Port Ahuriri School Attendance Management Plan

Regular school attendance is vital for the success and well-being of our tamariki. Attending school every day helps children build strong foundations for learning, develop positive social skills, and stay connected to their peers and teachers.

The New Zealand Government has set a national target for 80% of students to attend school at least **90% of the time**. This means that students should be absent for no more than **one day per fortnight** to ensure they are fully engaged in their learning.

At Port Ahuriri School, we are committed to working alongside whānau to support attendance and remove any barriers that may prevent our tamariki from coming to school. Our **Stepped Attendance Plan** outlines a proactive and supportive approach to improving attendance, ensuring that every child can thrive.

Strategic Plan
Strategic Goal 'Positive Relationships Through Whānau Involvement'

Annual Implementation Plan
Our Annual Implementation plan has a focus on implementing our attendance management plan.

Current Attendance Data
Term 2 2025
78 % Regular attendance (90% of the time)
15 % Irregular attendance (80-89% of the time)
5 % Moderate attendance (70-79% of the time)
2 % Chronic attendance (less than 69% of the time)

Target
In the previous 12 months, there has been an increase of 12 percentage points in regular attendance for term two. If we can increase the term 2 attendance result each year by 3 percentage points, we will achieve 91% attendance in 2029.

Attendance Procedures

At Port Ahuriri School, our attendance procedures ensure students are accounted for during school hours and activities as well as emergency events. This allows school staff to identify and respond to student attendance concerns. We recognise the importance of regular attendance to support student welfare and help students achieve their educational potential.

As required by the Education and Training Act 2020 (s 35), 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 the Ministry of Education. The board takes all reasonable steps to ensure all students enrolled at Port Ahuriri School attend school when it is open (Education and Training Act 2020 (s 36)).

Port Ahuriri School records and monitors attendance using set attendance procedures. We have annual targets for student attendance, and work with students, parents and caregivers, staff, and external agencies where necessary to improve our levels of student attendance. We share our attendance information with the Ministry of Education.

Attendance Expectations

We set and reinforce attendance expectations through:

- Discussions about expectations at enrolment interviews / transition meetings
- Expectations are documented on enrolment
- Regular communications via school communication channels
- Reiteration during school assemblies
- External recognition should the school manage its targets during term time

Parent/Guardian and Student Responsibilities

Parents and guardians have legal obligations to ensure their children attend school (Education and Training Act, s 244). We expect parents/guardians to:

- notify the school as soon as possible if their child is going to be late or absent
- arrange appointments and trips outside school hours or during school holidays where possible
- work with the school to manage attendance concerns.

We share attendance expectations with students and their parents/guardians and caregivers, and require students to be present and attend classes on time.

Parents/Guardians may ask for their child to be excused from certain areas of the curriculum for religious or cultural reasons. The principal reviews these requests and considers the preferences of the student. The school provides supervision for any students who do not participate in certain areas of the curriculum.

Attendance Management Guidelines

Port Ahuriri School has procedures to record and monitor attendance, and to identify and follow up concerns. We share attendance expectations with students and their parents/caregivers.

Recording Attendance

We record attendance accurately to ensure all students are accounted for, including for emergency situations. The school provides attendance data to the Ministry of Education each day, as required by the Education and Training Act 2020 and Education (School Attendance) Regulations 2024. We monitor absence patterns using our student management system and notify parents/caregivers of any concerns.

Classroom teachers, learning support staff, and office staff work together to ensure attendance is recorded correctly. Relievers provide attendance information directly to the school office.

We record students as present or absent using Ministry of Education attendance codes. An absence may be justified or unjustified based on the reason for the absence.

Justified Absences
These are absences that are explained and the reason is accepted as a valid reason for the student to miss school

- **Medical / Illness (M).**
  Used if a student is home due to illness or medical reasons, including mental health or anxiety
- **Explained and Approved (J)**
  Used for valid reasons such as:
  - Family emergency
  - Bereavement
  - Exam Leave such as a ballet or music exam. Justified leave will be granted for a half-day absence. Any longer that a half-day will be classed as unjustified
- **Medical Appointment (D)**
  Used for Doctors or dentist appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours.
- **Board Approved Off-Site Learning (Q)**
  Used for activities such as Nature Connect

A Justified code tells the school that the reason for the absence is acceptable but still indicates the student has missed out on that day's learning.

Unjustified Absences
These are absences where a student is away with or without parental knowledge and the reason does not meet the criteria for a valid absence.

- **Holiday During Term Time (G)**
  Used when travel or holidays are taken while school is open
- **Explained but Not Approved (E)**

Used when a parent provides a reason, but it is not considered justifiable. E.g. Staying home for their birthday or not wanting to attend a school event.

- **Truant (T)**
  Used when the student is absent without explanation or the office was not notified of a reason for the absence
- **Unknown (?)**
  Used only as temporary code while we wait for an explanation from home.

Monitoring Attendance

The school office receives attendance information from classroom teachers and/or relievers and is responsible for checking and updating attendance information (e.g. due to students arriving late or going home early). Office staff follow up absences, monitor for changes or trends in student attendance, and coordinate with relevant staff as needed.

Staff are encouraged to report any attendance concerns to the principal.

Student Absences

Parents/Caregivers are expected to notify the school as soon as possible (before or during the school day) if their child will be absent. Port Ahuriri School will contact parents/caregivers directly if no explanation is provided for student absence.

Under the Education and Training Act 2020 (s 45), the principal may allow a student to be absent from school for up to five days if there is a justified reason for absence (e.g. due to illness, a funeral or tangihanga, or other approved reason at the discretion of the school). For planned absences, requests must be made to the principal before the planned event.

The principal has discretion to approve or deny requests, based on criteria including:

- the benefit to education for the student (including qualifications and experience of course providers as relevant)
- the length of time away from regular school programmes that the activity will require.

If a student does not arrive at school or goes missing during the day (including from an EOTC event), we check there are no errors in how attendance information was recorded or updated (e.g. if a student has gone home due to illness). If necessary, we follow up with parents/guardians and/or emergency contacts. We may also follow our Missing Student Procedure

Following up Unexplained Absences

Port Ahuriri School takes all reasonable steps to ensure students attend school while it is open, including following up unexplained absences.

Our follow-up actions may include:

- analysing attendance data for patterns of absence
- contacting parents/caregivers to outline attendance expectations
- meeting with students and their parents/caregivers to discuss strategies for improving attendance
- discussing school programmes with relevant staff to better meet the needs of students at risk of disengagement.

We may also refer students with extended or persistent absences to Attendance services .

Absence Thresholds

Step 1 Less than 5 days per term

- Monitor attendance as a part of normal practice.

Step 2 Up to 10 days absence per term

- Monitor attendance as a part of normal practice particularly if absences are medical and/or holiday/family visiting.

- Contact whānau to discuss reasons/support
- Offer any in-school resources needed to address barriers
- Formal notification if concerning patterns emerge
- Record interventions and monitor attendance.

Step 3 Up to 15 days absences per term

- Monitor attendance as a part of normal practice particularly if absences are medical and/or holiday/family visiting.
- Escalate formal notification to parents
- Hold face to face meetings to discuss reasons
- Collaboratively develop plan
- Engage external agencies as appropriate
- Record interventions and review and monitor progress regularly.

Step 4 15+ days per term

- Monitor attendance as a part of normal practice particularly if absences are medical and/or holiday/family visiting.
- Escalate notice to a formal warning
- Hold face to face parent meeting
- Initiate multi-agency response/Ministry led support
- Implement and monitor an intensive attendance plan
- Record interventions and review and monitor progress regularly.
- Unenroll if all options have been exhausted and following Ministry guidelines.

Guidelines do not preclude the Principal from using their discretion over a specific student absence.

Addressing Late Students

Students and/or caregivers sign in through Vistab in the office with the reason for being late
Lateness is reviewed via Hubs to identify students with frequent lateness
Whānau contact is made to understand the reasons for absence
The school offers support to address any emerging barriers

Monitoring and Measuring Progress

The principal is the senior leader who is responsible for attendance improvement in the school.
The Principal, Deputy Principal and office administrator have timely discussions about coding decisions as they arise.
Hub leaders will review progress and results regularly. This is to be a regular discussion at hub meeting and reported during principal/hub leader meetings on a regular basis. This will form the basis of next steps for the following term.
The principal will provide the Board each term the EveryDay Matters Ministry of Education attendance report for analysis against the Annual Implementation plan targets.
The office staff follow up with teachers about interactions with whānau of absent children.

Supporting Students Returning to School

To assist students who have missed learning, staff will as able, differentiate practice
Teachers will operate a positive and inclusive classroom culture to welcome students back to school and re-establish friendships
Depending on level of absence, ongoing monitoring by the school will enable early response to emerging learning or well-being issues
As part of good practice, teachers will ensure that whānau of returning students are kept informed of the integration progress.