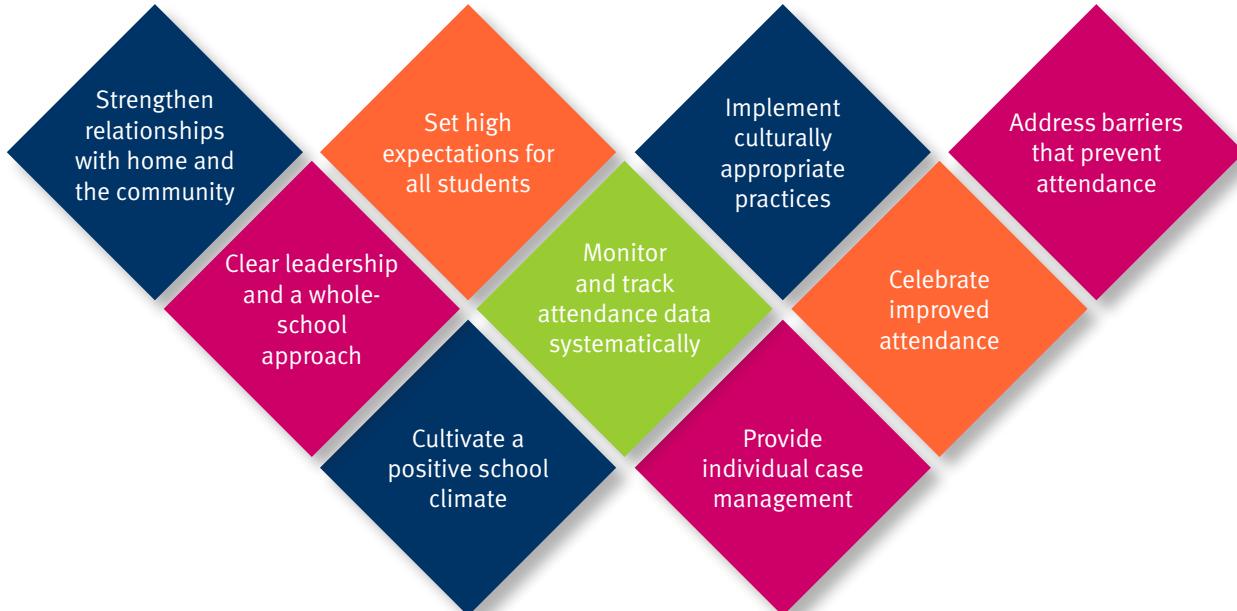# Making every day count
Fact sheet: Successful attendance strategies

Effective approaches to improving student attendance must be comprehensive enough to address a broad range of school, life and personal factors.

The University of Queensland's (UQ) research report, *Making Every Day Count: Effective Strategies to improved student attendance in Queensland state schools* (June 2017) outlines some consistent approaches schools can use to make a difference.

Diagram of diamonds: Strengthen relationships with home and the community · Set high expectations for all students · Implement culturally appropriate practices · Address barriers that prevent attendance · Clear leadership and a whole-school approach · Monitor and track attendance data systematically · Celebrate improved attendance · Cultivate a positive school climate · Provide individual case management

UQ's research includes the following examples of school strategies[1]:

Develop a positive school culture
- Have staff (e.g. principal) welcome students and parents at the school gate.
- Build relationships with families from local feeder early childhood centres/schools.
- Have cultural evenings.
- Have 'Chat and Chew' sessions– teachers eat with students.
- Develop a school curriculum framework.
- Hold parent/child interviews with teacher present where the child presents their progress at school.
- Have 'Random Act of Kindness' week.
- Focus on engagement.

Monitor student non-attendance
- Display attendance data walls.
- Track attendance data visually in classrooms.
- Identify 'at risk' students and intervene early.

Record and follow-up student absences
- Be persistent with students and parents.
- Personally contact parents when a student is away for a few days in a row.

Communicate high expectations of attendance
- Acknowledge attendance achievements on the school Facebook page.
- Emphasise messages that absence from school results in missed learning.
- Consider the use of rewards (e.g. VivoClass, certificates).
- Share attendance messages and data in the newsletter, on parade, posters, Facebook.

Provide intervention and support
- Understand students' particular circumstances.
- Reduce barriers to learning by providing food, shoes and uniforms for students, or stationery packs if required.
- Establish a 'walking bus' where students walk to school together.
- Build relationships with external agencies to support students' needs.
- Establish a case management committee of teaching staff and support personnel (e.g. behaviour teacher, deputy principals, chaplain, guidance officer).
- Offer homework club.
- Offer scholars program for high-achieving students.
- Appoint an experienced teacher as the school attendance officer.
- Allow students to present work privately (e.g. in lunch breaks) if they are having a bad day or are not confident.

[1] The strategies developed in these schools were very context specific and may not be able to be replicated with the same effects in other schools. However, they do provide indicators for the types of activity and strategies which work to support improved attendance.