

PROCEDURE 49: ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES AND PUNCTUALITY

RATIONALE:

Attendance is strongly correlated to student achievement, the key focus for the school.

Links between disengagement in education and youth offending have been well evidenced in literature. Attendance at school is usually regarded as one of the 'big four' factors that can produce resilience in young people. Therefore, increased participation in school is key to reducing anti-social behaviour and offending. Longer term consequences of disengagement in education include worse employment opportunities, lower earnings, greater welfare dependence, homelessness and limited housing options, higher involvement in crime, worse mental health, suicidal thinking, and early pregnancy.

Research has shown that the patterns for truancy are set in the first two years of school. Students who have poor attendance as five and six-year olds, are much more likely to become disengaged with school and drop out early.

GUIDELINES:

1. This policy aligns with the National Administration Guidelines and relevant education legislation.
2. Whareorino School uses a SMS to record and monitor attendance/absentees.
3. The Board will monitor attendance through the Principal Report.
4. Deployment of the school's resources to deal with attendance is based on clear analysis of need and effective prioritisation and is well targeted and monitored.
5. Responsibility for managing attendance is with the principal.
6. The Principal will adopt processes that ensure effective recording, monitoring, analysis, and intervention to improve attendance.
7. This procedure will be reviewed bi-annually.

PURPOSES FOR PROCEDURES:

- To ensure the school is operating within the legislative and health and safety requirements set by the Ministry of Education.
- To enhance student achievement and outcomes. Research shows that long-term success at school is strongly linked to attendance, particularly in the first two years of school.
- To discourage unexplained and unjustified absences and lateness, as both are disruptive to the learning of the individual pupil and to the learning of the whole class.
- To ensure the safety of pupils. Every effort will be made to contact parents/caregivers if children are absent without explanation.
- To ensure irregular attendances or patterns of attendance e.g. lateness, are monitored, recorded and addressed where necessary by school.
- By pupils adopting a pattern of regular and punctual attendance, it is hoped that these positive habits will assist them throughout their lives and that all students will remain at school longer and leave with higher qualifications.

IMPLEMENTATION:

NAG 6: Legislation

Each School Board is also expected to comply with all general legislation. Having a school-wide focus on attendance is to support overall student engagement and achievement.

Definitions:

Explained absence: An absence for which an explanation has been received by the school from the parent or guardian.

Justified absence: Absence that is explained to the satisfaction of the principal. Common forms of justified absence include medical/dental appointments, illness, bereavement or personal or family circumstances.

Unjustified absence: An absence that is either unexplained, or not explained to the satisfaction of the principal. A student is considered truant in this scenario- on more than 20% of the half days for which the school is open over a four-week period.

Satisfactory attendance level: The Ministry of Education have decided on the level of acceptable attendance for the district as being **94%**. This is the standard we are setting as our attendance goal.

Procedures:

1. Each day, staff will record student attendance and punctuality by marking the school roll before 9.30am.
2. Parents/caregivers are expected to contact the school before 9am if a student is going to be late or absent for the day with an explanation.
3. If a student is absent and there has been no contact from parents/caregivers by 9.30am, the school will endeavour to contact parents/caregivers by phone.
4. If uncertain about whether an absence is justified or unjustified, seek clarification from the Principal.
5. For students with regular unexplained absences, a letter will be sent home to parents/caregivers reminding them of their obligation to contact the school regarding student absences.
6. Continued unsatisfactory attendance will be reported to the School Board, who will send out a letter. (see attached letter)

Encouraging regular attendance

- 1 As well as the above 'compliance' process to address non-attendance of students, the school will employ positive strategies from time-to-time to encourage students and parents to be motivated towards high levels of attendance.
- 2 Parents will be kept informed via newsletters of the expectations regarding attendance and also of the school's attendance goals and attendance rates.
- 3 The school attendance rate will be worked out every term and a report provided to the School Board.

Related Documents and Information

- Attendance Code List
- Guidelines on how to refer to your Attendance Service for additional support

- MoE Attendance Matters Booklet

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Stevenson', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

C. Stevenson
PRINCIPAL

Dated: 17 March 2022