

General tools for all risk factors

Focus Meeting

The Focus Meeting is a collaborative initiative designed to identify, assess, and support students at risk of falling behind academically, socially, or in school attendance. This meeting involves the student (if they are willing to participate), their contact teacher, parents, counsellor, and any other adults important to the student's development. The primary goals are to ensure academic progression, improve attendance, and promote overall well-being.

Guide for action

1. Identify students who need support

Identify students who might benefit from additional support. Look for indicators such as:

- poor results on assessment tests
- increased absence
- lack of academic progress
- social withdrawal
- behavioural or emotional challenges

Make sure the student is willing to collaborate by explaining that the Focus Meeting is there to help them do well and succeed.

2. Schedule a focus meeting

Find a suitable time for the following people to meet:

- **The student:** Center the process around their needs and input.
- **Contact teacher:** Often the assigned contact teacher or any other teacher with a strong connection to the student.
- **Parents or guardians:** Their ideas, perspective and help are important for making a good plan.
- **Counsellor:** To handle emotional or psychological challenges.
- **Other important adults:** Include important people in the student's life, such as mentors, coaches, or others who have made a difference.

Let everyone in the group know about the meeting and check if they can attend. Choose a time and place that works for everyone and explain the meeting goals ahead of time.

3. Prepare for the meeting

Collect and review the following information:

- attendance records to find any patterns or reasons for not attending school

- academic progress, like grades, test results and copies of the student's schoolwork
- notes on the student's social and emotional health

Share this information with the participants if this is relevant for the discussion.

4. Facilitate the Focus Meeting

Use a clear agenda to keep the discussion on track. The agenda should include:

- Attendance: Talk about attendance records, patterns and reasons for absences.
- Academic progress: Look at grades, test results, and overall progress.
- Well-Being: Discuss social, emotional, and behaviour challenges.

Guide the discussion by:

- Explaining everyone's role.
- Encouraging open communication, starting with the student's point of view.
- Listening carefully and focusing on finding solutions, not blaming.
- Moving the conversation toward practical strategies that help the student.

5. Make an action plan

Identify clear steps each participant will take to support the student. Examples:

- **Student:** Promise to do tasks like attending classes, finishing assignments or joining extra classes.
- **Teachers:** Change teaching methods and strategies, provide extra resources or offer extra help.
- **Parents:** Create supportive routines at home or set up a quiet place to study.
- **Counsellor:** Help with emotional needs through individual or group counselling.
- **Other adults:** Offer guidance, mentoring or extra support.

Set clear deadlines for the plan and create measurable goals. Write down the action plan in detail.

6. Document the meeting

Complete a Focus Meeting Report during or immediately after the meeting. The report should include:

- Student's full name and class.
- Date of the meeting.
- Names, titles and roles of participants in the meeting.
- Detailed notes under the following sections:
 - Attendance: Observations and identified patterns.
 - Academic progress: Performance and areas for improvement.
 - Well-Being: Social and emotional aspects addressed.

- Measures: Decided steps and support.
- Date of the next meeting.
- Student's signature (if applicable).
- Signature of the Focus Meeting responsible.

Below is an example of what a Focus Meeting report might include.

Focus Meeting Report Template

- Student (full name):
- Class:
- Date of Meeting:
- Present at the Meeting (full names/title/role):

1. Attendance:

[Enter attendance notes]

2. Academic progress:

[Enter academic progress notes]

3. Well-Being:

[Enter well-being notes]

4. Measures:

[Enter agreed actions]

Date of next meeting:

[Enter next meeting date]

Student's signature:

Signature of Focus Meeting responsible:

7. Act on the plan

Carry out the steps decided in the meeting.

- check attendance regularly
- provide academic help
- take care of well-being by providing counselling or support from peers

8. Monitor and follow-up

Track the student's progress by:

- regularly checking attendance and grades

- keeping in touch with the student, parents and teachers
- having follow-up meetings to review the plan and make changes if needed

Keep communication open to make sure the student gets ongoing support and the plan works well.