



Every day counts

Step 5: Provide intervention and support

The information below expands on advice to improve student attendance provided in [A model for making every day count](#).

Even with a supportive school environment, interesting and engaging learning opportunities, and a clear attendance policy, there will be some students who require additional assistance or encouragement to attend school regularly.

School staff may need to work with these students and their families to help identify the reasons for poor attendance, promote the benefits of attending school, identify attendance and achievement goals, and develop a realistic plan for improving attendance.

Frequent unexplained absences from school may indicate that a student or their family has other issues that need to be addressed before attendance will improve (e.g. access to uniforms, school shoes, or transport). Try to clear the path for learning by considering actions that may support students to attend school.

Where there is no reasonable excuse for the child's non-attendance, the department may refer parents to the Queensland Police Service for prosecution, in accordance with the [Managing student absences and enforcing enrolment and attendance at state schools](#) procedure. However, prosecution is seen as a last resort and schools are encouraged to implement strategies to assist parents and students with attendance issues prior to taking further action.

Ideas¹

- Refer students to school support staff (e.g. guidance officers, youth support coordinators, chaplains or nurses) to identify reasons for absences/lateness and to develop practical strategies to improve attendance.
- Invite parents to assist in developing a re-entry plan that addresses practical issues such as getting an alarm clock, negotiating transport, or changing family routines. Encourage parents to seek support from, and communicate regularly with, teachers and other school staff.
- Consider establishing support programs that respond to specific essential needs if these are affecting attendance (e.g. uniform exchange, breakfast program, walking bus, childcare options for students who are also parents).
- Schedule interesting before-school activities that encourage students to get to school on time.
- Help students who are at risk of poor attendance to build and maintain a relationship with a key person in the school.
- Refer students and families to relevant professionals outside of the school (e.g. counsellors, psychologists, financial/social/occupational support) according to individual needs.

¹ These ideas have been collected from Queensland schools, as well as other national and international schools. Schools will need to consider local circumstances, priorities, age of students etc in determining which (if any) of these ideas might be useful in the local context.

Ideas (continued)

- Consider establishing Individual Attendance Plans for students with high levels of absences.
- Consider linking attendance with specific events such as school functions and extra-curricular activities.
- Establish individual case management (e.g. involving guidance officer, student welfare worker, external agencies) and/or a mentoring program for students who are at risk.
- Assist students to improve self-esteem and coping skills, especially if they are experiencing family/peer conflict, family breakdown, anxiety, depression.
- Support students when they return to school, including students returning from disciplinary absences, and assist them to catch up on missed work.
- Ensure parents are aware of their legal obligations and the importance of schooling from the early years.
- Conduct information sessions for parents on how to address issues such as school refusal and separation anxiety.
- Encourage parents to participate in parenting skills training (e.g. organisational skills), where appropriate.
- Encourage the development of supportive networks with other parents (e.g. establish a parents' club), where appropriate.
- Liaise with other agencies as needed to suit individual circumstances (e.g. Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, the Queensland Police Child Protection Investigation Unit, and relevant non-government agencies).
- Use OneSchool and/or another system (such as ID Attend) to identify students who are attending school but truant from specific classes. Talk to the students to find out why and take remedial action.
- Develop a procedure to address issues of students who attend school for form class but then truant from remaining classes. Regularly check areas where these students 'hang out'.