Attendance Plan

Date Approved by Board of Trustees: December 2025
Next Review Date: [Annually or in accordance with MOE regulation updates]
Document Owner: Principal / Board of Lochiel School

1: Purpose and Philosophy

This Attendance Management Plan sets out Lochiel's strategy for identifying, responding to, and reducing student absences, aligning with the Education and Training Act 2020 and the Ministry of Education's Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) framework.

Our Philosophy

We believe that regular attendance is vital for student wellbeing, academic success, and fostering a strong sense of belonging (mana whenua). Our goal is to work in partnership with whānau to identify and remove any barriers to attendance, ensuring every child is present and engaged — because every day matters.

Our Goal: To achieve a target of 85% of students attending school for more than 90% of the time (Regular Attendance).

2: Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees (BoT)	Governs the plan, ensures sufficient resourcing, and monitors high-level attendance data (termly review).
Principal/ SENCO	Takes overall leadership of attendance strategy, approves extended justified leave (Code J), manages Tier 3 & 4 interventions, and liaises with external agencies (MOE Attendance Service).
Teachers / Kaiako	Accurately mark attendance in the electronic register (e.g. by 9:00 AM and 1:30 PM), monitor individual student attendance daily, and flag patterns of concern to the Principal.
Office Admin	Manages the electronic register, ensures accurate coding, conducts same-day follow-up for unexplained absences, and maintains detailed records of communication and interventions.
Parents / Caregivers	Ensure their child attends school every day it is open, notify the school of any absence before 9:00 AM on the day of absence through HERO or via the school website, and provide reasons for the absence.

3: Daily Attendance Procedures and Codes

3.1: Recording and Follow-Up

1. Roll Marking: Classroom Teachers will mark the electronic roll accurately every morning and afternoon.
2. Same-Day Follow-Up (Mandatory): By 9.10am, the Office Admin will check the roll for any unexplained absences (Code ?).
3. Communication: For any unexplained absence, the school will initiate a text message and/or phone call to the primary caregiver.
4. Coding: If no explanation is received by the end of the school day, the code remains ? (Unknown). If a reason is given but deemed unjustified (e.g., Code G for holiday), the code is updated accordingly.
5. Lateness: Students arriving late must sign in at the office. Consistent lateness is managed as an attendance concern.

3.2 Ministry of Education Attendance Codes

We use the following MOE-approved codes to distinguish between presence, justified absence, and unjustified absence:

Category	Code & Description
Present	P - Present for Instruction
Justified Absence	M - Illness/Medical (Requires explanation). J - Explained and approved by the Principal (e.g., significant family event, tangihanga, board-approved cultural activity). U - Stood down or Suspended. X - Offsite study for exams (Senior Students only).
Unjustified Absence	? - Reason for absence not yet known (Temporary code). E - Explained but not approved by the Principal. G - Holiday during term time. T - Truant / Absent without parent/caregiver permission.

4. Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) Framework

The STAR framework triggers a proportionate response when a student reaches an absence threshold over a school term. (Note: A term generally includes around 50 school days, so 5 days absent equates to 90% attendance).

Tier	Term Attendance Threshold	Attendance Rate	School Response and Intervention
Tier 1	0-4 days	>90% (Regular)	Monitor: No action if absences are justified (M, J). Positive recognition for excellent attendance (e.g. class rewards, assembly recognition).
Tier 2	5-9 days	80-90% (Irregular)	Early Concern: Teacher contacts whānau via phone/email to check in, identify any emerging barriers, and remind them of the importance of daily attendance. Teacher checks in with the student.
Tier 3	10-14 days	70-80% (Moderate)	Escalated Concern: Formal letter/email from the Principal/Deputy Principal outlining the attendance pattern. Meeting arranged with whānau, Deputy Principal, and student to discuss specific barriers and collaboratively develop a simple Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP).
Tier 4	15+ days	70% (Chronic)	Intensive Support: Mandatory meeting with Principal/BoT representative and whānau. Referral to the Ministry of Education Attendance Service. Engagement with external support agencies (e.g., Health, Social Worker) to address complex barriers. Legal action considered as a last resort.

5. Identifying and Addressing Barriers

We recognise that barriers to attendance often stem from issues outside the school gates (e.g., health, housing, transport, financial stress). Our approach is to support whānau holistically:

- Whānau Engagement: Use meetings (Tier 3/4) to actively listen and identify specific barriers (e.g., lack of uniform, transport issues, mental health challenges).
- Targeted Support: Offer practical support where possible, such as connecting whānau to school resources (e.g., uniform bank, breakfast club) or external community and health services.
- In-School Factors: Regularly review school climate to ensure it is safe, engaging, and inclusive. Address any concerns related to bullying or engagement promptly, as these are significant barriers to attendance.

6. Communication and Review

Communication

- This plan will be published on the school website and reviewed with the community periodically.
- Attendance data is regularly reported to the Board of Trustees.
- Parents receive communication about their child's attendance via our primary communication platform HERO app.

Review

- The Board will review this Attendance Management Plan annually to ensure it remains effective and aligned with MOE requirements.
- Review will include analysing attendance data by cohort (e.g. Year Level, Ethnicity) to identify trends and ensure equity of outcomes and response.