Attendance Management Plan

Introduction and Purpose

Waihao Downs School is committed to providing a high-quality education for all students. Regular and punctual attendance is fundamental to student success, fostering strong academic progress, social development, and a sense of belonging within our school community.

The purpose of this Attendance Management Plan is to:

- Outline clear expectations for student attendance.
- Establish consistent procedures for monitoring, recording, and managing student attendance.
- Provide a framework for early intervention and support for students whose attendance is a concern.
- Promote effective communication between the school, students, and whānau/caregivers regarding attendance matters. ● Comply with Ministry of Education regulations regarding student enrolment and attendance.

Scope

This plan applies to all students enrolled at Waihao Downs School and their whānau/caregivers, as well as all school staff members involved in the monitoring and management of student attendance.

School Target

Our school's overarching target is to achieve **90% justified attendance** for all students across the school year. This target reflects our commitment to maximising student presence in learning environments while acknowledging legitimate reasons for absence.

As of end of Term 2 2025 our data shows that we are at 94% attendance (present + justified absences)

Definitions

For the purpose of this plan, the following definitions apply:

Attendance	A student is marked as present when they are at school and engaged in timetabled learning activities for the full school day, or for part of the day as formally agreed with the school.
Justified Absence	An absence that has been formally approved by the school, typically due to: ○ Illness or medical appointment (with supporting evidence if requested, e.g., medical certificate). ○ Bereavement. ○ Approved family events (e.g., tangi, significant cultural events, with prior arrangement). ○ Participation in approved school-related activities (e.g., sports, cultural events, EOTC). ○ Exceptional circumstances, approved by the Principal or delegated authority, where a student is unable to attend.

Unjustified Absence Any absence that does not meet the criteria for a justified absence, or for which the school has not received a valid explanation from a parent/caregiver within a reasonable timeframe (24 hours). This includes, but is not limited to:

○ Staying home without a valid reason.
○ Shopping or non-essential family outings during school hours.
○ Overdue explanations for absence.

Truancy Persistent or habitual unjustified absence from school.

Partial Absence/Lateness Arriving at school after the designated start time, or leaving school prior to the designated finish time, without justified reason or prior arrangement

Roles and Responsibilities

School Leadership (Principal)	● Oversee the implementation and review of the Attendance Management Plan. ● Ensure staff are trained in attendance procedures. ● Provide resources and support for attendance initiatives. ● Analyse attendance data and report to the Board. ● Make decisions on complex or persistent attendance cases. ● Liaise with external agencies (e.g., Oranga Tamariki, truancy services) when necessary.
Teachers	● Record student attendance accurately and promptly at the start of each learning day. ● Follow up immediately on unexplained absences from their class. ● Identify and report students with emerging attendance patterns of concern to the principal. ● Foster a positive and inclusive classroom environment that encourages attendance. ● Communicate proactively with whānau/caregivers regarding student attendance.
Parents/Caregivers	● Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time, every day the school is open for instruction. ● Notify the school promptly (preferably by [e.g., 9:00 AM] on the day of absence) of any student absence, providing a clear reason and expected duration. ● Provide supporting documentation (e.g., medical certificate) for extended or frequent absences when requested. ● Communicate with the school about any difficulties impacting their child's attendance. ● Work collaboratively with the school to address attendance concerns.
Students	● Attend school every day, punctually and prepared for learning. ● Be aware of the importance of good attendance. ● Communicate any attendance difficulties or concerns to a trusted adult at school or at home.

Procedures for Monitoring and Recording Attendance

Daily Attendance Recording	● Classroom teachers will take attendance at the start of each morning and again after the lunch break. ● Attendance will be recorded accurately in the school's Student Management System (SMS). ● Late arrivals must inform the principal or teacher ensuring their attendance is officially recorded and the reason for lateness noted. ● The principal or teacher must be notified of early departures by a parent/caregiver.
Unexplained Absences **Justifying Absences**	● For any student absent without prior notification, the school office will initiate contact with parents/caregivers, usually by text message and/or phone call, by 9.15am on the day of absence. ● If contact cannot be made, attempts will continue throughout the day. ● If an explanation is not received within 24 hours, the absence will be recorded as unjustified. ● Parents/caregivers must provide an explanation for absence by phone call, text, email, Hero, message, or written note. ● For extended illness of 5 consecutive days or more, a medical certificate will be requested. ● For planned absences (e.g., family holidays, appointments), prior notice and approval from the Principal are required. These may be recorded as unjustified if they are not considered exceptional circumstances by the Principal.

Intervention Strategies (Tiered Approach)

The school employs a tiered approach to support student attendance, providing targeted interventions based on the level of concern.

Tier 1: Universal Support (For All Students)	Tier 2: Targeted Support (For Emerging Concerns)	Tier 3: Intensive Support (For Persistent Concerns)
Positive School Climate: Foster a welcoming, inclusive, and engaging school environment. **Clear Expectations:** Communicate attendance expectations regularly through newsletters and Class Dojo. **Attendance Awareness:** Educate students and whānau on the importance of regular attendance for learning and future opportunities.	**Trigger:** When a student's justified attendance falls below [e.g., 90%] or a pattern of unjustified absences/lateness emerges (e.g., 3-5 unexplained absences in a term, or 5-10 days of justified absences within a term).	**Trigger:** When a student's justified attendance falls below [e.g., 85%] or there are persistent, ongoing unjustified absences despite Tier 2 interventions (e.g., 5-10 unjustified absences in a term, or 10-15 days of justified absences within a term).
	Action: **- Initial Communication:** Principal makes personal contact (phone call/meeting) with whānau/caregivers to discuss concerns, identify potential barriers, and offer support. - **Monitoring:** Increased monitoring of attendance. - **Action Plan (Informal):** Develop an informal attendance plan with whānau, setting clear expectations and identifying strategies (e.g., morning routines, wake-up calls).	**Action:** **- Formal Meeting:** Principal convenes a formal meeting with whānau/caregivers to develop a comprehensive, formal attendance improvement plan. **- Internal and External Agency Involvement:** Involve relevant internal school support services and, if appropriate and with whānau consent, external agencies (e.g., Truancy Service, Oranga Tamariki, health professionals, community support organisations). **- Referral:** Consider formal referral to truancy services if unjustified absences persist and other avenues have been exhausted.

		- Review: Regular review meetings to monitor progress and adjust the plan as needed.

Communication

Effective communication is paramount to successful attendance management.

- The school will use multiple channels to communicate attendance expectations and procedures (e.g., school website, newsletters, enrolment packs, Hero and Facebook).
- Parents/caregivers will be contacted promptly regarding absences.
- Attendance data and progress will be discussed during parent-teacher interviews or specific attendance meetings.
- Confidentiality will be maintained regarding individual student attendance records, shared only on a need-to-know basis or with explicit consent.

Review and Evaluation

This Attendance Management Plan will be reviewed annually by the school leadership team in conjunction with the Waihao Downs School Board. The review will include:

- Analysis of school-wide and cohort attendance data against the 90% justified attendance target.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of intervention strategies.
- Feedback from staff, students, and whānau/caregivers.
- Updates to reflect any changes in Ministry of Education guidelines or school policy.
- Review of Student Attendance Policy and Attendance Procedures as per SchoolDocs Review Process