

Dawson Primary School Attendance Management Plan



Dawson Primary

Whakaaro tēnei rā, Hoatu āpōpō - Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow

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Postal Address: Box 64147, Botany

Physical Address: Haumia Way, Otara, 2023

Principal: Tarayn Zeier

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Website: www.dawson.school.nz



Dawson Primary School Attendance Management Plan and supporting STAR Procedures

Strategic Priorities

Regular school attendance is important for students to achieve their educational potential. The government target is that 80% of students will be regularly attending school by 2030.

Our school currently has 40% regular attendance and a target of lifting regular attendance to 55% by the end of 2026.

Board responsibilities

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.

Principal responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of student attendance and the implementation of this plan. These responsibilities include:

The principal is responsible for:

- *developing and implementing a stepped attendance response (STAR) aligned with the thresholds to support student attendance*
- *ensuring that student absence is investigated, responded too and actions taken recorded aligned with the thresholds*
- *ensuring all students, whanau and staff understand the processes and procedures that support student attendance*
- *reporting to the board on any trends, barriers to attendance and interventions being used to support student attendance.*
- *developing and implementing the school's Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) procedure*

(Undertaken with the help of senior management)

Procedures/supporting documentation

Attendance Management Procedure & Stepped Attendance Response - [see next tab](#)

Monitoring

Dawson School acknowledges that new regulations may be developed by the Ministry of Education, which could set out specific requirements or changes to absence thresholds, detailed processes for identifying and responding to barriers, and formal review periods for plans.

- **Plan Update:** Upon the release of these new regulations, Dawson School will promptly update this Attendance Action Plan to ensure full compliance with all new requirements.
- **Regular Review:** Beyond regulatory updates, this plan will be reviewed annually by the School Board and senior leadership team, or more frequently if deemed necessary due to significant changes in attendance patterns or school policy. The review will assess the plan's effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and ensure it continues to meet the needs of the school community.

This plan will be a living document, adapted and refined to best support the attendance and well-being of all students at Dawson School.

Legislative compliance/ Legislation

Insert here any relevant legislation this plan supports

[Education and Training Act 2020](#)

[Education Attendance rules](#)

[Education Attendance Management Plan regulations \(yet to be passed\)](#)

Reviewed: October 2025

Next review: October 2026

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Dawson School Attendance Action Plan

This document outlines Dawson School's Attendance Action Plan, developed in accordance with the Ministry of Education's new requirements for attendance management, effective from Term 1, 2026. This plan aims to ensure all students are attending school regularly, identifying and addressing barriers to attendance, and fostering a culture of consistent school engagement.

1. School Board Responsibilities

The Dawson School Board commits to the following:

- **Development and Implementation:** Develop and implement this comprehensive Attendance Management Plan.
- **Online Publication:** Publish this plan online on the school's official website by the start of Term 1, 2026, ensuring easy accessibility for parents, caregivers, staff, and the wider community.
- **Adherence to Guidelines:** Have due regard for attendance guidelines from the Ministry of Education, specifically incorporating principles of the "Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)" framework in the development and execution of this plan.
- **Periodic Review:** Periodically review this plan to ensure its ongoing effectiveness, relevance, and compliance with any updated Ministry of Education regulations.

2. Plan Components

2.1 Clear Process to Identify and Respond to Student Absences

Dawson School will implement a systematic process for identifying and responding to student absences:

- **Daily Roll Call and Monitoring:** Teachers will conduct daily roll calls at the start of each school day and after lunch. Absences will be recorded accurately and promptly in the school's student management system.
- **Absence Notification:** Parents/caregivers are required to notify the school of a student's absence, stating the reason.
- **Unexplained Absence Follow-up:** If an absence is unexplained, the school office will attempt to contact parents/caregivers via **phone call, text message, or email**.
- **Recording Reasons for Absence:** All reasons for absence will be recorded, distinguishing between justified (e.g., illness, bereavement) and unjustified absences.
- **Early Intervention:** For students with emerging patterns of absence, early informal communication will be initiated by the classroom teacher or office staff.

- **Excessive Justified or Explained Unjustified absence** that may be non consecutive will be monitored and followed up. If medical absence exceeds 5 days a medical certificate may be requested. Continued justified absence will also be monitored for follow up by DP or Principal.

2.2 Strategies and Interventions at Different Attendance Thresholds

Dawson School will implement a stepped approach to interventions, aligning with the principles of the Ministry's Stepped Attendance Response (STAR). The following outlines the specific thresholds and corresponding actions:

- **Threshold 1: Unexplained Absences (UA) Less Than 5 Days in a Term**
 - **Situation:** A student has accumulated fewer than five unexplained absences within a school term.
 - **Task:** Address absenteeism early to prevent escalation.
 - **Action:**
 - Follow up on absence with daily texts / phone call home.
 - Monitor attendance patterns via school tracking systems and ask 'why' when a pattern emerges.
 - Notify parents via text, call and/or email if absences begin forming a pattern.
 - Refer to attendance services if pattern or 2-3 consecutive days absence unexplained.
 - Engage the student through positive reinforcement and check-ins, emphasising relationships with trusted adults.
 - Celebrate attendance milestones with praise and small incentives.
 - Ensure the school environment is engaging and stimulating to encourage daily attendance.
 - **Result:** Early intervention increases awareness and encourages parental engagement in attendance improvement.
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- **Threshold 2: Unexplained Absences (UA) Between 5 and 15 Days in a Term**
 - **Situation:** A student has accumulated between five and fifteen unexplained absences.
 - **Task:** Strengthen communication and support strategies.
 - **Action:**
 - Continue attempting to engage with parents, refer to attendance / truancy services if no response or explanation given
 - Identify and address any barriers (transport, social concerns, family challenges), asking 'why' absences occur consistently on specific days.
 - Offer support mechanisms such as breakfast programs
 - Implement in class attendance goals with student recognition initiatives.
 - Reinforce the importance of school as a fun, engaging, and stimulating place to be.
 - Differentiate between consecutive and non consecutive absences - consecutive absences escalate to the next threshold faster.
 - **Result:** Increased parental accountability and targeted support reduce absenteeism.
- **Threshold 3: Unexplained Absences (UA) Over 15 Days in a Term**
 - **Situation:** A student has reached fifteen unexplained absences.

- **Task:** Implement more intensive intervention measures.
- **Action:**
 - Issue a formal attendance warning call, email, letter.
 - Provide attendance reports highlighting the impact on academic performance.
 - Convene a meeting with school leadership, parents, and or support services.
 - Provide a full summary of the student's academic achievement and attendance trends.
 - Develop an individualised attendance improvement plan with clear expectations.
 - Refer to external truancy services if attendance does not improve.
 - Continue to build strong relationships and celebrate attendance progress, no matter how small.
 - Explore ways to make school feel more welcoming and engaging, giving students a reason to want to come back.
- **Result:** Reinforcement of attendance expectations and potential external support ensure compliance.

2.3 Identifying and Responding to Barriers to Attendance

Dawson School recognises that various factors can contribute to non-attendance. The plan will include strategies to identify and respond to these barriers:

- **Open Communication:** Foster an environment where students and families feel comfortable communicating challenges impacting attendance.
- **Pastoral Care Team:** Utilise the school's pastoral care team (SWIS, attendance services, volunteers, outside providers, support staff) to conduct initial assessments and provide support.
- **Collaboration with Families:** Work collaboratively with parents/caregivers to understand underlying issues (e.g., health concerns, family circumstances, bullying, learning difficulties, mental health).
- **Internal Support:** Provide internal support mechanisms such as academic support, well-being programs, and peer mentoring.
- **External Agency Referrals:** Establish clear pathways for referral to external support agencies (e.g., health services, social services, Ministry of Education Attendance Service) when school-based interventions are insufficient.
- **Flexible Learning Options:** Explore flexible learning options or alternative support where appropriate and in line with Ministry guidelines.

2.4 Attendance Intervention Process and Timeline

Dawson School will follow a structured intervention process and timeline for student absences:

- **Step 1: Day One – Day Two**
 1. Office to make contact with families via text, email and / or phone call. Teachers may also approach parents on return or message via seesaw if the student is absent without explanation.
 2. If contact is made, office staff / teacher documents the reason for Unexplained Absence (UA) on school SMS.
 3. If no contact is made, Truant (T) is coded, so follow-up is highlighted.
 4. The Office makes follow-up calls until the student attends.

- **Step 2: Day Three-Four**
 1. SMS alerts are triggered for 2 and 4 consecutive half days to office staff
 2. The office continues to try and make contact with the family on the third consecutive day of UA. Text, Phone, Email - potentially reaching out to emergency contacts.
 3. Communication clarifies the school's expectations re. attendance with the whānau.
 4. Refers the case to Attendance Services for follow-up.
- **Step 4: Day Five**
 1. Attempting to continue making contact with whānau to discuss the absence emphasising critical factors important for success at school including proactive communication, overall well-being and asking 'why' to help identify underlying barriers.
 2. If contact is made, a response is documented on school's SMS and summary of contact with whānau to Attendance Services to monitor for follow-up. If no contact is made Truant is coded
 3. The Attendance Officer to make contact with whānau
 4. SMS alerts are triggered for 10 and 12 consecutive half days to office staff and senior management
- **Step 5: Day Ten**
 1. SMS alerts are triggered for both 20 consecutive and non consecutive half days to office staff, deputy principal and principal.
 2. Where appropriate AP, DP or Principal hold a hui with the whānau to address concerns.
 3. Attendance Services continue to monitor attendance.
 4. Non consecutive attendance also monitored and followed up by classroom teacher, office staff, AP, DP or principal.
- **Step 6: Day Fifteen**
 1. SMS alerts are triggered for both 30 consecutive and non consecutive half days to office, DP and principal
 2. Office staff and senior management continue to communicate with Attendance Services if a student is absent for the fifteenth day in a term.
 3. AP, DP or Principal hold a hui with the whānau to address concerns.
 4. Ministry involvement is initiated by the AP/DP/Principal if appropriate.

3. Implementation and Monitoring

Dawson School will ensure the effective implementation and ongoing monitoring of this plan through:

- **Data Tracking:** Regularly review attendance records to identify emerging patterns and ask 'why' absences occur.
- **Collaboration:** Work with parents, students, and support services to implement tailored solutions while maintaining strong, positive relationships.
- **Celebration & Engagement:** Foster a school culture that makes attendance rewarding, through recognition, engaging learning experiences, and a welcoming atmosphere.
- **Evaluation:** Measure success based on improved attendance rates and student engagement.

4. Additional Requirements and Review Periods

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