



Report: Release of attendance data for Term 3 2024

To:	Hon David Seymour, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date:	14 November 2024	Deadline:	21 November 2024
Security Level:	In-Confidence	Priority:	High
From:	Grant Pollard	Phone:	04 463 7639
Position:	General Manager, Data and Insights, Te Pae Aronui	METIS No:	1339202

Why are we sending this to you?

- This paper briefs you on the release of Term 3 2024 regular attendance data and provides you with key statistics from this release.

What action do we need, by when?

- Note that regular attendance data for Term 3 2024 will be released on Thursday 21 November.

Key facts

- In Term 3 2024, **51.3%** of students met the criteria for **regular attendance**. This is an increase of 5.3 percentage points from Term 3 2023 (46.0%).
- Absences due to short-term illness or medical reasons continue to be the largest contributor to justified absences.

Alignment with Government priorities

- 1 This paper reports on regular attendance and supports the Government's target of 80% of students attending more than 90% of the school term by 2030.

Background

Term 3 2024 attendance reporting

- 2 Reports and data for attendance in Term 3 2024 will be released on Education Counts on Thursday 21 November 2024.
- 3 Because of recurring patterns in attendance that are unique to each term, most comparisons in this paper and in the attendance reports are between Term 3 2024 and Term 3 2023.
- 4 Reactive questions and answers are included in Annex 1.
- 5 In Term 3 2024, 96.8% (2,346) of all schools and kura provided useable attendance data.

The impact of illness, including COVID-19, on attendance data

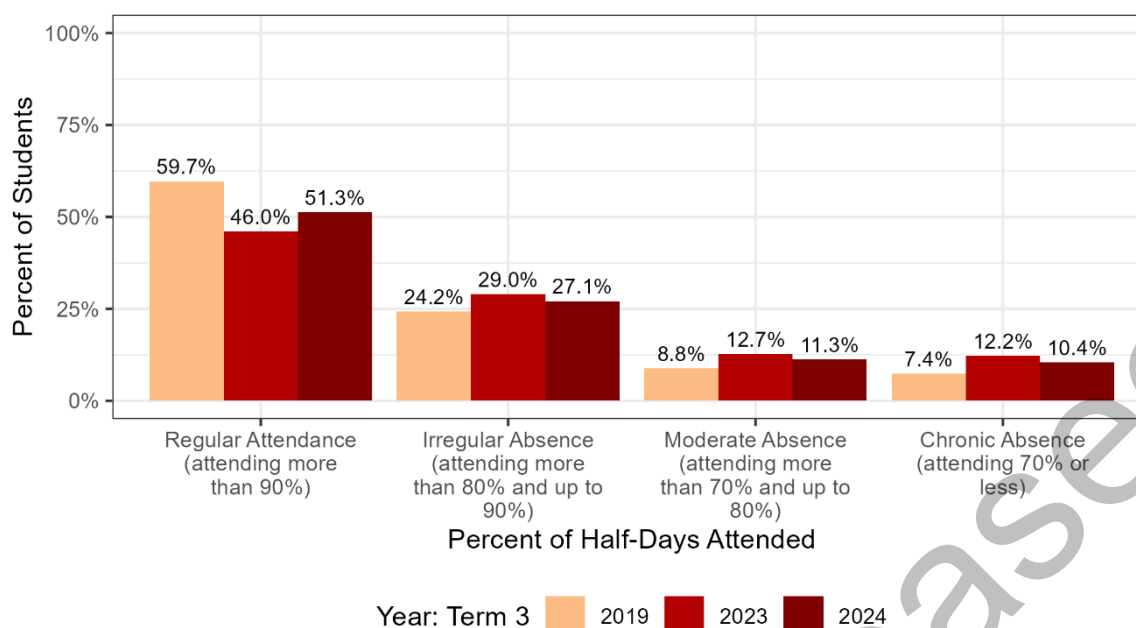
- 6 Short-term illness/medical absences continued to be the main driver of non-attendance in Term 3 2024. The level of illness is associated with the continued incidence of COVID-19 and other seasonal illnesses.
- 7 Comparisons to previous years are impacted by incidence of COVID-19 in the community and the government's COVID-19 response. From 15 August 2023, all mandatory public health requirements for COVID-19 were removed.
- 8 The current health guidance is for students (and staff) to self-isolate for at least 5 days if they tested positive for COVID-19, even if they only have mild symptoms, however self-isolation is not mandatory. In most school terms, students who are absent from school for 5 days or more for any reason will not meet the criteria for regular attendance.

Key Findings

National regular attendance and chronic absence

- 9 In Term 3 2024, 51.3% of students met the criteria for regular attendance. This is an increase of 5.3 percentage points from Term 3 2023 (46.0%) and remains lower than Term 3 2019 (pre-COVID-19) when 59.7% of students were regularly attending.

Figure 1: In Term 3 2024, the regular attendance rate increased while the rates for irregular, moderate and chronic absence decreased compared to Term 3 2023



Term 3 Year	Regular attendance (more than 90% of the term)	Irregular absence (more than 80% and up to 90% of the term)	Moderate absence (more than 70% and up to 80% of the term)	Chronic absence (70% or less of the term)
2024	51.3	27.1	11.3	10.4
2023	46.0	29.0	12.7	12.2
2019	59.7	24.2	8.8	7.4

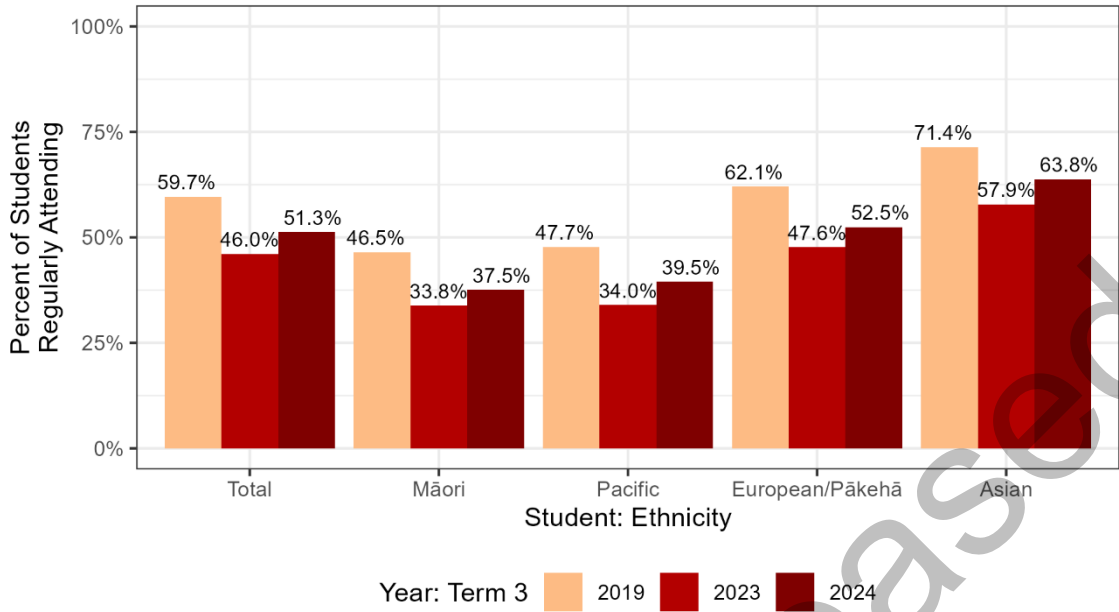
10 The percentage of students in the chronic absence category (attending 70% or less of the term) decreased to 10.4% in Term 3 2024 from 12.2% in Term 3 2023 (1.8 percentage points).

Attendance rates by ethnicity

11 In Term 3 2024, regular attendance was 37.5% for ākonga Māori, 39.5% for Pacific students, 63.8% for Asian students, and 52.5% for European/Pākehā students.

12 Regular attendance rates for ākonga Māori and Pacific students show increases of 3.7 and 5.5 percentage points respectively, compared to Term 3 2023. The regular attendance rates for Asian and European/Pākehā students increased by 5.9 and 4.9 percentage points respectively.

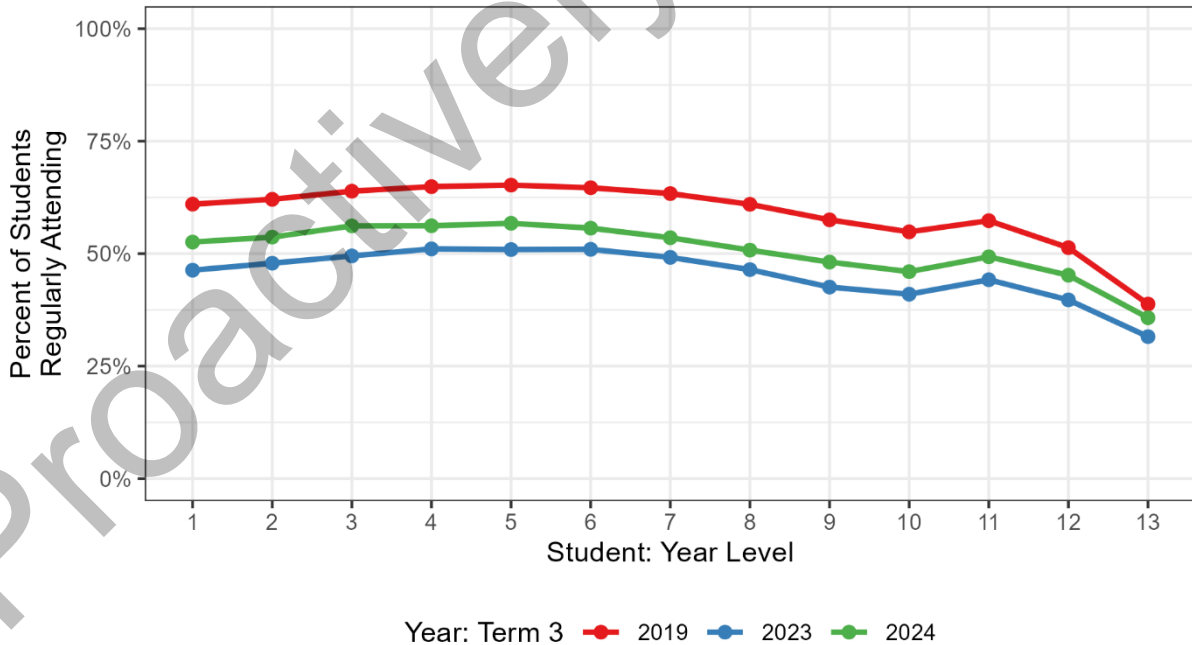
Figure 2: Regular attendance has increased for students of all ethnicities in Term 3 2024 compared to Term 3 2023



Attendance by year level

- 13 In Term 3 2024, attendance rates across all year levels increased compared to Term 3 2023.
- 14 Overall, the regular attendance rate for primary students increased by 5.4 percentage points to 54.4%, while the overall rate for secondary students increased by 5.0 percentage points to 45.5%.

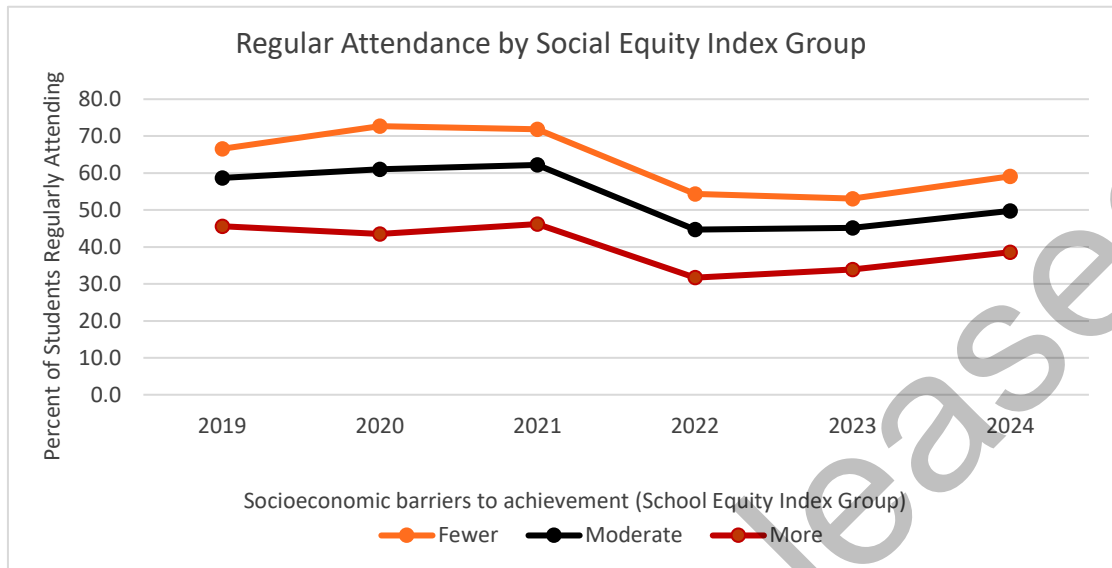
Figure 3: Regular attendance increased across all year levels in Term 3 2024 compared to Term 3 2023



Attendance by school equity index groups/bands

- 15 Regular attendance by school equity index groups shows that regular attendance rates are higher for schools where the students face fewer socioeconomic barriers. Attendance rates across all equity index groups increased from 2023 to 2024¹.

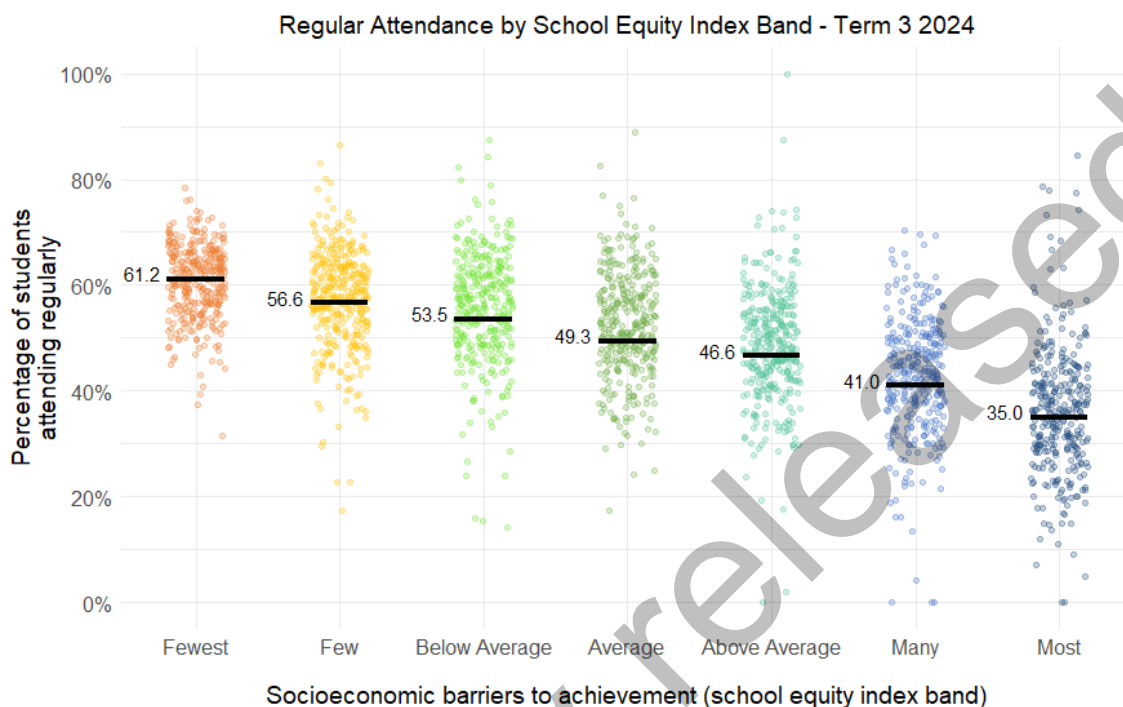
Figure 4: Regular attendance rates across all school equity index groups increased from 2023 to 2024



¹ While the equity index has been in use only since 2023, here Equity Index Bands are used from 2019 onwards. This is done using 2023 Equity index numbers in order to provide a time series for socioeconomic analysis, as 2023 EQI numbers provide a reasonable estimation of the socioeconomic circumstances of a school's learners back to 2019.

- 16 There is a great deal of school-to-school variation within the equity index groups and bands. The jitter plot in Figure 5 shows the distribution of regular attendance rates in Term 3 2024 grouped by their Equity Index bands. The solid line is the average percentage of students attending regularly for each band. Each coloured dot denotes an individual school within each band.

Figure 5: On average, regular attendance rates are lower for students in schools with higher socioeconomic barriers to achievement



- 17 The variation in attendance rates between schools is greater in bands where students have more socioeconomic barriers to achievement. Very high and very low regular attendance rates are predominantly for small schools.

Attendance by region

- 18 All education regions experienced an increase in Term 3 regular attendance rates between 2023 and 2024.
- 19 Tāmaki Herenga Manawa | Central and East Auckland region had the highest percentage of students attending regularly in Term 3 2024 (57.3%). This region also had the largest increase (7.1 percentage points) compared to Term 3 2023.

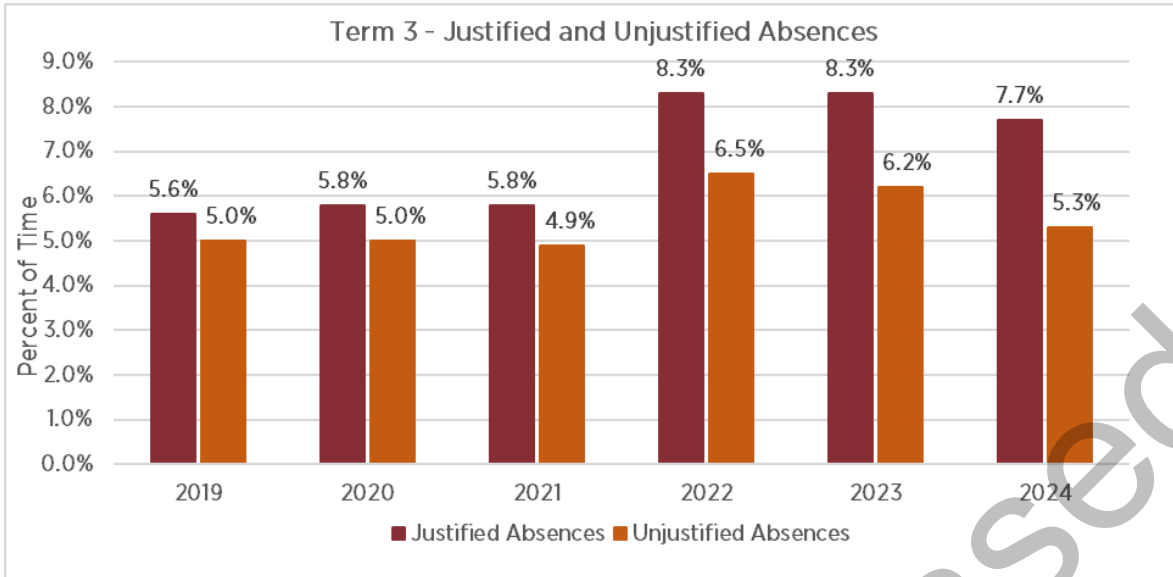
Percentage of Students Regularly Attending by Education Region

Education Region	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2024 – 2023 (percentage point difference)
Tai Tokerau	34.4	38.8	4.4
Auckland	46.3	53.1	6.8
• Tāmaki Herenga Tāngata North and West Auckland	48.5	55.4	6.9
• Tāmaki Herenga Manawa Central and East Auckland	50.2	57.3	7.1
• Tāmaki Herenga Waka South and South-west Auckland	38.6	45.1	6.5
Waikato	45.6	47.8	2.2
Bay of Plenty, Waiariki	43.7	47.8	4.1
Hawke's Bay, Tairāwhiti	45.4	47.9	2.5
Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatū	46.1	52.0	5.9
Wellington	46.0	51.9	5.9
Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast	47.5	48.8	1.3
Canterbury and Chatham Islands	49.2	54.9	5.7
Otago, Southland	48.7	53.4	4.7

Recorded reasons for absence

- 20 Analysis of reasons for absences is based on the percentage of time (in minutes) reported against absence codes. This allows absences to be reported on the same basis across different class lengths and school types. In this section, “time in term” refers to the total amount of time students were expected to be in class across the term.
- 21 Students were present 86.4% of the time in Term 3 2024. Of the time absent, 7.7% was for a justified reason, (illness or medical reasons or a reason within school policy). Unjustified reasons accounted for the remaining 5.3% of time absent (truancy, no/trivial explanation given, or for an explained but unjustified reason).
- 22 The overall percentage of time recorded to justified absences decreased between 2023 (8.3%) and 2024 (7.7%). This remains higher than Term 3 2019 when justified absences accounted for 5.6% of term time.
- 23 Within justified absences, absences due to short-term illness or medical reasons continue to be the largest contributor, followed by absences for reasons within school policy. Illness or medical absences made up 6.5% of all term time in 2024, down from 7.0% in 2023, and absences justified under school policy made up 1.1% of all term time in 2024, the same as for Term 3 2023.
- 24 The percentage of time recorded to unjustified absences was 5.3% in Term 3 2024, down from 6.2% in Term 3 2023. This remains higher than Term 3 2019 (5.0%).
- 25 Absences due to truancy, or for an unknown/trivial reason is the biggest contributor to unjustified absences in Term 3 2024. These absences made up 2.7% of all term time in 2024 down from 3.3% in Term 3 2023.
- 26 Data on unjustified student absences shows that 14.3% of enrolled students had five or more full days of unjustified absence in Term 3 2024. This is a decrease of 2.3 percentage points from Term 3 2023.

Figure 6: Compared to 2023, justified and unjustified absences have decreased in Term 3 2024



Proactively released

Next Steps

27 The Term 4 2024 attendance reports and data are due to be released on the Education Counts website by 20 March 2025.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** that
 - i. the indicator reports and data for Term 3 2024 will be published on Education Counts on 21 November 2024.
 - ii. in Term 3 2024, 51.3% of students met the criteria for regular attendance, an increase of 5.3 percentage points compared to Term 3 2023 (46.0%).
 - iii. reactive questions and answers are attached in Annex 1.

Noted

Proactive Release:

- b. **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this paper in full once it has been considered by you.

Agree / Disagree



Grant Pollard
General Manager
Data and Insights, Te Pae Aronui

14/11/2024

Hon David Seymour
Associate Minister of Education

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Annexes

The following are annexed to this paper:

Annex 1: Question and Answers Sheet

Proactively released

Annex 1: Question and Answers Sheet

What was the national regular attendance rate for Term 3 2024?

In Term 3 2024, **51.3%** of students met the criteria for regular attendance, attending school for more than 90% of the term.

How does this compare with last term and Term 3 last year?

The regular attendance rate for Term 3 2024 has increased by 5.3 percentage points compared with regular attendance of 46.0% in Term 3 2023.

Regular attendance in Term 3 2024 decreased compared to Term 2 2024 (53.2%). This is similar to the previous year where the regular attendance for Term 3 2023 (46.0%) was lower than Term 2 2023 (47.1%). This is due in part to recurring patterns in attendance that are unique to each term.

What are the rates for other attendance categories?

The percentage of students in all other attendance categories decreased for Term 3 2024 compared to Term 3 2023.

Term 3 Year	Regular attendance (more than 90% of the term)	Irregular absence (more than 80% and up to 90% of the term)	Moderate absence (more than 70% and up to 80% of the term)	Chronic absence (70% or less of the term)
2024	51.3	27.1	11.3	10.4
2023	46.0	29.0	12.7	12.2
2019	59.7	24.2	8.8	7.4

Compared with Term 3 2023, the regular attendance rates for ākonga Māori and Pacific students have increased by 3.7 and 5.5 percentage points respectively. The rates for Asian and European/Pākehā students have increased by 5.9 and 4.9 percentage points respectively.

All regions saw an increase in the regular attendance rates with the Tāmaki Herenga Manawa | Central and East Auckland region experiencing the largest increase of 7.1 percentage points.

How have reasons for student absence changed in Term 3 2024?

Justified absences (including short-term illness) made up 7.7% of time in Term 3 2024. This is a decrease from Term 3 2023 (8.3%). Unjustified absences contributed 5.3% of time in Term 3 2024, down from 6.2% in Term 3 2023.

The main driver of absence in Term 3 2024 was time absent due to short-term illness/medical reasons, making up 6.5% of term time, down from 7.0% in 2023.

Within unjustified absences, absences due to truancy, no reason given, or for an unknown reason accounted for 2.7% of term time in Term 3 2024, down from 3.3% in Term 3 2023.

What's the difference between regular attendance and the daily reporting?

At the beginning of Term 2 2024, the Ministry began reporting on the daily attendance rate. This data is updated weekly for each day of the previous week. The daily attendance rate tells us what attendance was like each day by reporting the percentage of all students who were present for 4 hours or more on a given day.

The regular attendance categories tell us about the attendance patterns for each student over the whole term. Attendance for each individual student (based on half-days) is summarised into one of four categories for the whole term based on how much of the term the student was present for. The Ministry reports on the percentage of all students in each of the four regular attendance categories.

The four regular attendance categories are:

- Regular attendance: present more than 90% of the term,
- Irregular absence: present for more than 80% and up to 90% of the term,
- Moderate absence: present for more than 70% and up to 80% of the term,
- Chronic absence: present less than 70% of the term.

For example, daily attendance tells us that most days in Term 3 2024 more than 80% of students were present on any given day. In contrast, the regular attendance statistic tells us that in Term 3 2024, 51.3% of all students were present for more than 90% of the term.

Regular attendance is based on more complete and accurate data than daily attendance as more time is available to implement quality assurance processes and for schools to update attendance information for individual students.

What does this tell us about what is happening in schools each day?

Daily attendance gives us a faster picture of how many students are at school each day. Schools are not always able to provide the Ministry with complete and accurate data for the most recent days, particularly if they need to contact parents or caregivers for clarification.

Regular attendance does not tell us about how attendance is looking in schools on a particular day, rather it tells us what has happened for individual students over the whole term. The Ministry also has time to provide more comprehensive analysis of the data for the termly reporting.