



# DISCOVERY SCHOOL

*Whanake rā tātou kia pai ai te āpōpō*  
We thrive & grow today for a better tomorrow

## Attendance Management Plan

### Rationale for Prioritising Attendance

The strategic priority of ensuring **regular and consistent attendance** is central to our school's commitment to student success, wellbeing, and equitable outcomes for reasons outlined below.

- **Achievement Link:** Every day counts. Irregular attendance directly impacts a student's ability to access the curriculum, build foundational knowledge, and progress and achieve expectations. Consistent presence ensures continuity of learning and minimises attainment gaps.
- **Welfare and Belonging Link:** Our school provides a safe, structured, and supportive environment. Regular attendance is key to promoting a strong **sense of belonging**, fostering positive peer relationships, and ensuring early identification and intervention for student health, welfare, or mental health concerns.
- **Future Pathways:** Developing strong habits of attendance and punctuality prepares students for secondary school. It is a vital life skill.

We aim to have students attending school and present for more than 90% of the term. Term time holidays are the greatest reason for absence in our school aside from illness. This is a long term pattern. Term-time holidays severely interrupt the sequential nature of curriculum delivery, causing students to miss essential instruction and assessments. This absence creates a significant catch-up burden upon their return, possibly leading to increased anxiety, potential disengagement, and a negative impact on overall academic achievement. Parents should be avoiding term time holidays.

### Attendance Policy & Procedures

Our attendance policy and procedures are housed in [School Docs](#). These documents outline:

- Our key legal obligations under the Education and Training Act 2020, including; and
- Expectations of parents, students, and staff in relation to student absence.

**Enrolment:** Attendance expectations, including legal obligations, are clearly communicated during the enrolment process. Parents taking their children out of school for a period of time need to contact the principal prior to this taking place.

**Communication:** Expectations are published in the school newsletter at the start of the year, with ongoing reminders during the year to reinforce the link between attendance, achievement, and welfare. Teachers record attendance figures on mid and end of year reporting summaries. At Learning Conversations, teachers alert

whānau to their child's attendance, using and discussing the Hero Attendance graphs. If a child is going to be away, the whānau are expected to let the office know before 9am (via phone or email).

**Timing:** Attendance is taken by the classroom teacher at the start of every day and after lunch (by 9.10am and 1.55pm).

**System:** Attendance is recorded using Hero. The system is updated to reflect explained absences recorded by the office.

**Storage:** Attendance data is stored securely within Hero and archived in line with NZ school record-keeping requirements.

**Unjustified Absences:** Parents taking term time holidays and other unjustified absences are emailed (usually by the Principal) to inform them of the unjustified coding of the absence and the impact this can have on learning.

**Unexplained Absences:** The office team follows up unexplained absences and code absences accordingly. If necessary, they may involve the Deputy Principal, Principal, or member of the Leadership Team. If a parent does not provide a reason for absence, the student will be marked as truant.

**Attendance Codes:** We follow guidance from the Ministry of Education for coding attendance and absences. The main codes we use for absences are J (justified), E (explained but unjustified), Q (attending a school trip), M (medical/unwell), and L (late).

**Lateness:** Regular lateness can disrupt the learning of the individual who is late, as well as their class. Lateness is monitored and parents are alerted to any emerging patterns.

The school employs a tiered response based on absence thresholds, aligning with the **Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)** approach:

| Threshold                  | Intervention Level     | Action Required                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Good attendance            | Universal              | <b>Less than 5 days absent in a term.</b> Accurate daily attendance coding. Positive communication promoting attendance.                                                                                                 |
| Worrying attendance        | Targeted Support       | <b>Up to 10 days absent in a term</b> (80-89% attendance). The teacher contacts whānau to identify possible barriers and offer support.                                                                                  |
| Concerning Attendance      | Intensive Intervention | <b>Up to 15 days absent in a term</b> (≤80% attendance). Deputy Principal works with the classroom teacher to ensure whānau are aware of the concerning pattern of attendance, reiterate expectations and offer support. |
| Very Concerning Attendance | External Intervention  | <b>More than 15 days absent in a term.</b> Pattern indicates a significant barrier or lack of parental engagement. Referral to the Attendance Service or relevant Interagency Forum.                                     |

- **Individual interventions** for concerning and very concerning absences are tailored to the individual situation.

- **Attendance Service Referral:** A referral is made when internal resources have been exhausted, the student is severely absent, and there is an identified need for statutory intervention or home liaison beyond the school's capacity.
- **Interagency Forums:** For complex cases involving multiple barriers (e.g., housing, mental health, family violence), the school will utilise **interagency forums** (e.g., Oranga Tamariki, local health providers) to coordinate holistic support. This is led by the Deputy Principal.
- When there is a need to **support a return to school**, we consider loss of learning and reintegration into social settings. Plans are developed for individuals as needed. Whānau are included in these plans and close monitoring continues.

## Monitoring and Measuring Progress

**Policies are reviewed** in line with the School Docs review schedule. They would also take place immediately following major legislative changes. This is the responsibility of the board and Leadership Team.

**Attendance data is monitored** termly, including the effectiveness of strategies put in place to support students. Trends are noted and teachers are included in the follow up as required. This is the responsibility of the Leadership Team.

Office staff conduct a **termly audit of Hero** to ensure coding is accurate. The Deputy Principal ensures that documented follow up steps are completed.

The Principal will **report to the Board** on attendance data termly (as part of the Principal's Report), providing the Everyday Matters Attendance Summary, assurances that procedures are being followed, and additional anecdotal information as appropriate.

## Board Responsibilities

As required by the Education and Training Act 2020 (s35), all students between six and sixteen years old must be enrolled at school. Once enrolled, it is compulsory to attend school regularly, unless a specific exemption has been approved by the school and Ministry of Education. The board takes all reasonable steps to ensure all students enrol attend when it is open for instruction (Education and Training Act 2020 s36).