



## Aidanfield Christian School Attendance Management Plan

### Background

Boards are required to design, approve and implement an Attendance Management Plan (**AMP**) by Term 1, 2026. The completed AMP will be implemented and published on the schools website.

### Aim

AMP aims to improve student attendance by providing clear pathways to identify and address absences. The Government goal is 80% of the students attending school 90% of the time by 2030.

### AMP must show:

- A clear process to identify and respond to student absences.
- Strategies or interventions at different attendance thresholds (based on the number of days absent in a term).

### MOE Resources

- AMP documentation
- STAR documents – Stepped Attendance Response

### Attendance Management Policy

<b>Approval:</b>	<i>Signed:</i> <i>Zheuy Lam</i>	<b>Published on:</b> 28 January 2026	www.aidanfield.school.nz
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<i>Date: 28 January 2026</i>	<b>Review Date:</b>	<i>Date: 28 January 2028</i>

## Success criteria for Aidanfield Christian School Attendance

- a) Aidanfield Christian School goal: 80% of students attend 90% of the time by 2028<sup>1</sup>.
- b) The school community is provided with clear pathways to identify and address absences.
- c) Uniformity across the school for dealing with absences and coding of absences. This is particularly important when there are children from the same family across the school.

## Aidanfield Christian School Report Evaluation of Attendance

- **Excellent Attendance:** 95% or above attendance.
- **Regular Attendance:** 90% to 95% attendance.
- **Non-regular Attendance:** 85% up to 90% attendance.
- **Attendance Of Concern:** Below 85% attendance.

At Aidanfield Christian School, we have high expectations of all students and therefore will respond to 'Non-Regular' or 'Attendance of Concern' as soon as it is identified.

## 1. Attendance Objectives and Strategic Priorities

Absence from school does not just mean missing content—it disrupts learning patterns, reduces engagement, and disconnects students from critical school support systems. Research is clear: **regular attendance is one of the most reliable predictors of academic success.**

School attendance is vital to learning success for several key reasons:

### 1. Consistent Learning

- Daily lessons build on each other. Missing even a few days can leave gaps in understanding.
- Students who attend regularly are more likely to keep up with the pace of the curriculum.

### 2. Teacher Interaction

- Being present allows students to ask questions and get immediate feedback from teachers.
- Teachers can better understand a student's strengths and struggles when they see them regularly.

### 3. Classroom Participation and Peer Interaction

- Learning is not just about listening. It is also about participating in discussions, group work, and hands-on activities that help deepen understanding.
- Students who are not consistently at school become disconnected from their friendships and find it harder to re-integrate with their peers when they are present.

### 4. Spiritual, Social and Emotional Development

- The Aidanfield school context has the potential to enhance the spiritual development of students. Regular attendance at school means that students can participate in the fullness of an authentic Christian community. Aidanfield's vision is to be biblical, relational, transformative – regular student attendance enhances the schools chance of working this out for each individual student as well as collectively.
- School helps students develop social skills by interacting with peers. This also provides opportunities for students to use their gifts and abilities daily to serve God and others.

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<sup>1</sup>The Government has a goal of 80% of students attending 90% of the time by 2030.

- Regular attendance supports routines and a sense of belonging (**turangawaewae**), both of which are linked to better mental health and motivation.

## 2. Attendance definitions

### 2.1 Ministry of Education Definitions of Rates of Attendance

- **Regular Attendance:** Fewer than 5 days of absence in a term, i.e. over 90% attendance.
- **Irregular Absence<sup>2</sup>:** Up to 10 days' absence in a term, i.e. more than 80% and up to 90% attendance.
- **Moderate Absence:** Up to 15 days' absence in a term, i.e. more than 70% and up to 80% attendance.
- **Chronic Absence:** 15 days or more of absence in a term, i.e. 70% attendance or less.

'Regular Attendance' refers to the frequency of absences from school by individual students during a term. This differs from 'Daily Attendance' rates, which describe the percentage of students attending school on any given day. The Government is focusing on Regular Attendance as it provides a picture of the number of students persistently missing school, using the four categories above. It enables the school to recognise and actively support those students and families with irregular to chronic absences.

Aidanfield Attendance Management Plan will activate where a student falls into the **Non-regular Attendance:** 85% up to 90% attendance category.

## 3. Legal Obligations<sup>3</sup>

### Education and Training Act 2020

1. Except as provided in the Act, a student is required to attend school whenever it is open.
2. The principal must ensure that an accurate attendance record is kept for each student enrolled at the school.
3. The Board of Trustees must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend school when it is open.
4. Parents/Caregivers must ensure the student attends school whenever it is open.
5. Under Section 45, if satisfied that a student's absence is justified, the principal of the school may exempt the student from attending the school for a period of no more than five school days.

### Attendance Rules (Ministry of Education)

**Rule 1:** The principal of a State school must ensure that attendance records are kept for each student enrolled at the school (either by half-day or period) for each half-day that the school is open for instruction. The principal must ensure that the school has an absence notification process so that absences can be notified by and to the school promptly.

**Rule 2:** The principal of a State school must use a Ministry-approved Electronic Attendance Register unless exempt.

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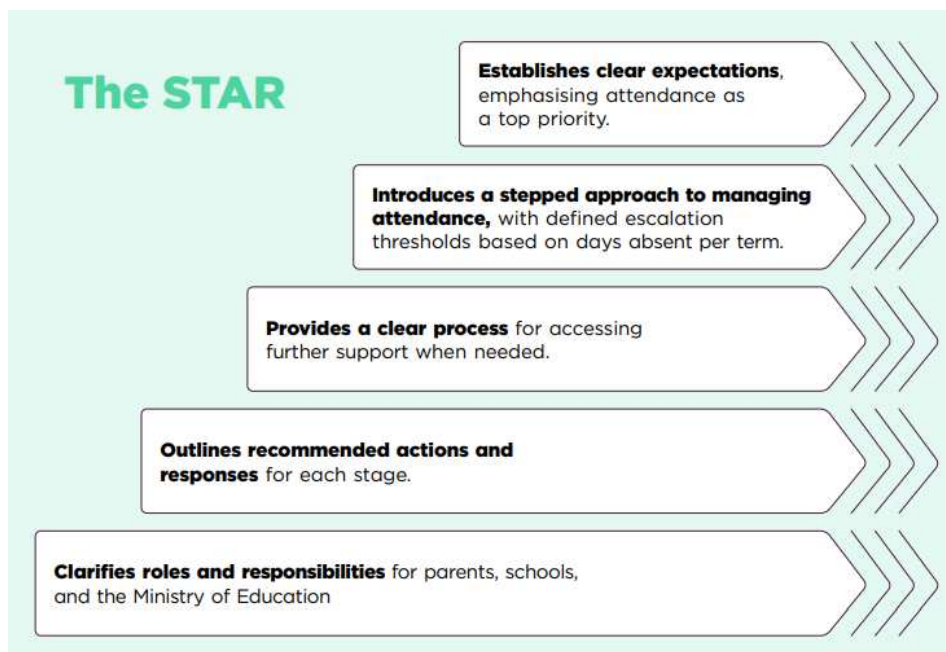
<sup>2</sup> The MOE does not distinguish between justified and unjustified absences. All absences count towards the threshold descriptors.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 1 provides additional details from the Education and Training Act 2020.

**Rule 3:** The principal of a State school must use Ministry-approved attendance codes, including a default attendance code, to mark a student's absence for each half-day or period that the student is absent without explanation.

#### 4. Attendance Management Steps at Aidanfield Christian School

The Attendance Management Procedures at Aidanfield Christian School cover six key aspects to ensure high levels of attendance. This aligns with the **Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)** approach provided by the Ministry of Education. See the graphic below.



In response to the STAR Aidanfield Christian School will:

- 1. Expectations:** Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents, and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn.
- 2. Monitor:** Use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at both individual and cohort levels) as soon as possible, so that all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. The school's **"Every Day Matters" Report** will be regularly reviewed to track student attendance rates, including justified and unjustified absence reasons.
- 3. Listen and understand:** Meet with, listen to and understand barriers to attendance for students and/or parents when a pattern is identified and agree on how all parties can work together to resolve them.
- 4. Facilitate support:** To the degree it is possible, remove barriers within the school and help students and parents access the support they need to overcome challenges outside of school.
- 5. Formalise support:** Where absence persists and voluntary support is not effective or not being utilised, work together with all parties to clearly explain the consequences and ensure that support is also in place to enable families to respond.
- 6. Enforce:** Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention, which may include prosecution to protect the student's right to an education.

## 5. Communicating Expectations

The school will remind parents of the importance of high attendance levels, the educational costs associated with poor attendance, the process by which parents can inform the school, and how they can seek help as needed. Pro-forma examples are provided in [Appendix Two](#).

Parents communicate absence via either: email, use the School App, or call the school absence line to report an absence. Notification must include an explanation for the absence.

The school will provide clear communication to parents on attendance expectations

- on enrolment,
- at the start of the school year, and each term.
- At all new parent orientation events,

The school will use multiple avenues to remind parents regularly about attendance data (eg. Facebook, newsletters, school app, emails). A variety of formats will hopefully encourage parents to read the information.

As part of the enrolment process for new students, attendance information will be requested from their previous school, including the number of days of absence in the preceding year, and whether the school had any concerns regarding attendance. If there are concerns, then further information will be requested from the school.

Attendance procedures and information will be presented on the school website.

Teachers and Heads of School remind students regularly in whānau time and school assemblies of the importance of attendance at school.

Student diaries will provide information on the importance of school attendance.

Pro-forma letters are sent to parents regarding specific issues, such as holidays in term time, prolonged medical absences, or students who exceed the higher threshold for absences. Pro-forma examples are provided in [Appendix Two](#).

Information for parents should be available in their first language where possible.

Support staff involved in recording attendance, and senior leaders will be fully conversant with the Attendance Management Plan and the MOE Attendance Code Guidance document.

The Attendance Officer (AO) will be responsible for ensuring that the school communicates its expectations to the parents.

## 6. Determination of applicable Attendance Codes in Kamar

The Ministry of Education provides excellent resources to support school staff in making decisions about which code to apply when recording daily attendance.

- a. Attendance Code Decision Tree (shown below).
- b. Attendance Code Guidance Document.

c. Revised Attendance Codes: FAQs

School boards and principals have discretion on the application of attendance codes. Such as:

- d. **L** Late to class: Thresholds and acceptable timeframes for lateness
- e. **Q** Board-approved off-site learning: Presence at off-site learning is approved by the school board.
- f. **J** Explained and approved: Absences that are explained and approved by the principal
- g. **E** Explained but not approved: Absences that are explained but not approved by the principal

Notes:

- Attendance is measured in **half days**.
- Schools are generally open for two half-days. One in the morning, before noon, and one in the afternoon.
- Attending for a half day requires a minimum of 2 hours of being present at school.
- Medical certificates are required after five days of medical (M) absences for year 7 to 10 students.

<b>Presence</b>	<p>A student is <b>present</b> if they;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>P</b> are physically <b>present in class</b>,</li><li><b>L</b> arrive <b>late to class</b> within school/kura determined thresholds,</li><li><b>A</b> are physically present in <b>alternative provision</b>,</li><li><b>V</b> are engaged in onsite <b>exams or study</b>,</li><li><b>N</b> are <b>temporarily out of class</b> either <b>at school</b>,</li><li><b>D</b> or in an <b>appointment</b>,</li><li><b>Q</b> or are engaged in <b>Board approved learning offsite</b>.</li></ul>
<b>Justified absence</b>	<p>A student is <b>justifiably absent</b> if they;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>M</b> are <b>ill/unwell</b>,</li><li><b>U</b> have been formally <b>stood down or suspended</b>,</li><li><b>X</b> are engaged in offsite <b>study for exams</b>,</li><li><b>J</b> or the school principal has <b>approved their absence</b>.</li></ul>
<b>Unjustified absence</b>	<p>A student is <b>unjustifiably absent</b> if;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>?</b> the reason for the absence is <b>not yet known</b>,</li><li><b>T</b> they are absent <b>without parent/caregiver permission</b>,</li><li><b>G</b> they are taking a <b>holiday during term time</b>,</li><li><b>E</b> or their absence is <b>explained but not approved</b> by the principal.</li></ul>



# Attendance Code Decision Tree

Updated 1 April 2025



## 7. Monitoring attendance

### The School will

- Communicate with parents about every absence.
- Maintain up-to-date contact details of parents.
- Provide students with regular updates on their own attendance
- Report regularly to parents on the attendance of their child.
- Regularly review the school's **"Every Day Matters" Report** to track student attendance rates, including justified and unjustified absence reasons.

### Auto-notifications from KAMAR

- Consecutive Days of absence set at 5, and 10 days, sent to the pastoral lead.
- Attendance % for each week for students who have under 60% attendance that week, sent to the pastoral lead.

## 8. Overview of the ACS Attendance Management Plan

### DAY TO DAY ABSENCES



#### SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

- Clear communication to parents on attendance expectations on enrolment, at the start of the year and each term.
- Communicate to parents what steps the school will take in the event their child is absent from school.



#### ADMINISTRATION

- Highlight attendance issues to pastoral team.
- Maintain contact details of parents.
- Communicate with parents about every unexplained absence.



#### WHĀNAU TEACHER

- Provide parent/students with regular updates on their own attendance.
- Monitor attendance patterns, discuss concerns with students, communicate with parents and escalate issues to pastoral team.

## ON-GOING ABSENCES



### PASTORAL TEAM

- Monitor attendance and identify patterns and areas of concern.
- Notify whānau teacher of necessary actions.



### WHĀNAU TEACHER

- Contact parent/caregiver to discuss concerns about absence.
- Support students to catch up missed learning where required.
- Refer situation to pastoral team if not resolved.



### PASTORAL TEAM

- Send formal notification.
- Contact parent/caregiver to discuss reasons for absence.
- Develop and implement a plan for improvement.
- Use in-school resources as appropriate to remove barriers e.g. counsellor, spare uniform, restorative conversations.

## ESCALATING ABSENCES



### PASTORAL TEAM

- Refer situation to Head of School if not resolved.



### HEAD OF SCHOOL

- Send formal notification.
- Convene meeting to confirm reason for lack of progress on attendance.
- Confirm a support plan.
- Implement the plan tailored the circumstances around the child's ongoing absence.
- Monitor improvement plan.



### PRINCIPAL/DP

- Escalate to multi-agency response.
- Participate in multi-agency response.
- When criteria is met, follow prescribed processes to un-enrol the student and/or seek legal intervention.



### MINISTRY ATTENDANCE SERVICES, MULTI-AGENCIES, ORANGA TAMARIKI, ETC.

- Co-ordinate regional response where required.
- Consider system-wide initiatives for high-risk attendance.
- Re-enrol students who are not enrolled.

## 9. Information Flow and Coding Absences and Late to School

### 1. Recording absences

As soon as determined that student will be absent from school	Parent notifies the school of absences using one of the following means: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School App – preferred</li> <li>2. Phone call – voicemail</li> <li>3. Email to <a href="mailto:absences@aidanfield.school.nz">absences@aidanfield.school.nz</a></li> </ol>
By 9:30 a.m.	Office/Attendance Officer to record each day's absences using information sourced from the School App, emails or phone messages from parents.
	<p>The attendance code is recorded based on the reason for absence.</p> <p>Where the office is unsure of the <b>reason</b> for absence, they will seek clarity from the parent.</p>



If a student has not arrived at school by 9:30 a.m. <b>and</b> there is no notification from a parent	Office/Attendance Officer will contact the family to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ascertain the reason for absence,</li> <li>from a safety perspective, determine why the student is not at school as expected.</li> </ul>
Parents who intend to take their children out of school for a period of time, e.g. a planned holiday or overseas travel, must inform the Principal by email before the time away.	Office/Attendance Officer will record in advance the absence in Kamar for that period.  Standard response sent to families (Appendix 2)

## 2. Lateness

### Coding for when a student is late to school in the morning

<b>Before 9:30am</b>	Students arriving after school start but before 9.30am must sign in on the iPads, and will be coded as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Valid Explanation: P, D</li> <li>Invalid explanation: L</li> </ul>
<b>After 9:30am</b>	<p>Student arriving 9.30am must sign in at the office.</p> <p>The parent must provide an explanation for the absence via the school app, email, or phone call.</p> <p>An explanation from a student without corroboration from a parent is not considered a valid explanation. The absence is coded '?' until the parent informs the school.</p> <p>For appointments, parents must provide the nature of the appointment to determine if it is an approved appointment (e.g., doctor, dentist) or an unjustified appointment (e.g., a haircut).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Valid Explanation: P, D or M</li> <li>Invalid explanation: E</li> </ul>

## 3. Monitoring absences

The pastoral lead checks attendance weekly, notifying the whānau teacher of any attendance inconsistencies, gaps, and about any concerns or patterns that may require attention. This includes regular lateness to school. All coding must be resolved as soon as possible and, at the latest, within five school days.



In the first instance, communication regarding patterns of absences are addressed by the whānau teacher. Where the pattern does not change, the whānau teacher will refer the student back to the pastoral lead.



The pastoral lead will then send parents a pro-forma letter (CC to Head of School), highlighting school concerns and the importance of punctuality. [See Appendix Two](#). They will follow this up with a call to the whānau to discuss the situation or arrange a meeting time.



The pastoral lead keeps a record on Kamar (date, type of communication, support plan and outcome) where there is a concern regarding student attendance. Part of the support plan may be the offer of in-school resources, for example, referral to the school counsellor. Confidential attendance notes can be stored in the pastoral system.



If further support is required, the pastoral lead will refer the whānau to the Head of School, who will send an escalated formal notification and arrange a face-to-face meeting with parents.



Heads of School and pastoral lead will meet to handover the information and they will together meet with parents to discuss reasons for absences and collaborate on a revised support plan and timeframe within which it must be actioned. They will request, if needed, support from the Ministry and other agencies. All meetings and outcomes will be documented.



If change is not apparent within the set timeframe, the Head of School will refer the case to the Principal/Deputy Principal, who will determine the appropriate next steps. These might be to:

- Hold further meetings with the whānau.
- Escalate to a multi-agency response.
- Participate in a multi-agency response.
- Implement and monitor an improvement plan.
- Undertake MoE/school-led prosecution if parents are unwilling to engage.
- Unenroll students who are not returning to school.

All meetings and outcomes are documented.

#### 4. Absences for International Students

- According to the MOE Rules for Attendance, all must be resolved by 6 p.m. the same day.
- Absences may impact the eligibility for a student visa.

## **10. Monitoring and measuring progress**

### **Reporting to the Board**

The Ministry of Education will publish the “Every Day Matters” Report for the school for each term. This report is based on attendance data taken from the School Management System (SMS - Kamar). The termly report highlights attendance patterns and provides actionable insights to improve student attendance.

The principal, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), will review the termly report. This includes reviewing the plans which are in place for students in the Moderate and Chronic Absence categories and identifying what further support may be needed. The School Management System will be used to identify individual students in these two categories.

The SLT will further review the full termly report, as it provides a detailed analysis of the reasons for absence (Attendance codes used), trends over the last five terms, absences by year level, ethnicity, gender, and weekday. Any trends or areas of concern are discussed, and actionable strategies should be implemented.

The principal will provide the Board, each term, a copy of the “Every Day Matters” term report and a summary of the SLT responses.

### **Auto-notifications from KAMAR**

- Consecutive Days of absence set at 5, and 10 days, sent to the pastoral lead.
- Attendance % for each week for students who have under 60% attendance that week, sent to the pastoral lead.

## **Appendix One: Legal Obligations**

### **Section 36. Students of registered schools are required to attend whenever schools are open.**

(1) Except as provided in this Act, a student is required to attend a registered school whenever it is open if the student—

- (a) is required to be enrolled at a registered school;
- (b) is aged 5 years and is enrolled at a registered school.

(2) A board or sponsor must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend the school when it is open.

(3) For the purposes of this section, a student attends a school on any day if, on the day,—

- (a) It has been open for instruction for 4 hours or more, and
- (b) The student has been present for 4 hours or more when the class was open for instruction.

### **Section 45. Exemption of a student from attendance for no more than 5 days.**

(1) Despite section 36, if satisfied that a student's absence is justified, the principal of the school may exempt the student from attending the school for a period of no more than five school days.

(2) In the absence of evidence to the contrary, a certificate from the principal stating that a student was absent from school for any period and that the principal is not satisfied that the absence was justified is sufficient proof that the student was absent for that period without being exempted under subsection (1).

### **237A Attendance records**

(1) The principal of a State school must ensure that an attendance record is kept for each student who is enrolled at the school.

### **244 Offence relating to irregular attendance**

(1) A parent of a student commits an offence if the student—

- (a) while enrolled at a registered school, does not attend the school as required by sections 36 and 42; or
- (b) While enrolled at a distance school, the student does not do the work of the course in which the student is enrolled.

## Appendix Two: Communicating with parents about attendance: Pro-Form Letters

### Setting Expectations

- The messages below can be sent to parents at the start of the year and others at the beginning of each term.
- The communication comes from the principal.
- Where possible the school will communicate expectations in relevant translations.

### Reinforcing Attendance - Start of the Year communication to parents

#### Version 1

**Dear Parents and Caregivers,**

#### **Re: Expectations Around Student Attendance**

We are writing to share our expectations regarding student attendance and to highlight the important role you play in supporting your child's regular attendance at school. Attending school every day is vital for your child's learning, progress, and future opportunities.

Under the **Education and Training Act 2020**, you are legally required to ensure your child attends school every day that it is open (i.e., during term time).

#### **When Your Child is Absent**

- **Contact the school** if your child will be absent, arriving late, or leaving early: you must provide a clear explanation for the absence; otherwise, the student will be marked as truant. If the absence is due to an appointment, please specify the nature of the appointment, such as a doctor's appointment or a dentist's appointment.
- **Let us know as soon as possible** if your child is unwell or attending a medical appointment.
- Please note that **holidays during term time are not an acceptable reason** for absence.
- Likewise, **personal activities** such as haircuts or shopping should not be scheduled during school hours.

#### **What You Can Do at Home to support excellent learning**

- Be positive about school and talk about your child's goals and future.
- Establish good routines. Prepare bags and lunches the night before and create a calm morning schedule.
- Talk with your young person about what happened at school each day and praise their efforts.
- Remind them – and yourself – that *better attendance means brighter futures*.

#### **Supporting Regular Attendance**

- Talk with your child about why going to school every day is important.
- If your child is reluctant to attend school, have a conversation with them. If needed, please don't hesitate to reach out to us; we are here to work together.
- Support your child to return to school quickly after any absence. The longer they are away, the more difficult it may become to catch up.

By working together, we can ensure your child gets the most out of their learning journey.

Thank you for your ongoing support.  
(Principal Name)

## **Version 2**

Dear Parents and Caregivers

One of our priorities at Aidanfield is student attendance. You will hear us talk about it often, with you, with our students, and among our staff. Why? Because we know how much it matters.

Did you know that if a student misses just one day every two weeks, by the time they are 16, they will have lost more than a whole year of learning? That is why regular attendance is so important.

As parents and caregivers, you play a vital role, alongside our school, in helping to build strong, lifelong habits of showing up every day.

By law, every student is required to attend school daily, and together we share the responsibility of ensuring students are present and engaged from their very first day. If your child will be away, for example, for a tangi or a medical appointment, you must let us know. Please remember that under the law, family holidays or activities outside of school (that are not organised by the school) are not acceptable reasons for being absent.

We know it is not always easy to decide if your child is well enough to come to school. If you are still unsure, talk with us; we are here to work with you to support your child.

If you are having trouble getting your child to school, please do not hesitate to talk to us. We are committed to helping every young person succeed, and that starts with being present. We have a school culture that values and supports attendance every single day by ensuring:

- Teachers and staff form strong, caring relationships with students and families.
- Our school recognises and values who your child is, created in the image of God, who they are in Christ, and what is important to your family.
- We take every practical step to make sure your child is at school, safe, and progressing in their learning.
- Our school is a welcoming and safe place where everyone belongs.

If you have any questions or concerns about attendance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## **Reinforcing Attendance – messaging from Heads of School and pastoral leads**

**The following reminder can be included in the communication sent by the Head of School. Adjusted for the International Students.**

## Reminder: Explaining Student Absences **Message One**

### Absences

The Ministry of Education requires all student absences to be explained by parents or caregivers. Where no explanation is provided, the absence must be recorded as *truancy*.

If your child is absent, please notify the school promptly with the reason. This helps us keep accurate records and support your child's learning.

## Reminder: Explaining Student Absences **Message Two**

### Absences

Our commitment to the safety and well-being of our students requires that parents notify the school of a student's absence and the reason for the absence **by 8:45 a.m. on the morning of the absence.**

Explanations directly from students are not acceptable and must be received from the authorised parent or guardian.

Absences can be reported by:

- a. School App
- b. Website "Report Absence"
- c. Phone call 03 338 8153
- d. Email to [absence@aidanfield.school.nz](mailto:absence@aidanfield.school.nz)

Classroom or Whānau teachers should NOT be the first point of contact for absence emails.

If the school has not been contacted by a parent/guardian regarding an absence, a notification will be sent. Should you receive communication regarding an Unexplained Absence, please contact the school as soon as possible so we can update our records. If no explanation is received, the student will be marked as truant until an explanation is provided.

## Reinforcing Attendance - *Start of each Term*

### PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### Dear Parents and Caregivers

#### OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is vital to your child's success, and there is a clear connection between going to school regularly and doing well in the classroom. Making sure students attend and engage in learning is a shared responsibility. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure your child attends school on time, every day. This starts from the very first day they begin at school.

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, it is essential that you let us know as soon as possible. The ways to inform us are:

- a. School App
- b. Phone call 03 338 8153
- c. Email to [absence@aidanfield.school.nz](mailto:absence@aidanfield.school.nz)



The best and easiest way to inform the school of your child's absence is by using the SchoolApp to confirm your child's absence and **provide us with a clear explanation.**

If no explanation is given for the absence, your child will be marked as truant. Informing us must be done before the start of the school day. Make sure you leave a reason for your child's absence. You do not need to contact your child's teacher, as the Office will do this.

We acknowledge that there are genuine reasons students may occasionally be absent. However, without regular attendance, your child may struggle to make progress. If your child is absent regularly or for extended periods, we will contact you to discuss the situation.

We are committed to supporting your child's attendance at school. If you're having difficulty getting your child to school, you can ask for support by speaking with your child's teacher. We can work with you to develop a support plan that addresses any barriers to regular attendance.

Kind regards  
Janice Phillips  
Head of Primary School

**Dear Parents and Caregivers**

**OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance at school is vital to your young person's success, and there is a clear connection between going to school regularly and doing well in the classroom. Making sure students attend and engage in learning is a shared responsibility. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure your young person attends school every day.

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, it is essential that you let us know as soon as possible. The best way to inform the school of your child's absence is by using the SchoolApp to confirm your young person's absence and **provide us with the reason**. If no explanation is given for the absence, the student will be marked as truant. Informing us must be done before the start of the school day. An alternative way to inform the school include:

- a. School App
- b. Phone call 03 338 8153
- c. Email to [absence@aidanfield.school.nz](mailto:absence@aidanfield.school.nz)

Make sure you leave a reason for your child's absence.

We acknowledge that there are genuine reasons students may occasionally be absent. However, without regular attendance, your young person may struggle to make progress. If your child is absent regularly or for extended periods, we will contact you to discuss the situation.

We are committed to supporting your young person's attendance at school. If you're having difficulty getting your them to school, you can ask for support by speaking with your child's whānau teacher or Head of School. We can work with you to develop a support plan that addresses any barriers to regular attendance.

Kind regards

Mrs Teresa Thomson  
Head of Middle School

**Newsletter reminder once a term**

**◆ Every Day Counts ◆**

Regular attendance is one of the most important factors in your child's success at school. The **Ministry of Education** requires all students aged 6 to 16 to attend school every day.

✓ Acceptable reasons: illness, medical appointments, tangihanga (funerals).

✗ Not acceptable: family holidays during term time or outside activities not organised by the school.

👉 Please plan family holidays during official school term breaks to keep your child on track with learning, friendships, and routines.

## 5. When a student is absent, but the parent has not notified the school.

- Kamar text auto notification: Year 1-10
- Phone call to listed contacts/parents
- Email as a last resort if no phone contact can be made

Dear (parent)  
(Student's name) was marked absent today.  
Please get in touch with us as soon as possible to provide a reason;  
otherwise, they will be marked as truant.  
Thank you,  
(name of AO, etc.)

**Where a student/family has not provided a reason by the end of the week. Email to be sent by the Attendance Officer (CC: Head of School)**

**Dear Parent/Caregiver,**  
**Re: Unexplained Absence**

Your child was absent from class last week, and in accordance with our procedures, a week was given to provide an explanation for this absence. Unfortunately, no explanation has been received.

The Ministry of Education requires schools to record the reason for every student's absence. Where no explanation is provided, the absence is recorded as *truancy*. This has now been applied to your child's attendance record.

If you can provide an explanation for this absence, please contact **me**, as soon as possible so that the record can be updated accordingly.

We appreciate your support in ensuring that your child maintains regular attendance at school and that all absences are appropriately explained.

Yours sincerely,  
Head of School

## 6. *Late to school* Primary School

Dear Parents/Caregivers

It has come to my attention that (student name) has been late to school on a regular basis.

Children who are regularly late often miss important community time, instructions and learning at the start of the school day. Once the day has started at 8.55am, late children disrupt the teaching and learning of the whole class. We consider regular lateness to be inconsiderate of the needs of others in the class and establishing of negative habits in the life of the child. It works against the character the school seeks to build in each of our young people and challenges progress toward our

school values of excellence, faithfulness, integrity and stewardship – these are summarised on our Learning Tree.

If your child's lateness is caused by tiredness, consider adjusting their bedtime or routines to allow for sufficient time to wake up and prepare for school. Preparing lunches, school bags and material the night before also helps to create space in a rushed morning. It may be possible to share the school drop off with another family if preschool children make it difficult to get out of the door on time.

I would be grateful if you could attend to this matter by planning to drop your child off at school no later than 8:50 a.m. each morning.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please get in touch with your child's teacher in the first instance.

Kind regards

Janice Phillips  
Head of Primary School

## **Late to school – Middle School**

Dear Parents/Caregivers

It has come to my attention that (student name) has been late to school on a regular basis.

Young people who are regularly late often miss important community time, instructions and learning at the start of the school day. Once the day has started, at 8.40am, late students disrupt the teaching and learning of the whole class. We consider regular lateness to be inconsiderate of the needs of others in the class and establishing negative habits in the life of the young person. It works against the character the school seeks to build in each of our young people and challenges progress toward our school values of excellence, faithfulness, integrity and stewardship – these are summarised on our Learning Tree.

If your young person's lateness is caused by tiredness, consider adjusting their bedtime or routines to allow for sufficient time to wake up and prepare for school. Preparing lunches, school bags and material the night before also helps to create space in a rushed morning. It may be possible to share the school drop off with another family if younger children make it difficult to get out of the door on time for the earlier Middle School start.

I would be grateful if you could attend to this matter by planning to drop your child off at school no later than 8:35 a.m. each morning.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please get in touch with your young person's whānau teacher in the first instance.

Kind regards  
Teresa Thomson  
Head of Middle School

## **7. Absence for medical reasons over three days**

Dear Parent,

We're sorry to hear that (student name) has been unwell. We hope s/he is feeling better and on the road to a full recovery.

Due to the number of days (student name) has been absent from school, we are required to have a medical certificate on file. If it has not been possible to see a GP, we kindly ask that you provide a written explanation outlining the nature of the illness and an expected date for their return to school. For ongoing or extended illness, we recommend consulting with a doctor and at this consultation to also request a medical certificate for the school records.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need further support.

Blessings,  
(Name)

## 8. Taking students out for a holiday

**Sent by Attendance Officer when a parent notifies the school they are taking their child on a holiday during term time.**

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

### Family Holidays During Term Time

At Aidanfield Christian School, we greatly value the partnership we have with you in supporting your child's education. One of the most important factors in student success is **regular, consistent school attendance**.

We are aware that some families consider taking holidays during the school term. While we understand the value of family time, we must make it clear that under New Zealand law, this is **not a valid or acceptable reason for a student to be absent from school**.

The **New Zealand Ministry of Education** states that:

- **All students aged 6–16 are legally required to attend school every day.**
- Absences are only justified in certain circumstances, such as illness, medical or dental appointments, or tangihanga (funerals). Family holidays and extracurricular activities not organised by the school are **not considered acceptable reasons for absence**.

Missing even a few days of school has a significant impact. The disruption of term-time holidays means students miss class content, which impacts on them and on their learning. Extended overseas travel can have significant impact.

We kindly ask that you plan family holidays during official school term breaks. This helps us to work together to give your child the strongest possible foundation for success—both now and in the future.

Family holidays taken during the school term are noted on your child's attendance record as an "Unjustified Absence." The unjustified reason for an absence will mean no accommodation will be made for missed assessments or lessons and teachers will not be required to provide work for students travelling on holiday. This may affect your child's results and reports at the end of the year.

This email is sent on behalf of the Head of School and is copied to the Head of School, Pastoral Team, Whānau Teacher and Principal.

**9. First formal notification where a student has up to 10 school days of absence in a term.**

Notification is emailed to the parent, followed by a phone call to arrange a meeting time at school.

Dear parents

[Student's name] has been absent for [number of days absent] days this term. That means their attendance rate is less than 80%.

We need to have a face-to-face discussion to better understand the reasons for their absences and to see what the school can do to support you in improving [student's name]'s attendance.

Please meet with me on [date] or send me an [email/message] to arrange a time.

Thank you

[Head of School]

**10. Escalated form notification where the student's absences have reached 14 days in the term.**

Notification is emailed to the parent, followed by a phone call to arrange a meeting time at school.

[Student's full name] – Continued low attendance

Dear [parent's name]

I am writing to inform you that [student's name] 's attendance has not improved sufficiently since your last meeting with the school. Our attendance records show that (student name) has been absent for [xx] days this term.

It is important for students to attend school to set them up for success, and they are legally required to attend school every day. We share the responsibility of ensuring students attend and engage in learning from the moment they first start school.

We've already had a discussion with you about [student's name]'s attendance on [date of chat/meeting]. Unfortunately, things haven't improved. We need to meet and adapt our plan to ensure [student's name] returns to regular attendance, so their learning stays on track and their character and work ethic continues to form in positive ways.

I will give you a call or, please get in touch with me urgently on [contact details] so we can arrange a time to develop this plan.

Thank you

[Principal's or deputy principal's name]



# **11. Warning notice due to absences being 15 days or more in the term.**

Notification is emailed to the parent, followed by a phone call to arrange a meeting time at school.

Referral / Consideration of Legal action:

Dear [parent's name]

This is to inform you that [student's name] has not had regular attendance at Aidanfield Christian School. To date, their absences have reached X days this term ([XX]% of the term).

This letter is to inform you of your legal obligation to ensure that [student's name] attends school whenever it is open and to request that [student's name] returns to regular school attendance immediately.

School staff have engaged with you on the occasions listed below to discuss these ongoing absences and attempt to get [student's name] attendance back on track.

- [email/letter, date
- email/letter, date
- details of meeting, date
- details of meeting, date]

The school has also involved [external agencies involved] to support [student's name] to return to regular attendance.

This has not resulted in an improvement in [student's name] 's attendance at school. Section 36 of the Education and Training Act requires a student to attend the registered school at which they are enrolled whenever it is open. Section 244 provides that a parent of that student commits an offence if they do not attend as required by Section 36.

If there are insufficient improvements by [date], the board will consider the appropriate next steps available, which may include referring the matter to the Ministry of Education for consideration of prosecution for irregular attendance under Section 244 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

Please contact [school leader name] as soon as possible, no later than (date), with any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely  
[Principal]

## Appendix Three: Links to MOE Resources

### “A COMMON APPROACH” TO DETERMINING ATTENDANCE CODES

**Note:** **J** can be for a maximum of 5 **consecutive**<sup>4</sup> days, but multiple times in a term/year.

#### Board approved off-site learning.

##### Section 53 Courses, work experience, and visits outside school premises

- (1) A board may authorise any students to undertake courses of education, gain work experience, or make visits outside the school premises.
- (2) If authorisation is given, the student must be treated as attending the school while undertaking the course, gaining the experience, or making the visit.
- (3) A principal or person responsible for teaching and learning in a charter school, a teacher, or an occupier of a workplace may not allow a student to go into, or remain in, a workplace to gain work experience except in accordance with any conditions prescribed by the Minister by notice.

#### The following activities have been approved by the Board as “Approved offsite learning.” Attendance Code **Q**

1. School organised trips, for example, camps, competitions, and day trips.
2. Cultural, academic or sporting activities, for example, noho marae, cultural performances, kapa haka, community events, inter-school events and sports tournaments<sup>5</sup>.
3. Visits and orientation activities, for example, transition visits to another school.
4. Other learning experiences, for example, work experience, civic engagement, cultural practices, IEP (e.g. gifted students), agreed commitments and obligations.
5. Emergency situations where the school is temporarily closed, and students are learning from home.
6. Learning Support Students studying from home for selected periods.
7. School organised external tutoring or music lessons.
8. Overseas learning experiences, for example, the Chinese Summer Cultural Camp
9. Canterbury Regional or New Zealand selection in a Representative Team for cultural, academic or sporting activities.

#### The student is attending a funeral.

Funeral of immediate family or near-relatives:\*

- Up to five days are coded **J**.
- If the absence is longer than five days, find out the reason why. If ‘being with family’ is the intention, then **E** is used. If, however, the family is taking time for a holiday, then the **G** code applies.

This applies to both within New Zealand and overseas.

**\*Definition of immediate family or near-relatives: parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins.**

<sup>4</sup> Section 45 allows for a maximum of five **consecutive** days to be coded **J**; however, the same student may have several events in the term/year that allows for a **J** to be coded up to five days each time.

<sup>5</sup> Board approves non-school-organised cultural/arts/sports events as offsite learning, then use **Q**. Otherwise, **J** if the principal approves absence as justified, or **E** if not justified.

Attending the funeral of a friend or someone close to the school community, for example, a teacher, use the code <b>E</b> , unless the principal has approved an exemption. In that case, <b>J</b> may be used.
<b>The student is travelling for:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holiday – use <b>G</b> (<b>T</b> if the parent does not condone)</li> <li>• visiting sick relatives – <b>E</b> up to five days, then use <b>G</b></li> <li>• religious observance – <b>E</b> up to five days, then use <b>G</b></li> <li>• family wedding – <b>E</b> up to five days, then use <b>G</b></li> </ul>
<b>The student is absent overseas for an extended period</b>
Update the student's type to 'NA' in their SMS, unless the principal has been informed of the reason for absence.
<b>The Student is doing an assessment with Learning Support team</b>
Use Code <b>V</b> the Learning Support staff should enter this code. The student goes straight to the arranged space for the assessment.
<b>The student is with the Pastoral Lead or Head of School, withdrawn from class</b>
Use Code <b>N</b> - Pastoral Lead/HoS sends notification to Attendance Officer to enter.
<b>The student has private tutoring or external music lessons</b>
Use the <b>E</b> code unless the school has organised or affirmed the private tutoring or external music lessons.
<b>The student is participating in a regional or national event.</b>
<p>A student is participating in a regional or national event, in NZ or overseas, which the school does not organise.</p> <p><b>Q:</b> If the Board have approved this as offsite learning.</p> <p><b>J:</b> If the principal determines this is a justified absence.</p> <p><b>E:</b> If no board or principal exemption, i.e. unjustified absence.</p>
<b>The student has an appointment.</b>
<p>A student is late to school due to an appointment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>E</b> should be used if the appointment is outside of the approved appointments in the Attendance Policy.</li> <li>• <b>D</b> if the reason for the appointment is approved by the Board.</li> </ul> <p><b>Approved external appointments include:</b> doctor, dentist, medical specialist, learning specialists, and Visa applications.</p> <p>Note: The student must attend at least two hours in a half day to be counted present (<b>D</b>); otherwise, they are absent for the half day (<b>E</b>). In terms of coding for this situation, there is a maximum of two D's. This could look like: <b>DDE</b></p>
<p>If the appointment means that the student is unable to attend school that day. (e.g., out-of-town appointment), then <b>E</b> should be used unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The appointment is for illness or medical, then <b>M</b> may be used, or</li> <li>• a principal exemption applies, then <b>J</b> may be used.</li> </ul>
<b>The student is participating in community events.</b>
<p>If a student is attending or participating in a march, strike or similar event, then the school should use <b>E</b>. If the parent does not condone the absence, then <b>T</b> should be used.</p>
<p>If a student is attending an event in the community, such as a blood drive, an immediate family member's graduation or a community meeting, the school should use <b>E</b> unless an exemption applies; then <b>J</b> may be used.</p> <p><b>Approved external community events include:</b></p> <p>Local and National Government events that the student has been specifically invited to attend can be coded <b>Q</b>; an immediate family member's graduation ceremony <b>J</b></p>

<b>Paid Union Meetings</b>
Use the code <b>N</b> for students who were on-site and supervised. Use the code <b>Q</b> for students who went home as the school was temporarily closed for instruction in the afternoon. The <b>Q</b> code does not affect school absence calculations.
<b>Student has absences due to mental health or anxiety</b>
Use <b>M</b> and add a note in KAMAR to indicate (professionally diagnosed) 'mental health' or 'anxiety' as the reason. The MOE Absence guideline under ' <b>M</b> ' includes mental health-related absences, e.g. anxiety.

## **Justified Absences**

### **J Explained and Approved**

According to Section 45 of the Education and Training Act 2020, the principal has the discretion to approve absences as justified. This is up to five consecutive days **at a time**. The student may have several occasions in the year that they are coded J, up to five consecutive days.

At Aidanfield Christian School, the principal approves the following events as 'Explained and Approved' to a maximum of five consecutive days:

- Family emergencies
- Bereavement
- Bus breakdown
- Accident
- Road closure
- Extreme weather conditions
- The student is participating in non-school events, such as regional/national sports, arts, community, and cultural events that are **not** board-approved off-site learning activities. Examples include club-level representation, individual participation, and blood drive.
- The student has a temporary well-being/transition plan.
- Attending the Graduation Ceremony of an immediate family member.