

Carlton Gardens Primary School Carlton Gardens is a primary school in inner-city Melbourne. Classes loved the idea of competing for an attendance trophy and it became a real incentive for students to come to school. Unacceptable reasons for allowing children to stay home from school include; fulfilling adult duties such as child-minding and interpreting, keeping an adult company, visiting friends and relatives, shopping trips, birthdays and 'mental health days. Our lesson structure dictates that most of the instruction is done in the first 10 to 15 minutes of class so if a student misses this it is hard to catch up. To help us to achieve our attendance goal we will be sending out regular updates letting you know how many times your child has been absent so far this year. Over the past four years NAPLAN results and teacher judgments have shown a real improvement as attendance has improved. Parent meetings allowed staff to give parents strategies to improve attendance and it also helped teachers become aware of issues that they were previously unfamiliar with. Note: Carlton Gardens Primary School has around 15 – 20% of students achieve perfect attendance each term. Dear Parents & Carers, At Carlton Gardens Primary School we believe that student success is dependent upon good attendance at school. The school has 260 students from a number of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. Key actions Carlton Gardens PS instituted a reward system, such that: ?A member of school leadership stands in the foyer greeting late families and ensures that students sign a late pass. Evidence of success In the four years since Carlton Gardens implemented these changes they have seen the average absence days fall from 22 to around 12 in 2012. The school had to ensure that teachers were marking their rolls correctly. Due to other commitments it is not always possible to have a member of leadership in the foyer to speak to late comers, so students can sometimes slip through without a late pass. Students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from their schooling. Students with poor patterns in primary school usually have poor patterns in secondary school and often disengage from school. Poor attendance also makes it difficult for children to form positive relationships with their peers therefore; we feel that good attendance is essential for CGPS students. When your child returns to school please send a note to the classroom teacher that clearly outlines the reason for your child's absence. The need for punctuality and the impact lateness can have on student learning and classroom routines. The school set out to make sure students could maximise their learning potential by improving their attendance. The school wanted to achieve an average of less than 12 absence days per year and reduce the number of late students each day. Each term parents receive a letter stating how many absences their child had for the term, as well as their yearly total. The letter contains information about appropriate absences as well as a table that shows parents how many days students would miss during their school life if their current average continued. Estimated cost of the project These initiatives didn't cost a lot. Some parents were upset with the perfect attendance certificates and felt it was too difficult for students to achieve. Regular attendance enables students to access a full education, allowing them to reach their full potential. To help us with this goal please ensure that your child attends school on all designated school days. Punctuality At CGPS we classify a child as late if they arrive at school after 8:55am. Key objectives There was a high rate of absence within the school. Students were averaging more than 22 absence days per year. Students who are on time and at school every day for a week go into a school wide raffle to win a showbag. The school created a trophy

for the class who has the best attendance each week. Students who have two or less days away each term are given a certificate for good attendance. While running these programs the school has seen a dramatic increase in student achievement. Showbags cost around \$150 per year and the class trophy cost \$30, and is used from year to year. The future The school is continuing to try to keep these strategies in place as they have been very effective. Students really liked being rewarded for perfect attendance. Over the past four years the school has seen an increase in students who achieve perfect attendance. Ongoing challenges for the school: ?There were classroom roll inconsistencies. Showbags became an expensive option over time so that incentive did not continue. There is a direct link between school attendance and achievement later in life. Last year at CGPS we were above the state average for attendance. If your child is absent please immediately notify the school. For this first update we are also sending out last year's attendance figures. The project The attendance rate at school was low and students were constantly late to school. Students who have perfect attendance for the term are able to attend a special party. Note: An example of this letter is included in this case study. Teachers are asked to phone families if a child is absent two days in a row. On the third day school leadership phones families. The school holds meetings with families that have attendance problems. Teachers work with families to try to find solutions and explain how serious the problem is. ?The school encourages parents to arrive at school on time. Attendance If your child has an attendance record around the state average for their entire school life by the time they reach year 12 they would have missed one year of school. This year we are trying to get our attendance level well below the state average. If you are taking a holiday in school time please inform your child's class teacher well in advance. If a child is 15 minutes late everyday by the end of the year that is the equivalent of 8 days away from school. Please ensure that your child is on time for school every day.????The school keeps parents informed.????The school changed the start of the day from 9:00am to 8:55am.??????