

Matamata Christian School



ATTENDANCE HANDBOOK

Our Vision

Equip for life, prepare for eternity.

Our Values

The school believes in and actively pursues:

- a caring, praying community united in Jesus Christ
- enthusiastic and actively involved families
- a heart obedient to the Lord
- a spirit of perseverance, resilience and self-discipline
- respect for self, others and those in authority
- quality, Christ-centred, Bible based education
- a well maintained physical environment and resources

Personal Character Development Core Values:

- Respect
- Self-control
- Truthfulness
- Diligence
- Compassion
- Initiative
- Perseverance
- Service

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Rationale

Consistent attendance is a critical factor in student achievement and wellbeing. Traditionally data has shown a strong correlation between low attendance and low academic outcomes—students who are regularly present in class are more likely to engage in learning and achieve success.

Under New Zealand law, all students aged 6 to 16 are required to attend school every day. Ensuring this happens is a shared responsibility across our school community. When students attend regularly, they are more likely to feel connected to their peers, teachers, and learning environment—key elements that support both academic and personal growth.

There are many reasons why students may not attend school, and attendance requires a proactive, coordinated approach. This handbook outlines the roles and responsibilities of all staff, as well as the targeted strategies we will implement as part of our commitment to the Stepped Attendance Response Plan. Our collective goal is to maintain attendance to above 80% of students attending 90% of the time, with a focus on early identification, timely intervention, and strong relationships with whānau.

Accurate attendance marking is not only a professional expectation—it is a legal requirement. Attendance data is used for a range of purposes, including legal matters such as custody arrangements, and is now automatically uploaded daily to the Ministry of Education. This makes accuracy and timeliness more important than ever.

By working together and following the steps outlined in this plan, we can ensure that every student at Matamata Christian School has the opportunity to succeed through regular, meaningful engagement in learning.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students	Expected to attend every day, arrive on time, and remain on-site during the school day.
Whānau and Caregivers	Ensure student attendance and inform the school of absences on the day.
Teachers	Mark attendance accurately at the beginning of the day and afternoon. Engage students in fulfilling purposeful learning. Provide opportunities for students to make up for missed work. Identify concerning patterns of absence. Discuss concerns with principal weekly.
Office	Monitor daily attendance before 9:30AM and follow up on unexplained absences. Report to the principal regarding absences with weak excuses or that are building without strong reason.
SLT	Lead the attendance strategy, support interventions, and oversee referrals to external agencies.
Principal	Lead the attendance strategy, follow through on interventions, and follow up with parents as per the response plan. Engage Attendance Officers as necessary.
Attendance Officers	Engage with whānau once a referral is in place with the school and engage in their strategies.

Attendance Procedures

Teachers	<p>DAILY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Accurately mark the roll in every class before 9AM and at 1:30PM. <p>WEEKLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Monitor attendance patterns and refer concerns to SLT and principal. <p>REGULARLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Communicate with whānau about attendance patterns, both good and concerning.● Support catch-up learning for returning students.
Office	<p>DAILY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Monitor the correct recording of attendance and absences before 9:30AM.● Follow up on unexplained absences with whānau before 9:30AM.● Monitor flagged students and intervene immediately. <p>WEEKLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Monitor attendance patterns and refer concerns to SLT and principal.
SLT	<p>DAILY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Support roll compliance. <p>WEEKLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Meet with whānau about trending absences or those with less appropriate excuses. <p>REGULARLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Assist leading responses to chronic absence.● Refer students to the Attendance Service after 20+ days of absence.

Principal	<p>DAILY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support roll compliance. <p>WEEKLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor weekly attendance reports for follow-up. • Write to and meet with whānau about trending absences or those with less appropriate excuses. <p>REGULARLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist leading responses to chronic absence. • Refer students to the Attendance Service after 20+ days of absence.
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Attendance Thresholds and Responses

- Green Zone ($\geq 90\%$) – Teacher affirms attendance, minimal intervention required.
- Yellow Zone (80–89%) – SLT contacts whānau, may introduce an attendance plan.
- Orange Zone (70–79%) – SLT and/or principal meets with student and whānau. Unless the reason is acceptable (for example; surgery with follow up care), an attendance plan is created.
- Red Zone ($< 70\%$) – SLT and principal lead an intensive intervention. External agencies involved where needed.

Attendance Management Plan: Flow Diagram

	GREEN: ≥90% Attendance (No more than five days absent per term (based on a 50 day term))	YELLOW: 80 – 89% Attendance (6 - 10 days absent per term (based on a 50 day term))	ORANGE: 70 – 79% Attendance (11 - 15 days absent per term (based on a 50 day term))	RED: <70% Attendance (16 or more days absent per term (based on a 50 day term))
Step 1	DAILY: Teachers mark roll.			
Step 2	DAILY: Office follows up by 9:30AM checking on correct recording of attendance and absences and follows up on unknown reasons for absence.			
Step 3		DAILY: When students reach this level SLT and principal is informed by the teacher. Reasons for absences are analysed and assessed. If warranted go to Step 4.		
Step 4		Attendance hui with whānau by SLT.		
Step 5			DAILY: When students reach this level SLT and principal is informed by the teacher. Continued reasons for absences are analysed and assessed. If warranted go to Step 6.	
Step 6			Attendance hui with student and whānau by SLT and principal with attendance concerns put in writing to whānau.	
Step 7				Continued reasons for absences are analysed and assessed. If warranted go to Step 8 and 9.
Step 8				A second letter of attendance concerns is put in writing to whānau by the principal
Step 9				Principal makes a referral to Attendance Services.

Attendance Codes

Code Group	Sub-Group	Code	Examples
Present	On-site	P – Present	In class and present
		L – Late to class	Late to class and present
		V – Unsupervised exam study	Unsupervised exam study (ON-SITE)
		N – Present but out of class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal appointment • On-site school-based activity e.g. cultural / sporting event like Sports Day. • Temporary removal from class • Student leadership meeting • Time in sickbay
	Off-site	D – Approved external appointment	<p>If a student cannot attend an appointment out of hours, for example;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical appointments (doctor, dentist), • specialist appointments • appointments with other professionals (for example; counsellor, social worker).
		Q – Board approved offsite learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOTC event • Cultural / Arts/ Sports event • Performing / Playing / participating in a regional or national school event • Overseas BUT committing to a learning program. • Flexible learning plan = Q on days off • Attending an offsite program for IEP • Rostering home for group or year levels. NOTE: work needs to be available
		A – Alternative provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students present at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Alternative Education o Health school

Code Group	Sub-Group	Code	Examples
Absent	Justified Absences	M – Illness / Medical absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Absent due to illness (includes health-related, for example; anxiety)
		J – Explained and approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special family arrangement with prior approval by principal
		U – Stood down or suspended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stood down or suspended
	Exam Leave	X – Exam Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Study leave off-site (not included in MOE attendance calculations)
	Unjustified Absences	T – Truant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student is absent without explanation
		E – Explained but not approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Absent without justifiable reason, for example; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Didn't come to school because of sports day ○ Went to watch siblings school production
		G – Holiday during term time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Holiday taken
		? – Unknown reason (temporary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is a TEMPORARY code. This will be updated once the reason is specified.

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Attendance Management Plan

For students with five or less days absence in a school term - 90% + attendance
Goal - To maintain and reinforce regular attendance patterns.

Activities	What we do	How we do it... (Including linked resources)	Who is responsible
<p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>Clear communication to parents on attendance expectations on enrolment, at the start of school year, and each term</p> <p>Communicate to parents what steps the school will take in the event their child is absent from school</p>	<p>Explain attendance expectations at enrolment and include attendance protocols each term in the school newsletter</p> <p>Explain to parents the codes used to record attendance of each student in the school newsletter and publish the Attendance Handbook on the school website</p>	<p>Principal explains attendance expectations during the enrolment interview</p> <p>School newsletter explains attendance protocols each term</p> <p>Attendance codes on display in the beginning of term newsletter and on the school website</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Principal</p>
<p><u>Monitoring</u></p> <p>Monitor attendance</p> <p>Communicate to whānau about unexplained or inappropriate absences</p>	<p>Roll is marked by class teacher between 8.50 and 9.00AM</p> <p>Subject teachers check the roll during class time</p> <p>Unexplained absences are followed up on by 9:30AM</p> <p>Inappropriate absences may be flagged to parents as unjustified</p> <p>Weekly data is collated by Attendance Matters and shared with the principal</p>	<p>Recorded on Edge SMS</p> <p>Updated to office if attendance changes</p> <p>Whānau are contacted initially by text, and then by phone call if there is no response</p> <p>Text, email or contact phone call</p> <p>Each Sunday this is emailed to the principal</p>	<p>Class teacher</p> <p>Subject teacher</p> <p>Office</p> <p>Office, SLT or principal</p> <p>MOE</p>

Maintain contact details of parents	The following morning teachers identify students absent the day before and have a conversation around the cause of the absence	Teachers follow up, confirm with students and discuss as necessary	Class teacher In-school attendance team
	Gather details at enrolment and request updates annually. Office checks in on a regular basis when parents visit and notes any updates	Office oversees these processes	Office
	Regularly text, email or call parents	As part of our Tataiako response teachers regularly communicate with parents to share good news	Class teacher
	Contact whānau ahead of school events and when students are recognised for achievements	Remind parents by text of upcoming events, event details and by phone when students are being honoured at end of term assemblies	Office
		Social Media Facebook keeps caregivers up to date and celebrates success	Teachers in charge of Facebook updates
<u>Reporting</u> Report regularly to parents on attendance of their child	Report to parents on each school report	Section in six monthly school report for attendance rates	Class teacher
	Celebrate high achievers at the end of the school year prize giving	Certificate for full attendance at prize giving	Principal
<u>Support</u> Support students to catch up missed learning where required	Teachers build strong relationships with students. Provide work for students to complete ahead of absence if it is a planned absence. Use Google Classroom to document lesson resources.	Use Google Classroom and resources that can be taken offsite.	Class teacher

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Attendance Management Plan

For students with up to 10 days absence in a school term – 80 - 89% attendance

Goal -To restore student's attendance to 90% or above

Activities	What we do	How we do it... (Including linked resources)	Who is responsible
<p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>SLT contact whānau to discuss reasons for absence</p> <p>Communicate to parents what steps the school will take in the event their child is absent from school</p>	<p>Analyse reasons for absence and, unless clearly justifiable (for example; significant sickness), contact whānau to discuss the importance of full attendance and ways the school can support this with whānau.</p> <p>SLT records contact home in Edge SMS.</p>	<p>Teacher alerts the SLT and principal when absences are regular, following a pattern or are unjustified.</p> <p>Weekly Edge SMS attendance trends are observed.</p> <p>Recorded on Edge</p>	<p>Class teacher and SLT</p> <p>Principal and SLT</p> <p>SLT</p>
<p><u>Monitoring</u></p> <p>Monitor attendance</p> <p>Communicate to parents about every absence</p>	<p>Edge flags students with absences of concern.</p> <p>Unless for a justifiable absence such as known illness, a text is sent to whānau pointing out an absence, even when the reason for it is known. This may be replaced by a phone call or meeting instead.</p>	<p>Class teacher, SLT and principal use this to monitor why a student is absent in order to provide support.</p> <p>Office sends an acknowledging text or the SLT may make contact with whānau.</p>	<p>Class teacher, SLT and principal</p> <p>Office or SLT</p>
<p><u>Reporting</u></p> <p>Report regularly to parents on attendance of their child</p>	<p>Where absences are recorded as unjustified attendance rates will be shared with whānau and contact made via text, phone call or meeting.</p>	<p>Office sends an acknowledging text or the SLT may make contact with whānau.</p>	<p>Office or SLT</p>

<p><u>Support</u></p> <p>Support students to catch up missed learning where required</p>	<p>Teachers build strong relationships with students. Provide work for students to complete ahead of absence if it is a planned absence. Use Google Classroom to document lesson resources.</p>	<p>Use Google Classroom and resources that can be taken offsite.</p>	<p>Class teacher</p>
<p>Use in-school resources as appropriate to remove barriers, for example; chaplain, mentoring, second hand uniform</p>	<p>Provide access to uniform, stationery, and transport to school to reduce barriers.</p>	<p>Principal to agree to support when issues are identified.</p>	<p>SLT to principal</p>

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Attendance Management Plan

For students with up to 15 days absence in a school term - 70 - 79% attendance

Goal - to re-engage students and increase attendance.

Activities	What we do	How we do it... (Including linked resources)	Who is responsible
<u>Communication</u> Send formal notification to parents Hold meeting to analyse reasons for absence and to collaborate on a support plan Develop and implement a plan tailored to the reasons and circumstances around the child's absence	Unless there is a justified reason for absence, for example; surgery with follow up respite a letter of concern sent formalising a problem with rates of attendance and inviting whānau to be part of solution. Principal and SLT (and if appropriate the class teacher, LSC and chaplain) have a meeting with whānau to mitigate barriers to attendance and to make a support plan. Attendance Services through Starfish may be approached if deemed able to provide some support.	Principal sends first letter. Hui held and plan developed and monitored. SLT or principal may discuss the case with Attendance Services through Starfish to see if their involvement is helpful and appropriate.	Principal Principal and SLT SLT or principal (must have principal's go ahead)
<u>Monitoring</u> Monitor attendance Communicate to parents about every absence	Office, class teacher, SLT and principal monitor rates of attendance Absence message text or phone call home by office or SLT.	Attendance rates closely tracked in Edge. Office sends an acknowledging text or the SLT may make contact with whānau.	Office, class teacher, SLT and principal Office or SLT

<u>Reporting</u> Report regularly to parents on attendance of their child	Regularly check in with the child (age appropriate) and whānau to encourage and monitor how the plan is going.	Decide who in the team is the right person to keep developing the relationship and connection with whānau and keep the dialogue going.	SLT, principal, class teacher, LSC or chaplain
<u>Support</u> Use in-school resources as appropriate to remove barriers and request support from Ministry or other agencies as needed	Uniform, stationery, transport assistance is provided to remove barriers as necessary.	Principal to agree to support as recommendations are made.	SLT to principal

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Attendance Management Plan

For students with 15 or more days absence in a school term - <70% attendance
Goal- Intensive intervention to overcome complex barriers.

Activities	What we do	How we do it... (Including linked resources)	Who is responsible
<u>Communication</u> Send written notice sent to whānau and make contact to arrange whānau meeting	Unless there is a justified reason for absence, for example; ongoing health issues requiring absence from school, a second letter of concern sent formalising the problem with rates of attendance and requesting a whānau meeting either at home or school.	A second letter explaining rates of attendance, requesting a meeting and explaining the next steps is sent.	Principal
	Principal and SLT (and if appropriate the class teacher, LSC and chaplain) have a meeting with whānau to mitigate barriers to attendance and to make a support plan. Next steps are informed including the involvement of Attendance Services through Starfish or other helping agencies.	Hui held and the plan is closely monitored.	Principal or SLT
Contact Attendance Services	A formal referral to Attendance Services through Starfish is made.	Principal makes a referral to Attendance Services through Starfish.	Principal
<u>Monitoring</u> Implement and monitor improvement plan	Principal, SLT, class teacher, LSC and chaplain help monitor the plan. A counsellor may be engaged as necessary with complex cases.	Follow and monitor the plan. Referral for counsellor as required.	Principal, SLT, class teacher, LSC and chaplain

When criteria is met, follow prescribed processes to un-enrol the student	After 21 days student is taken off the roll and MOE informed.	Follow MOE procedures on Enrol	Office and principal
<u>Reporting</u> Refer to the MOE to consider action, including prosecution, when supports are offered and not taken up	Refer students to Interagency hui – MOE, Starfish, OT and Police are part of this.	Hui run between schools each term to develop a pathway for intervention.	Principal or SLT
<u>Support</u> Escalate to multi-agency response Participate in multi-agency response	Refer students to Interagency	Attend, refer and update in each Interagency meeting as necessary.	Principal or SLT