

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

Attendance Services



Thank you for your interest in this opportunity.

Implementation of the new Attendance Services model represents a significant investment in the well-being and future of approximately 80,000 children and young people each year who need this support. A total of \$245 million in funding is being made available for the Attendance Services for the 2026 – 2029 school years. This opportunity relates to the provision of a comprehensive range of services to support school attendance of year 1-11 students across New Zealand.

We look forward to hearing from Schools and other providers, including iwi organisations, NGOs and other entities who want to join us in supporting this important initiative for students, schools and local communities.

This pack provides you with information for Schools about the programme, our requirements, the scope and scale of what we are looking for, and the response form you will need to complete if you wish to apply to be a provider.

If you have any questions, please contact us via the Programme's procurement team at: attendance.service.procurement@education.govt.nz

IMPORTANT: THIS DOCUMENT IS **PART ONE** OF THE RFA PACK. There are five parts and two Appendices in total. The Terms and conditions are at Appendix 2. Please ensure you read/have understood all parts before submitting your response.

What are we doing?

New Zealand has an attendance crisis. Around 200,000 students are chronically absent for at least one term during the year. And each year around 20,000 students are non-enrolled (should be, but are not, enrolled in school¹).

The new Attendance Services model will deliver a comprehensive range of services to support improved attendance rates for chronically absent and non-enrolled students aged 5 – 16 (years 1 – 11).

Attendance Service providers will provide appropriate services to all schools and eligible students in their catchment area. The new services are designed to have capacity to provide support to around 80,000 students per annum (the current attendance services manage around 41,000 cases per annum). Contract values will be based on estimated referral volumes, with providers funded to identify and address the needs of all referred students.

Providers will work collaboratively with schools. Flexible and innovative approaches to service delivery will be encouraged as a way of managing unexpected variations in demand, as well as to maximise impact on attendance. Ongoing monitoring and regular reviews will also enable the Ministry to agree adjustments to contracts if this becomes necessary.

A key feature of successful providers will be their ability to establish and maintain strong relationships with students, families, schools, local communities, and other social agencies within their catchment area.

¹ In most cases students are referred as non-enrolled after they have been absent for 20 consecutive days

The new Attendance Service model includes an in-school provision element, under which eligible schools (approximately 175 schools) can apply for funding to address less complex absence cases. The school application process for this funding sits outside of this procurement.

The new Attendance Services Model

Under the new Attendance Services model being introduced from the beginning of 2026 the Ministry will fund contracted Attendance Services providers to deliver a comprehensive range of services to all schools and eligible students within a defined catchment area. Key components will include:

- Case management services for eligible students.
- Addressing unmet basic needs that are impacting on a student's attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining strong local relationships including with schools, students and their whānau, other social agencies, and iwi.
- Working closely with local interagency forums to ensure that students get the appropriate support they need.
- Providing targeted attendance advice and support to local schools.

The new contracts will have a strong focus on outcomes and will encourage and support flexibility and innovation in service delivery.

The expectations of providers will be clear, with strong monitoring and contract management practices in place to ensure these expectations are met. Contracts will include clear service specifications, appropriate KPIs and reporting requirements, and relevant standard terms and conditions. They will be the same for all providers.

The Ministry has been working with an Attendance Expert Advisory Group (EAG) to ensure the design and implementation of the new Attendance Services model meets our goal of reducing chronic attendance and non-enrolment.

The new model continues to be developed, and we will provide updates as soon as they are ready. Ongoing development will be a key feature of the new model, and we will work with successful providers to learn more about what works and how to increase the impact of the service by adjusting in response to what we learn.

This opportunity offers successful Respondents the chance to have a life-changing positive impact on the lives of some of our most vulnerable children.

The diagram on the next page provides a visual overview of the key features of the Attendance Services provider procurement.

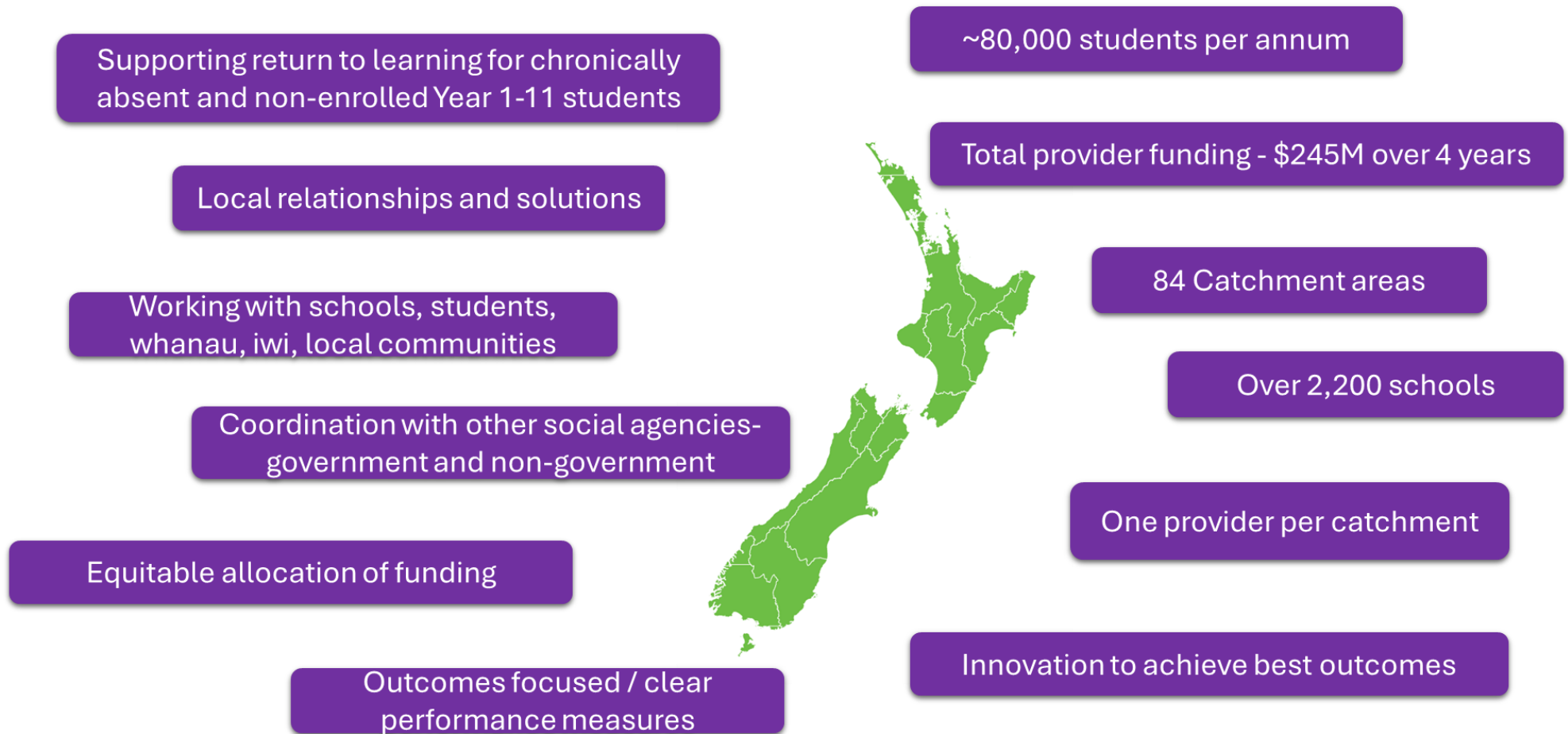
Who do we want to hear from?

This approach invites Schools to offer attendance services under this new model. The new multi-year contracts are expected to be in place by the end of October 2025, with delivery of services commencing from the beginning of 2026.

A separate RFP process is being run in parallel with this application process and providers, including iwi / Māori organisations, NGOs and other entities wishing to apply as a provider of these services are invited to apply via that process.

Following evaluation of all tenders / applications received through these parallel processes, a single contract will be awarded for each catchment. Each contract will be awarded to the Provider with the highest score against our evaluation criteria for each catchment, which may be an iwi / Māori organisation, NGO, school or other entity.

New Attendance Services Model – Provider procurement



What is our intention?

We have drawn on best practice from throughout the country, and the findings of reviews by the Education Review Office ([Left behind: How do we get our chronically absent students back to school?](#)) and the Ministry, to develop a new service delivery model. This model is taking a wholistic approach, engaging providers to provide services to different cohorts of learners – both chronically absent students and non-enrolled learners. The model has a strong evidence-based focus on outcomes and supports providers to test different approaches to meet the needs of students within their assigned catchments. Māori and Pacific students are significantly over-represented in chronically absent and non-enrolled student numbers, and all service providers must be able to engage effectively with these communities. The model will be consistently applied throughout the country.

Through our procurement and selection process it is our intention to identify and contract with the highest scoring provider against our evaluation criteria – whether a school, iwi, NGO or other provider - to provide support to students, schools and the Ministry to reduce chronic absence and non-enrolment levels.

How will we approach the market to do this?

We will approach the market using two parallel processes.

School Application Process	Schools who wish to apply as a provider of services are invited to apply via this application process. We are not seeking applications for alternative solutions.
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Request for Proposals (RFP) Process	A Request for Proposals is seeking proposals from iwi organisations, NGOs and commercial entities that can deliver a comprehensive range of attendance services to chronically absent and non-enrolled students in years 1-11. The RFP process mirrors this RFA process, with the same requirements, timings and evaluation process.
Provider selection stage	Providers shortlisted from both the RFP and school application process will move to a joint selection stage, where the Provider assessed as offering the best overall solution in accordance with the published evaluation criteria will be awarded the contract to supply the applicable catchment area. Please refer to Part FOUR: Timeline and Selection Approach, for more details.

Applications will be evaluated using Pre-conditions (Pass/ Fail) and weighted evaluation criteria. This information is detailed in PART FOUR: Timeline and Selection Approach.

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for providers with the capability and capacity to provide an Attendance Services solution that is ready for day 1 of January 2026. Please note this does not require a full solution on day 1. Our Requirements in Part 3 provide more information on establishment and service commencement requirements.

While we are open to a consortium bid or a Prime provider structure that could deliver a solution to multiple catchment areas, there will be one contract awarded for each catchment area. We are placing high importance on local solutions that understand and best meet the needs of students, including strong, connected relationships with schools, whanau, iwi and local communities. Lessons from review of the current Programme have identified the strengths and benefits in local relationships and solutions.

Providers will need to:

- be able to demonstrate they have a clear understanding of the challenges impacting school attendance within their proposed catchment area,
- have a good track record in delivering services with comparable features, for example, working with young people, whanau, local communities, and iwi, working to achieve clear and measurable outcomes, and
- propose a clear approach to how they will deliver the services, under an evidence-based outcomes-focused framework

Please see [PART FOUR: Timeline and Selection Approach](#) for our full evaluation criteria.

This process will help us to understand your solution and capability to deliver services under the new Attendance Services Model.

What's in it for you?

This opportunity presents successful Providers the chance to have a life-changing positive impact on the lives of some of our most vulnerable children. Furthermore,

data and evidence generated from the new solutions will be used to inform the shaping of the Attendance Services programme for future years.

Want to be involved? Here's what to do next:

If you would like to be involved, please complete the response form and submit your application (refer to [PART FIVE: Response Form](#)) in PDF to attendance.service.procurement@education.govt.nz by 10am Wednesday 23 July 2025. All submissions must be received by this date.

Please note: If you wish to apply to supply services in more than one catchment area a separate response form is required for each catchment.

To help inform your response the following seven documents are available and should be considered as part of this RFA pack:

1. PART ONE: Overview (this document)
2. PART TWO: RFA Scope, Scale and Approach
3. PART THREE: RFA Requirements
4. PART FOUR: Timeline and Selection Approach
5. PART FIVE: Response Form
6. Appendix 1– Frequently Asked Questions and Glossary
7. Appendix 2 – RFA Terms and Conditions

You can also attend a one-hour online briefing session to hear from our team and to find out more information. An online workshop will also be held for Providers who may be unfamiliar with the process of responding to written RFAs. Briefing and Workshop

dates and registration links are available in [PART FOUR: Timeline and Selection Approach](#). The content delivered by the Ministry will also be posted on the Ministry's website, along with any questions and answers.

House Keeping

We understand that this is a little different to how you might normally engage with the Ministry, and you may have questions.

We have included Frequently Asked Questions along with a Glossary of Key terms (Appendix 1) but do get in touch if your answer is not there, or you need additional information.

Further Queries?

All market activity will be managed by the Ministry's procurement team. You can ask us questions via attendance.service.procurement@education.govt.nz up until the 14th of July, and for transparency, all questions will be collated, anonymised, posted on our website and sent out to all schools who have registered to receive copies. We will also share relevant questions from the RFP process. Queries relating to a Provider's IP around their solution will not be shared.

We **shape** an **education** system that delivers
equitable and **excellent outcomes**

He mea **tārai** e mātou te **mātauranga**
kia **rangatira** ai, kia **mana taurite** ai ōna **huanga**

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