

# Castletown Primary School



## Attendance Matters: Supporting Success at CPS

*Our Shared Commitment to  
Learning Every Day*



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# Attendance Matters: Supporting Success at CPS

## *Our Shared Commitment to Learning Every Day*

At Castletown Primary School, we believe that regular attendance is essential for children's learning, wellbeing and long-term success. Being at school every day helps children build strong relationships, feel a sense of belonging, and engage fully in their learning.

Research consistently shows that regular school attendance is one of the strongest protective factors for children and young people. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to experience positive mental health, stronger social connections, improved academic outcomes, and greater success later in life. School provides not only learning opportunities, but also routine, stability, support and connection, all of which are critical for children's current and future wellbeing.

We also understand that families may experience challenges from time to time, including illness, anxiety, family circumstances, or other barriers that can affect attendance. Our approach to attendance is supportive, respectful and collaborative. We work alongside families to understand what is happening and to find ways to help children return to regular attendance as soon as possible.

## Attendance as a Shared Responsibility

Attendance is a shared responsibility. Students, families and school staff all play an important role in promoting and supporting regular attendance.

- Families support attendance by establishing routines, communicating with the school, and seeking support early if concerns arise.
- Staff support attendance by building strong relationships, creating safe and engaging learning environments, embedding social and emotional wellbeing in their classrooms and noticing early signs of difficulty.
- School leadership ensures clear systems, consistent responses, and access to appropriate supports.

By working together, we can ensure that every child is supported to attend school regularly and feel confident, safe and ready to learn.

## Our MTSS Approach to Attendance

Castletown Primary School implements attendance support through a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). This framework ensures that all students receive the right level of support at the right time, with a strong focus on prevention, early intervention and partnership with families.

Attendance supports are organised across three tiers:

- Tier 1 – Universal Supports (for all students)
- Tier 2 – Targeted Supports (for some students)
- Tier 3 – Intensive Supports (for a small number of students)

Families are engaged at every stage of the process.

## Tier 1 – Universal Supports

For all students and families (Regular attendance: 90%+)

Goal: Promote consistent attendance habits and strong school–family relationships.

At the universal level, we:

- Promote positive attendance habits and clear expectations for all students.
- Create welcoming, inclusive classrooms where students feel connected and valued.
- Foster student/teacher/staff relations that build trust.
- Teach students about the importance of coming to school every day.
- Communicate regularly with families about attendance and wellbeing.
- Celebrate attendance, effort and improvement across the school.

### School-Wide Promotion

Messaging embedded across Castletown Primary School.

- Newsletter items highlighting attendance tips, successes and reminders.
- Visual displays and classroom reminders reinforcing daily attendance expectations.
- Video messages used to promote positive attitudes towards attendance

### Celebrating

- Whole-class awards recognising the most improved attendance.
- Phone calls, emails or postcards home recognising improved or strong attendance.
- Extra recess, free play time, choice time, or a fun class activity.
- Students with strong or improved attendance earn entries, not automatic prizes.

### Consistent Daily Practice

- Teachers record attendance twice daily in Compass (9:00am and 12:00pm).
- School Officers maintain accurate data entry and generate Fortnightly unexplained absence letters where required.
- Staff apply correct attendance codes and maintain timely communication.

### Community Expectations

- Students: Attend school every day, arrive on time, and participate positively.
- Parents/carers: Notify absences within three days, apply for in-term leave where required, and prioritise regular attendance.
- Staff: Encourage attendance, apply correct procedures, and maintain warm, respectful communication with families.

### Universal Monitoring

- Regular review of SAR (Student Attendance Record) class and year-level attendance reports.
- Regular attendance summaries and longitudinal tracking.
- Early identification of students trending towards the Targeted (Tier 2) range.

## Tier 2 – Targeted Supports

For students with 80–89% attendance (“Indicated”)

Goal: Address emerging barriers early to prevent escalation.

Additional support may include:

- Monitoring attendance more closely.
- Checking in with students and families to better understand any challenges.
- Short-term goals or strategies to support improved attendance.
- Classroom or wellbeing adjustments to help students feel safe and supported.

### Identification

- Students recording under 85% attendance within a half-term are flagged.
- Line Manager notifies the classroom teacher and initiates the Tier 2 process.

### Targeted Intervention

- An Attendance Profile is completed to identify potential academic, wellbeing, cultural, social or logistical barriers.
- A Targeted Attendance Improvement Plan is developed collaboratively with:
  - Classroom teacher
  - Line Manager
  - Parent/carer
  - AIEO (where culturally relevant)

### Targeted Supports May Include

- Short-term attendance goals and progress tracking.
- Increased teacher–parent communication.
- Adjustments to morning routines, transitions or classroom supports.
- AIEO mentoring, connection-building and family support.
- Referral to Student Services for wellbeing, behaviour or social-emotional support.

### Monitoring

- Weekly check-ins by the teacher or Line Manager.
- Ongoing review and adjustment of strategies based on attendance data and family feedback.

## Tier 3 – Intensive Supports

For students with less than 80% attendance (“Moderate” or “Severe”)

Goal: Re-engage students experiencing complex or ongoing attendance challenges.

For students who continue to experience attendance difficulties, more personalised support may be required. This can include:

- Individual attendance or wellbeing plans.
- Regular meetings with families.
- Support from specialist staff or external agencies.
- Adjustments to support a gradual and supported return to school where appropriate.
- Support from Badged Attendance Officer

### Identification

- Moderate attendance (60–79%): Line Manager leads intervention.
- Severe attendance (<60%): Principal leads intervention.

### Intensive Case Management

- Principal or Line Manager convenes a meeting involving:
  - Parent/carer
  - Student (where appropriate)
  - Relevant school staff
  - AIEO (if applicable)
  - External agencies (as required)

### Intensive Support Options

- Development of a Comprehensive Attendance Improvement Plan, using the ‘Barriers to Attendance’ Checklist addressing:
  - Health and wellbeing
  - Behaviour and engagement
  - Learning needs
  - Cultural considerations
  - Family circumstances
- Referral to external agencies (health, family services, community organisations).
- Increased frequency of communication, monitoring and wellbeing check-ins.
- Consideration of graduated or supported return-to-school plans where appropriate.

### Attendance Advisory Panel

If attendance does not improve despite intensive support:

- A formal Attendance Advisory Panel may be convened (independent of the school).
- Parents/carers are notified via registered mail and followed up with personal contact.
- Full documentation of previous supports and interventions is provided.

## Whereabouts Unknown (SWU)

When a student's whereabouts cannot be determined:

- Systematic attempts are made to contact the family via phone, letters, emergency contacts and home visits.
- Previous schools, regional office and relevant networks are contacted.
- An SWU form is submitted to [student.tracking@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:student.tracking@education.wa.edu.au).
- Absences continue to be recorded until removal from the roll is approved.

## Monitoring and Supporting Attendance

Attendance is monitored regularly so that concerns can be identified early and support provided in a timely way. Attendance data is used alongside our professional knowledge of each child and their individual circumstances.

We also believe it is important to celebrate attendance and improvement, including:

- Regular attendance
- Positive effort and routines
- Improvements over time, even if attendance is not yet perfect

## Celebrating Attendance at Castletown Primary School

Castletown Primary School recognises that celebrating attendance plays an important role in building positive habits, strengthening engagement, and reinforcing a culture where every day at school matters. Consistent with our MTSS approach, attendance recognition focuses on improvement and positive routines, not solely on perfect attendance. The focus is on acknowledging the highest class percentages and acknowledging individual student increases in attendance (especially within the moderate and severe attendance categories) Celebrations are frequent, inclusive and developmentally appropriate, and may include certificates, acknowledgements at assemblies or in newsletters, class-based recognition, prize draws, and leadership or privilege-based rewards. Attendance celebrations are designed to motivate, encourage and build belonging, while ensuring students are not encouraged to attend school when unwell. Through positive reinforcement and shared celebration, the school community works together to support regular attendance for all students.

## Our Commitment

Our goal is simple: to support every child to attend school regularly, feel connected, and thrive.

We are committed to working in partnership with families, recognising individual circumstances, and providing the right level of support at the right time. Regular attendance supports learning today and wellbeing into the future, and together we can help every child make the most of their time at school.

## Glossary of Terms

**AIEO** – *Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer*

**Compass** – *Online student management and attendance system used to record and monitor student attendance*

**CPFS** – *Child Protection and Family Support*

**DP** – *Deputy Principal*

**EA** – *Education Assistant*

**GP** – *General Practitioner*

**IEP** – *Individual Education Plan*

**MTSS** – *Multi-Tiered System of Support*

**PE** – *Physical Education*

**SAR** – *Student Attendance Record*

**SSEN:B** – *School of Special Educational Needs: Behaviour*

**SSEN:D** – *School of Special Educational Needs: Disability*

**SWU** – *Student Whereabouts Unknown*

## **Appendices**

- Barriers to Attendance Checklist
- Barriers to Attendance Support Guide
- Barriers to Attendance Documented Plan

## Barriers to Attendance – Checklist

Purpose: To help identify what might be getting in the way of a student attending school regularly, so support can be put in place.

### Student-Related Barriers

Health & Wellbeing	Learning Needs	Social Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing illness or medical condition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Frequent minor illness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Disability impacting daily routines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mental health concerns (anxiety, mood, emotional distress)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sleep issues or fatigue</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medication side effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Learning difficulties not yet identified</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student feels behind academically</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoidance due to specific subjects or tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of engagement or boredom</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fear of Failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Friendship issues / conflict</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bullying (perceived or actual)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Struggles in unstructured times (before school, recess, lunch)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Separation anxiety</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Feeling that friendship groups are already established</li> </ul>

### Family & Home Barriers

Routine & Organisation	Home Stressors	Perceptions of School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Morning routine difficulties</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping patterns inconsistent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Transport issues</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parent work schedules making mornings difficult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family illness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Housing instability or changes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family conflict or separation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Caring responsibilities for siblings or adults</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Financial pressures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer unsure how to support attendance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low confidence engaging with the school</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Misunderstanding about authorised absences</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parent separation anxiety</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cultural obligations or sorry business</li> </ul>

### School-Related Barriers

Classroom Environment	Curriculum & Program	Transitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Feeling unsafe or unsettled in class</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mismatch between student needs and classroom strategies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour management concerns</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student feels unnoticed or disconnected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty accessing curriculum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student overwhelmed by work expectations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of adjustments or support (real or perceived)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty at morning drop-off</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Trouble moving between activities/lessons</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Poor transition between year levels or teachers</li> </ul>

Community & External Factors	Student/Family Voice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Community events impacting attendance</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cultural commitments</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sporting/arts commitments</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Peer influence outside school</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Child protection involvement or complexity</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Engagement with external agencies affecting routines</li></ul>	<p><i>(Tick if expressed during conversation)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> "School feels stressful."</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> "I don't feel like I belong."</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> "I don't understand the work."</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> "Everyone Else knows and I don't"</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> "It's hard to get organised in the morning."</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> "There's stuff going on at home."</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> "I'm worried about someone at school."</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> "I don't feel well a lot."</li></ul>

# Castletown Primary School Barriers to Attendance Support Guide

Castletown Primary School recognises that barriers to regular attendance may arise due to emotional, behavioural, social or health-related factors. In response, the school implements structured and supportive mechanisms designed to promote wellbeing, rebuild confidence and support gradual re-engagement with learning. These supports may include adjusted timetables, planned arrival routines, emotional regulation strategies, curriculum modifications, positive reinforcement and rewards for attendance, and close collaboration with families and relevant stakeholders.

## STUDENT-RELATED BARRIERS

### Health & Wellbeing

#### **Ongoing illness / medical condition**

- Care plan created with parent & school nurse/GP.
- Adjusted expectations for mornings, PE, or high-demand tasks.
- Regular communication between classroom teacher and family.
- Quiet space for rest breaks if needed.

#### **Frequent minor illness**

- Provide information to parents about thresholds for school attendance.
- Morning check-ins to ease anxiety disguised as illness.
- Build strong relationship with family to understand patterns.

#### **Disability impacting daily routines**

- Adjusted timetable or staggered start.
- EA support for transitions.
- SSEN:D or SSEN:B consultation.
- Visual schedules and predictable routines.

#### **Mental health concerns (anxiety, emotional distress)**

- Gradual return plans (scaffolded re-entry).
- Morning meet & greet with EA/DP/AIEO/nominated person.
- Safe person and safe space identified.
- Counselling with school chaplain or external provider.
- Classroom adjustments: reduced workload, predictable routines.

#### **Sleep issues / fatigue**

- Conversation with family about sleep routines.
- Later start for a short, time-bound period.
- Slow start morning routine (quiet activity on arrival).

## **Medication side effects**

- Adjustments to schedule around medication times.
- Communication with prescribing GP if family consents.
- Allowing movement breaks or rest breaks.

## **Learning Needs**

### **Learning difficulties not yet identified**

- Screening assessments (phonics, numeracy, reading).
- Small group or one-to-one intervention.
- Referral to school psychologist.
- Classroom differentiation.

### **Student feels behind academically**

- Short, achievable learning goals.
- Positive reinforcement for effort, not performance.
- Intervention participation
- Clear success criteria so the student knows they are making progress.

### **Avoidance of specific subjects**

- Adjusted entry to that lesson (shorter first part).
- Check for misunderstandings, skill gaps.
- Collaborate with specialist teacher on engagement strategies.

### **Lack of engagement or boredom**

- Incorporate student interests into learning.
- Provide leadership opportunities.
- Use hands-on, practical tasks to increase motivation.

## **Social Factors**

### **Friendship issues / conflict**

- Restorative circles or mediation.
- Playground buddy or peer mentor.
- Check-ins from DP or chaplain during break times.
- Help student reconnect with safe peers.

### **Bullying or perceived bullying**

- Investigation following policy.
- Safety plan created with student input.
- Increased supervision in identified areas.
- Parent communication and regular updates.

## **Struggles in unstructured times**

- Morning or recess quiet activities.
- Access to library/break space.
- EA or AIEO check-ins.

## **Separation anxiety**

- Predictable drop-off routine.
- Visual schedules and reassurance.
- Gradual fade-out of parent presence outside classroom.
- Daily check-in system to build confidence.

# **FAMILY & HOME BARRIERS**

## **Routine & Organisation**

### **Morning routine difficulties**

- Provide a simple "morning checklist" visual for home.
- Suggest night-before organisation strategies.
- Offer breakfast club.
- Establish a consistent arrival plan with the parent.

### **Sleeping patterns inconsistent**

- Share sleep hygiene resources.
- Gradual shift to earlier bedtime routine.
- Short-term adjusted start time if necessary.

### **Transport issues**

- Coordinate with other families (carpooling).
- Encourage walking school bus / bike routes.

### **Parent work schedules**

- Support through before school supervision.
- Plan for consistent drop-off arrangements.

## **Home Stressors**

### **Family illness**

- Provide flexibility where possible.
- Offer additional school connection for the child (EA/DP check-in).

## **Housing instability**

- Discreet support via chaplain/AIEO.
- Connect family to local services.
- Maintain consistent school routines for the child.

## **Family conflict/separation**

- Identify safe communication norms.
- Provide a safe adult at school they can check in with.
- More predictable routines and visual timetables.

## **Caring responsibilities**

- Work with family to reduce the burden on the child.
- Flexible arrival time short-term.
- Engage agencies if needed.

## **Financial pressures**

- Provide uniforms, stationery, fees support as appropriate.
- Inform families about available community supports.

## **Perceptions of School**

### **Parent unsure how to support attendance**

- Provide simple attendance expectations.
- Offer informal meetings to build confidence.
- Reinforce positives when attendance improves.

### **Low confidence engaging with school**

- AIEO or chaplain contact as an entry point.
- Non-judgemental language in all communication.
- Personalised invitation for key events.

### **Misunderstanding about authorised absences**

- Provide infographics and examples.
- Confirm understanding in conversation.

### **Parent separation anxiety**

- Partnership plan for drop-offs.
- AIEO/DP/nominated person to meet the child at the gate.
- Reassuring phone calls to parents.

## **Cultural obligations**

- Acknowledgement and cultural respect.
- Plan for student re-entry.
- Maintain connection with the family during absence.

## **SCHOOL-RELATED BARRIERS**

### **Classroom Environment**

#### **Feeling unsafe or unsettled**

- Revisit class behaviour norms.
- Check-in each morning with a trusted adult.
- Provide a predictable routine.

#### **Mismatch between student needs & strategies**

- Review adjustments.
- Get SSEN input.
- Use sensory tools (fidgets, breaks, movement).

#### **Behaviour management concerns**

- Collaborative problem-solving with student.
- Clear expectations and consistent follow-through.
- Positive behaviour support strategies.

#### **Student feels unnoticed or disconnected**

- Daily "micro-connection" routines.
- Give student classroom responsibilities.
- Strength-based feedback.
- Wellbeing buddies
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### **Curriculum & Program**

#### **Difficulty accessing curriculum**

- Differentiated tasks.
- Small-group instruction.
- EA support.
- Alternate representations (visual, hands-on, oral responses).

## **Overwhelmed by workload**

- Chunking tasks.
- Reduced work expectations temporarily.
- Breaks built into schedule.

## **Lack of adjustments (real or perceived)**

- Review IEP/adjustments with parents.
- Ensure consistency across teachers.

## **Transitions**

### **Difficulty at morning drop-off**

- Gate meet & greet.
- Visual "start of day" routine.
- Soft start activities.

### **Trouble moving between activities**

- Use of timers, transition cues.
- Gradual increase in independence.
- Visual transition support.

### **Poor transition between year levels**

- Transition meetings.
- Early visits to next classroom.
- Social stories.

## **COMMUNITY & EXTERNAL FACTORS**

### **Community events impacting attendance**

- Plan re-entry support after long events.
- Maintain contact with families beforehand.

### **Cultural commitments**

- Respect obligations.
- Offer catch-up supports and smooth re-entry.

### **Sporting / arts commitments**

- Develop flexible learning arrangements.
- Help student balance commitments through planning.

## **Peer influence outside school**

- Mentoring programs.
- Strengthening positive peer connections.

## **Child protection involvement**

- Work with CPFS case manager.
- Provide safe, predictable school routines.

## **External agency involvement**

- Coordinate with external supports.
- Ensure consistent messaging between home/school/services.

## Castletown Primary School - Attendance Support Plan

Name:

Date:

**Primary barrier(s) identified:**

**Things that will help- Parent thoughts:**

**Agreed next steps / supports:**

**What strengths can we build on?**

*(What are the best bits about school, how can we leverage these?)*

**Things that will help- Student thoughts:**

**Follow-up date:** \_\_\_\_\_