ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Updated 9/12/25

At Tauranga Special School, our mission is Hei Ako Tahi - Learning Together. We understand that it is in learning alongside our ākonga, whānau and community, that we can more effectively support wellbeing, attendance and engagement.

Key Principles for our special school context:
Whānau partnership is central: attendance challenges often reflect wider whānau and/or health needs
Flexibility: we acknowledge complex medical, transport, sensory regulation or behavioural reasons for absence
Mana-enhancing approach: we focus on what is possible, we celebrate small steps
Cultural responsiveness: the values of our ākonga & whānau cultural backgrounds are woven through communication and solutions
Documentation: every step is recorded to ensure transparency and support continuity

Rationale: Regular attendance supports connection, learning progress, wellbeing, and the development of independence. For many students in a special school setting, attendance is impacted by health, disability, transport, and whānau circumstances. The purpose of this Attendance Management Plan (AMP) is to ensure that attendance is actively monitored and supported in a way that upholds the rights, dignity, and needs of all students at Tauranga Special School. This AMP provides a stepped framework for responding to attendance concerns, ensuring actions are empathetic, equitable, culturally responsive, and tailored to the diverse strengths & needs of our ākonga and their whānau. Inclusion of Wellbeing Plans and responses within the Stepped Attendance Response (STAR), including use of Te Whare Tapa Whā as our framework to support wellbeing, ensure barriers are addressed in partnership with whānau and external agencies, while maintaining a focus on ākonga wellbeing and inclusion.

Legislative and Policy Alignment: This plan is consistent with the Education and Training Act 2020, Ministry of Education Attendance and Engagement Guidelines and our Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations as a kura in New Zealand.

Board of Trustees Responsibilities:
Our Tauranga Special School Board of Trustees will investigate, respond (in line with the Attendance Management Plan) and record actions taken in relation to absences. The board is responsible for taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend the school when it is open for instruction.
The board will comply with the provisions in the legislation in relation to student attendance by:
- having a commitment to support students return to regular attendance
- having processes and procedures in place to support a Stepped Attendance Response to student absence that uses data-based thresholds to identify students
- recording all absences, and responding accordingly

- having an effective method in place for identifying and monitoring student absence, including identifying patterns and barriers to student attendance
- publishing this attendance management plan on the school's website

The Board will receive termly attendance reporting- including information provided by the Every Day matters report. Included in this reporting will be any emerging trends, barriers to attendance, and areas of concern for the Board's consideration.

Principal Responsibilities:
The Principal is responsible for:
- developing and implementing a stepped attendance response aligned with the thresholds to support student attendance
- ensuring student absence is investigated, responded to and actions taken recorded aligned with the thresholds
- ensure all stakeholders understand the processes and procedures that support student attendance
- Report to the Board on any trends, barriers to attendance and interventions being used to support student attendance

ABSENCE / ATTENDANCE PATTERNS 2025

Terms	PRESENT	Reasons for absence							MoE STAR: Attendance / Absence Thresholds			
		JUSTIFIED			UNJUSTIFIED				GOOD Less than 5 days absent per term (90% attendance)	WORRYING Up to 10 days absence per term (80% attendance)	CONCERNING Up to 15 days absence per term (70% attendance)	SERIOUS CONCERN 15 days or more absence per term (less than 70% attendance)
		Illness/ Medical (M)	Stood down / Suspended (U)	Explained & Justified (J)	Unknown (?)	Truant (T)	Holiday (G)	Explained but not approved (E)				
Term 1	80.11%	4.98%	0.72%	7.96%	2.08%	0%	1.43%	0.28%	83.52%	TBA	TBA	TBA
Term 2	76.54%	7.12%	0.93%	8.64%	2.87%	0.01%	1.16%	0.59%	79.64%	TBA	TBA	TBA
Term 3	72.89%	13.65%	0.16%	7.2%	1.76%	0.01%	1.11%	0.5%	76.92%	TBA	TBA	TBA
Term 4 (to 9/12/25)	75.5%	10.59%	0.26%	3.29%	1.79%	0.09%	1.1%	0.7%	96.63%	TBA	TBA	TBA

ATTENDANCE / ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGES

The majority of absences are justified
- The largest percentage of justified absences are due to illness / medical reasons (M), and
- The second largest percentage of justified absences are recorded as (J) *Explained & Justified*

A small percentage of absences are unjustified
- A large percentage of unjustified absences across years are recorded as (?) *Unknown*
- The second largest percentage of unjustified absences are recorded as (G) *Holidays during term time*

Attendance patterns
- Female students have a slightly larger proportion of absences, both justified and unjustified
- Pasifika students have a higher absence rate than our overall kura attendance rate

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The government target is that 80% of students will be regularly attending school by 2030 *(regular attendance: attendance greater than 90% of the time)*
Our school currently has 79.4% regular attendance and a target of lifting regular attendance to *82%* by the end of 2026.

Strategic Plan 2026-2029
Goal: Establish and embed a positive, consistent, and innovative school culture by fostering deep reciprocal relationships and collective wellbeing
Initiative: Implement and embed an Attendance Management Plan

Effectiveness will be measured by improvements in attendance data, whānau feedback, kaimahi feedback and the success of collaborative interventions.

ATTENDANCE CODES

From January 2025, the following codes are used to record absences:

Discretionary Attendance Codes:

School Boards and Principals have discretion on the application of some attendance codes. Tauranga Special School discretionary application of the following codes are detailed below:

L (Late to class): Thresholds and acceptable timeframes for lateness	- Any student arrival after 9.30am is coded as L (late) - Late arrival due to reasons out of student/whānau control e.g. SESTA/Cross Country/transport issues (*L is a presence code whereas **J** is an absence code*) **N.B: Teachers - note must be recorded on Edge to state arrival time**
Q (Board approved offsite learning): Presence at offsite learning approved by the school board	- Offsite engagement/activities for the purposes of transition - Orientation visits - Work experience - Participation in AIMS Games - Sports representation at a National / International level - Engagement with online learning - Parent-funded sports/recreation e.g. Sailability / RDA (if these activities form part of student IP) - Site closures due to Health & Safety (TMAS advice 17/11/25)
J (Explained & approved): Absences that are explained and approved by the Principal/Board	**Must only be used for a maximum of 5 days (MoE requirement)** **NB: Staff must not use this code without first checking with Principal/LT** - Family emergencies, bereavement, cultural events (Kaumatua advice as appropriate) - Accompanying family members for sports/cultural representation Nationally/Internationally for extended periods of time, and when adequate supervision/care at home can not be provided if the student were to continue to attend school. - Parent is unwell and is unable to support student to attend school
E (Explained but not approved): Absences that are explained but not approved	Parent-funded sport/recreation sessions provided by external providers that do not form part of student IP (e.g. Sailability, RDA) - clarify why these cannot occur outside school hours
FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS:	
M (Illness / Medical) Absences due to illness/medical reasons, including mental health-related absences (e.g. anxiety)	- Medical certificate required as appropriate and outlined in individual student Wellbeing Plan or Attendance Improvement Plan/s - Lack of sleep, resulting in dysregulation and behaviour indicating distress - Anxiety resulting in dysregulation and behaviour indicating distress - Recuperation after an operation

Ongoing guidance will be provided by Tauranga Moana Attendance Services and the MoE regarding use of codes pertaining to our unique school context.

ONGOING OPERATIONS: Universal Attendance Support (all students)

Key Objectives:	Action	When	Who
To foster whānau awareness about the importance of attendance for wellbeing, learning and connection.	• Include statement in enrolment pack, outlining attendance importance, expectations and supports	Given to whānau as part of enrolment	Leadership
	• Engage in whānau messaging (Storypark, Newsletter, Email) to share expectations of student attendance, communication with school regarding child's attendance, and supports we can offer • Ensure Te Ao Māori values, such as manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, are embedded in all communication • Share attendance policy	Beginning of each term IP Meetings: T1 & T3 Hui a Whānau: T2 / T4	Principal Teachers Leadership
	• Engage students in learning that is relevant and presented in ways that engage students including individualised learning goals and other learning. • Support students using schoolwide approaches such as Zones of Regulation (for sensory regulation), AAC communication systems (for communication) • Use existing school systems to provide positive reinforcement for improvements/good attendance (e.g. weekly awards, Storypark posts, praise, whānau acknowledgement)	Each day Each week	Classroom teachers & support staff
To ensure correct coding of absence	• Provide PLD on absence, correct coding and making notes for unjustified absences	Term 1 annually	Leadership/AP
	• Teacher/admin to use correct codes and make notes on Edge for absences	Daily	Classroom teachers/ Attendance Officer
	• Leadership checks on attendance coding • Monitor teacher/admin consistency of coding	2-3 times per term Termly review/discussion in Staff Meetings	Leadership / Attendance Officer
	Identify any trends in student absence through analysis of data	Termly review of data	Principal/Leadership/ Board
	Email whānau encouraging/requesting them to advise school of students absence and reason ahead of time	Beginning of each term	Leadership
	Review policy on coding of absence and familiarise staff with any changes	Beginning of each year	Board/Principal/Lead ership
To review and adjust Attendance Management Plan	Attendance data will be reported to the Board of Trustees	Every term	Leadership / Principal

	This Plan will be reviewed at the end of Term 2 2026, and/or by the end of the year. Ongoing reviews will occur as required by legislative or Ministry of Education changes.	As per requirements	
	Effectiveness will be measured by improvements in attendance data, whānau & staff feedback, and the success of collaborative interventions	Termly data review Termly Hui a Whānau Termly staff meeting feedback	

IDENTIFYING UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES

Key Objectives:	Action	When	Who
Identify why a student is absent by the end of each week	Contact the parent/caregiver by: ● Phone call ● Text ● Email	● 9.30(-10.30am) on day ● Continued contact throughout day ● Identified by the end of the week	Attendance Officer
	Liaise with Classroom Teacher regarding absence reason	● Following inability to contact parent/caregiver	Attendance Officer
	If unable to contact parents/caregivers, mark T for Truant	● End of the day	Classroom Teacher
	Contact the parent/caregiver to explain the importance of attendance reporting for wellbeing/support and due to MoE requirements	● If absence continues to be unexplained for a second day	Attendance Officer
	Ensure Edge has up to date contact information for parents/caregivers	● Beginning of the year and mid-year, send information to parents/caregivers to update ● Regularly advise teachers to advise admin and update Edge with change of details - as relevant	Attendance Officer

For Tauranga Special School STAR (Stepped Attendance Response) see next page.

STEPPED ATTENDANCE RESPONSE (STAR)

ACTIONS to support student wellbeing when *valid, complex reasons for ongoing barriers to attendance* are identified:

Key Objectives:	Action	Who
To support holistic wellbeing in alternative ways	- In partnership with whānau, classroom teacher, health professionals and other external agencies, Leadership Team member/s identify ākonga with high physical health/mental health or other complex needs, either at Enrolment or as part of the STAR process. - Leadership contact whānau via phone & Edge/email to: - Explain STAR & school responsibility to offer support, whānau responsibility to engage - Request hui as needed (kanohi ki te kanohi - face to face- preferred) - Ensure follow-up email confirming hui is sent to whānau - Hui with whānau (& external agencies as appropriate) - Co-create an individualised **Student Wellbeing Plan** (link here: 📄 TSS Wellbeing Plan 2026) - Communicate regularly with key stakeholders identified in the Wellbeing Plan regarding supports detailed in the Plan - Keep records of all actions/support taken in Edge and once created, notes can be maintained through the Wellbeing Plan **If ākonga ability to attend changes, or ākonga attendance and/or wellbeing declines:** - Continue to implement actions/initiatives as per Wellbeing Plan (where possible/relevant) - Maintain supportive and clear communication with ākonga and whānau - Referral to the Ministry of Education - Tauranga Moana Attendance Service via ENROL - Leadership convenes a multi-agency meeting i.e. school, whānau, health professionals, agencies, (Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki or social services if appropriate) N.B. The whānau of ākonga with a Wellbeing Plan will not be communicated with at each threshold of attendance as outlined by our STAR, however communication type and frequency, as well as Plan reviews, will be outlined within the Wellbeing Plan for each ākonga.	Leadership Principal

Actions to support students with less than 5 days of absence within a term

Key Objectives:	Action	Who
Identify learners with up to 5 days full days absence in a term	- Check Edge to identify students who have been absent for less than 5 days (over the term) - Email to advise Principal, Leadership Team and classroom teacher if any student has reached 5 days of absence.	Attendance Officer
To reduce or eliminate absence	- Classroom teacher check-in with whānau (kaupapa of care, not compliance) - Express support for whānau and ākonga - explore any barriers (transport, health, anxiety, communication challenges) - Record all conversations and actions taken in Edge and staff notes	Classroom teacher

Actions to support students with up to 10 days of absence within a term

Key Objectives:	Action	Who
Identify learners with up to 10 days full days absence in a term	- Check Edge to identify students who have been absent for up to 10 days (over the term) - Email to advise Principal, Leadership Team and classroom teacher if any student has reached 10 days of absence	Attendance Officer
To reduce or eliminate absence	- Classroom teacher and PLL/Leadership check-in with whānau (kaupapa of care, not compliance) - Explore any barriers (transport, health, anxiety, communication challenges) - Offer immediate practical support (adjusted transport arrangements, flexible start/finish times, sensory/medical adjustments) - Facilitate links with external agencies - new or renewed - Leadership explain STAR, with a focus on supportive process - Record all conversations and actions taken in Edge and staff notes	PLL / Leadership / Classroom teacher (guided by relationship)

Actions to support students with up to 15 days of absence within a term

Key Objectives:	Action	Who
Identify learners with up to 15 full days absence in a term	- Check Edge to identify students who have been absent for up to 15 days (over the term) - Email to advise Principal, Leadership and classroom teacher if any student has reached 15 days of absence.	Attendance Officer
To reduce or eliminate absence	- Leadership contact whānau via phone & Edge/email to: - Explain attendance concern - Explain STAR & school responsibility to offer support, whānau responsibility to engage - Request hui as needed (kanohi ki te kanohi - face to face- preferred) - Ensure follow-up email confirming hui is sent to whānau - Hui: collaborative problem-solving with whānau (& external agencies as appropriate) - Health/medical needs - Transport review - Social/emotional supports (sensory spaces, toolbox resources) - Co-create an individualised **Attendance Improvement Plan** (link here: 📄 TSS Attendance Improvement Plan 2026) - Explain STAR next steps, with a focus on supportive process - Provide regular updates on progress to whānau - Keep records of all actions taken in Edge and staff notes *and*, once created, notes can be maintained through the **Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP)**	Classroom teacher (copied in all communications) Leadership Hui: Professional Learning Leader Therapists

Actions to support students with 15 days or more of absence within a term		
Key Objectives:	**Action**	**Who**
To support attendance for students with chronic absence	- Leadership identify students with **Attendance Improvement Plans (AIP)** - Leadership and whānau regularly discuss and review progress of supports (2 times per term or as appropriate) - Leadership encourage ongoing engagement with external agencies (as appropriate) - Organise/convene hui (as per AIP format), to review plan - Keep records of all conversations/actions taken in AIP/Edge/notes	Leadership
To reduce or eliminate absence for students who have 15 or more days of absence within a term	When interventions/actions/initiatives are in place as per **Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP):** - Track data regarding current supports - Update records in AIP - Discuss and identify potential further support options (see below for examples/possible options) - Keep records of all actions taken in AIP - Engage in ongoing review via AIP process	Leadership /PLL / Classroom teacher
	Reviewing supports for **students,** for example: - The student has anxiety or is troubled by something at school - identify, plan and implement an approach (note if potential medical issue refer whānau to GP/Paediatrician) - The program is not engaging - identify, plan and implement a program that will be engaging to the student - The student has difficulty with teaching style or delivery of lessons - identify, plan and implement a program that will be engaging to the student - The student has difficulty with their peers - identify, plan and implement a program that will be engaging to the student	Classroom Teacher Professional Learning Leader Mana Kaha Team Therapists Can be supported by Leadership
	Review supports for **whānau,** for example: - The student has anxiety about coming to school - discuss support from GP / Paediatrician / School team/other - Difficulties with transport - identify possible ways to resolve transport issue - eg school transport - The student has difficulty sleeping/sleep problems impact on attendance - visual supports, discuss importance of routines and sleep hygiene, referral to agencies as appropriate - External agency supports - Ministry of Education - Tauranga Moana Attendance Services	As relevant: Classroom Teacher Professional Learning Leader Mana Kaha & Therapy Team Leadership Principal GP/Paed External Agencies
	For further support or as part of an ongoing AIP review process: - Leadership convenes a multi-agency meeting i.e. school, whānau, health professionals, agencies, (Ministry of Education Tauranga Moana Attendance Services, Oranga Tamariki or social services if appropriate) - Flexible schooling pathways (e.g., Te Kura, blended options, part-time programmes) may be considered - A designated staff member is assigned as key liaison with whānau	As relevant: Classroom Teacher Professional Learning Leader Mana Kaha & Therapy Team Leadership / Principal GP/Paed/other External Agencies

FURTHER SUPPORT ACTIONS if non-attendance continues despite intensive support, *and no valid reasons are identified:*		
Key Objectives:	**Action**	**Who**
To support attendance for students with ongoing chronic absence	If non-attendance continues despite intensive support, *and no valid reasons are identified:* ● Continue to implement actions/initiatives as per AIP (where possible/relevant) ● Maintain supportive and clear communication with ākonga and whānau ● Referral to the Ministry of Education - Tauranga Moana Attendance Service via ENROL ● Evidence of all school-based interventions and communications is provided ● School participate in multi-agency response ● Unenrol students who will not be returning to school	Leadership Principal

ONGOING ACTIONS/FOLLOW UP		
Key Objectives:	**Action**	**Who**
To support attendance for students with chronic absence	● Each term discuss and analyse attendance data from Edge and Every Day Matters ● Identify appropriate PLD opportunities for staff to support reduction in absences ● Keep a school database of interventions that have been successful and interventions that have been unsuccessful with analysis information ● Report to Board on attendance ● Review and evaluate Attendance Management Plan mid year and end of year	Leadership, Principal