EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Raising attendance:
Five good practices

ERO looked at practices that shift student attendance. This framework tool sets out five evidence-based practices that make a big difference – and the extra boost that comes from making attendance a schoolwide priority.

Key to student attendance is...

1 Student belonging

Promote student belonging by:

Assigning roles and responsibilities
→ Consider positions and duties that students need to be at school to do.

Supporting students to feel connected to their teachers
→ Show students that teachers are people they can talk to.

Supporting students to feel connected to their peers
→ Find ways to use groups, activities, and events to build social connections.

Tackling bullying
→ Use proven whole-school strategies to prevent bullying – not just respond to it.

2 Clear expectations

Set clear expectations by:

Communicating clear and consistent expectations with students
→ Explain to students why their attendance matters and how absences can impact their futures.

Communicating clear and consistent expectations with parents and whānau
→ Show parents and whānau how every day matters for their child's achievement.

Keeping parents and whānau informed of their child's attendance
→ Share ongoing attendance information so parents and whānau can support their child proactively – not only once it's a problem.

3 Practical supports

Provide effective practical supports by:

Deciding on practical supports based on school-specific data and evidence
→ Find out about specific barriers to attendance and focus on those.

Monitoring the impacts of practical supports
→ This helps school leaders understand whether their support is working.

4 Rewards

Use rewards effectively by:

Setting realistic and increasing targets
→ Reachable targets are more motivating than ones that feel too aspirational too soon.

Rewarding students collectively
→ Recognise classes or year groups to help build a collective sense of ownership.

5 Patterns of closures

Minimise the impacts of school closures on attendance by:

Selecting days and times that minimise disruption to students' routines
→ Tuesdays and Thursdays aren't best, as they lead to extended weekends. Half-day closures can also result in full-day absences.

Communicating information about closures to parents and whānau as early as possible
→ This helps ensure transport, childcare arrangements, etc., can be put in place.

Also! An end-to-end approach

We can sustain improvements to attendance by taking an end-to-end approach.
→ This is about prioritising attendance relentlessly across the school, every day. Great attendance is everybody's business!

More info:

Want more detail, including evidence-based strategies and stories? Check out our full good practice guide here at **evidence.ero.govt.nz**