



## Questions and Answers

### Webinar: Attendance Management Plans

Date: Tuesday 18 November, 2025

#### **SMS-related**

**Q: Is the attendance statistic we need to publish based on what our SMS tells us or the statistic in attendance matters report?**

A: We recommend using the attendance statistics in your Every Day Matters reports. If you experience any difficulties comparing the data in your SMS with these reports, please contact [everydaymatters@education.govt.nz](mailto:everydaymatters@education.govt.nz) for assistance.

The requirements for attendance management plans are that your plan is published on a website maintained by the school. If the school does not have a website, please contact [attendance.management@education.govt.nz](mailto:attendance.management@education.govt.nz)

**Q: How will notifications work? Within our SMS?**

A: While details vary between different SMSs, schools can configure notifications within their SMS to notify them when students have met various AMP thresholds. Schools will then need to record response activities within their SMS.

**Q: In our SMS it would be helpful if we could see the data like the old paper registers - all names down the left, days across the top and then we could more easily see patterns. In HERO we can only currently see 1 child at a time. We can download spreadsheets, but it still does not really help us with the pattern spotting (e.g. Monday & Friday absences, regular incomplete weeks).**

A: You need to speak to your SMS provider as they have the ability to provide different forms of reporting that may assist you. We expect SMSs to provide all-student views as part of the AMP functionality.

**Q: The SMS changes don't happen till next year we need to make targets and the AMP this year ready for the start.**

A: Your targets can be set from your Every Day Matters reports and the trends you can find in this report. You do not need the up-coming changes to your SMS to complete your AMP.

### **Attendance data reporting**

**Q: How are the thresholds calculated? We look at YTD data, but MOE looks like they look at what percentage of students have good attendance. What do we have to report on?**

A: The thresholds are calculated on the number of absence days per term for each of the thresholds. The Everyday Matters report will continue to report on Regular, Irregular, Moderate and Chronic attendance and absence.

**Q: Is the percentage (%) attendance no longer a thing? Do we only look at days now rather than percentage (%)? (or both)?**

A: Both are important but responding to the number of days absent is a way to improve a school's regular attendance. The AMP thresholds are calculated on the number of days absent per term.

**Q: If a student is present for one to two periods, do we make that a day present or absent?**

A: In a secondary school, student attendance needs to be recorded for every period. If a student has been in class for 120 minutes for each half day, then they will be recorded as present for the day. Your SMS will calculate this for you.

**Q: Will it still be based on 1/2 days rather than full days?**

A: Attendance calculations are based on half days. A half day is 120 minutes.

**Q: If a student is present for 2 periods a morning, does that mean they will show up after 10 days for a 5-day absence?**

A: A student will reach the 5-day absence threshold when they have 10 half days recorded as absent. A half day is 120 minutes.

**Q: I am confused about the attendance data. Our attendance year to date sits at 92% yet the ministry data says 47% of our students are at school more than 90% of the time. What do we need to report on?**

A: The year-to-date calculation is a daily average across the year but is not used by the Ministry. The 47% is the regular attendance across one term. If it is Term 3 2025, illness contributed to higher than usual absence. Contact [everydaymatters@education.govt.nz](mailto:everydaymatters@education.govt.nz) for further support with this query.

### **Coding and attendance practice**

**Q: Q code seems quite loose. Some boards may have approved field days being a Q, other boards may not. Qs count as present, so a boards stance on Qs can impact attendance. So long as the board has minuted what they consider as Q - is that enough?**

A: There are four codes that each school board should have considered – Q, L, J and E. These are codes where a board may apply a level of discretion. These should form part of the school's attendance policy which would then provide discretion to the principal to apply appropriately.

**Q: Will there be consistent guidance for families on holiday?**

A: The Attendance Code Guidance can be found at this link - [Attendance Code Guidance.pdf](#) The G Code – Holiday during Term Time, should be applied for both domestic and overseas holidays.

**Q: What if student has been unwell for a long time impacting their attendance? Do they need a medical certificate to explain this?**

A: Schools may determine in their attendance policy the requirements for when a medical certificate can be requested. Schools can consider a referral to the Health Schools if criteria is met for enrolment. Schools can also provide distance learning to support students who are unable to attend school due to a medical reason.

**Q: For the challenging situations which could be justified or unjustified, who should we call for clarification, especially things like dance groups that have been selected for an international dance competition - parents call it NZ representation but there is no clear NZ team.**

A: Send any queries to the attendance codes email: [attendance.codes@education.govt.nz](mailto:attendance.codes@education.govt.nz)

**Q: What about clearer guidance when a child goes overseas for a period of time? It used to be 21 days but now people say 15 weeks?**

A: The attendance code guidance indicates that a student's type can be amended after 15 weeks in a school's SMS, from RE to NA. This is a student type not a code. If a student has attended less than 20% of a school term then their absence will not contribute towards the termly attendance data.

**Q: Asking parents to take breaks during school holidays when it costs double is a hard ask. Especially ones who are struggling financially.**

A: Under section 36 of the Education and Training Act parents are required to send their children to school whenever the school is open. The Ministry does not support parents taking children on holiday during term time.

**Q: What about the students that are continually late or leaving early.... that don't really show up as an absence?**

A: A school's attendance policy needs to determine the threshold for morning lateness, that is, how many minutes can a student be late for the L code to be applied. For primary schools the L code can be changed to P once they have arrived. For secondary school student be recorded as absent for the first period either using the J or E code.

Schools should also have procedures and/or protocols for students leaving early. Students are required to be at school for the duration the school is open unless they have an appointment or are being released under s52 to participate in tuition off site.

**Q: How to deal with students on lengthy holidays, and children who are often sick, with no improvement?**

A: If a student has been absent for more than 15 weeks and there is a return date then their student type can be changed to NA. This means they stay on the roll, but their absence does not have a negative effect on regular attendance data. For students who have had less than 20% attendance in any one term their attendance will not be included in the school's termly attendance data.

Schools need to work closely with students who are often sick. You can engage the support of the Attendance Service, who may have access to the support required for the unwell child. If that doesn't work you might consider referral to the Health School if the child fits criteria for enrolment.

**Q: Suggestions around in school truancy and how do we manage them back into classrooms.**

A: The STAR framework has a very good template for an individual attendance plan that could be used for both in-school and out-of-school absences. Understanding the reasons and hearing the voice of the student is important in preparing these plans. If the actions being used by the school are not resulting in an improvement in the student's attendance, then a referral to the attendance service could be considered.

**Q: What rules, regulations may be introduced around constant yet chronic health issues/medical absentees, e.g. child recovering from cancer treatment, or with IBS etc who require more time off.**

A: This will be considered in any review for 2026. Dual enrolment with Te Kura is a good option to support on-going learning with a possible transition plan back to school. Transition Attendance Plans – TAPs – are also an option allowing a student to attend part time when they are able.

### **AMPs in practice**

**Q: How much will change later this term? At the moment there is a note on the MOE website regarding attendance plans that new information will be available soon.**

A: The regulations are yet to be released, however, based on current information, it is unlikely the current guidance and advice will change.

**Q: Just want to know what a legally compliant plan looks like.**

A: A compliant attendance plan should outline your school's attendance targets, key objectives, and any strategic goals. It must include a commitment from the board to investigate, respond, and record actions for absences, along with clear processes for identifying and addressing student absences. The plan should detail strategies and interventions for different attendance thresholds, steps to remove barriers and underlying causes, and methods for monitoring progress against set targets.

For more information and resources to support understanding and developing an Attendance Management Plan, refer to the [Attendance management plans - Ministry of Education](#) webpage.

**Q: What is the review cycle on a school's AMP?**

A: Attendance Management Plans must be reviewed at least once every three years. However, we recommend reviewing them more frequently to maintain best practice and identify opportunities for improvement.

**Q: We report to the Board termly on our attendance data - do we need to have it minuted each meeting?**

A: Any report to the Board should form part of the minutes for that meeting. For further advice on board processes, you can contact New Zealand school boards association. Please email [govadvice@tewhakaroputanga.org.nz](mailto:govadvice@tewhakaroputanga.org.nz) or call 0800 782 435.

**Q: Can we use percentage thresholds instead of number of days?**

A: Yes, you can use percentage thresholds as long as they correspond to the same attendance levels as the 5, 10 and 15 day thresholds.

**Q: Are Justified absences counted in the 5,10,15 day thresholds? Eg Medical absence**

A: Yes – each threshold is made up of all absences – both justified and unjustified.

**Q: The actions at attendance thresholds would be somewhat retrospective which in some cases will make them (the actions) redundant don't you think?**

A: Attendance thresholds act as clear escalation points to trigger timely interventions and additional support, to prevent further absences. They help schools monitor patterns, act consistently when absences reach significant levels, and work best when paired with proactive monitoring and early engagement.

**Q: So, do we not call the thresholds Regular Attendance, Irregular Attendance, Moderate Absence, Chronic Absence when reporting attendance? Are they now called Good, Worrying, Concerning, Very Concerning?**

A: The attendance categories of Regular Attendance, Irregular Attendance, Moderate Absence and Chronic Absence indicate the percentage of the term that a student was present. Regular maps to good, irregular to worrying, etc. The AMP thresholds are based on the number of days a student is absent and the STAR framework and SMS systems will display these as green, yellow, orange and red.

**Q: Is it okay that we hold off putting in our attendance targets in our STAR and strategic plans until the SMS and the MOE data match**

A: Having an attendance target as part of an Attendance Management Plan helps as a measure to how effective the plan is at raising student attendance. We suggest you use the MoE data in the every day matters report.

**Q: When are the Attendance Plans required to be in place for kura? I think at the beginning you mentioned that at the moment the timeline excludes kura. Please confirm.**

A: All state and state integrated school (except Te Aho o te Kura Pounamu) must have an Attendance Management Plan by Term 1 2026.

**Q: Do schools have to follow the AMP template or as long as the areas of the plan are covered can any format can be used?**

A: Schools do not have to use the AMP template. Any format is acceptable as long as the Attendance Management Plan covers all the required areas and meets the compliance requirements.

**Q: How involved can the BOT be in helping implement the new systems? Is it school staff's sole responsibility that the BOT approves or should the BOT be involved from the grass roots?**

A: The school board is responsible for approving the Attendance Management Plan, and we expect school leaders and their board to work collaboratively in developing it so that it reflects both governance and operational needs.

**Q: With us being close to the end of term, there's only one BOT meeting before next year. What happens if the AMP is not signed off by the BOT before the start of Term 1 2026?**

A: All schools should have an AMP in place by the Start of Term 1 2026. We understand that in some situations it might not be possible to formalise the AMP by getting final sign off by the board within these timeframes. In these instances, we expect that this will be completed as soon as possible after the start of Term 1.

For support from the NZ School Boards Association on matters relating to AMPs, please email [govadvice@tewhakaroputanga.org.nz](mailto:govadvice@tewhakaroputanga.org.nz) or call 0800 782 435

**Q: Can you share one of the templates please**

A: [Attendance Management Plan Template v2 \(1\).docx](#)

**Q: Can you share an exemplar?**

A: [AMP exemplar -v2 \(1\).docx](#)

### **Attendance Services**

**Q: When all options other than to fine a family have been exhausted, including section 19 referrals to Oranga Tamariki and even an FGC process is not bringing about change for our chronic absenteeism, then what? What can the MoE do to help?**

A: When a school has taken all actions available to them and have not achieved the required improvement in attendance, we recommend that the student is referred to the local Attendance Service provider.

From 1 January 2026, the reformed attendance service delivery model will take effect, with providers resourced and supported to work with schools to improve attendance. These providers will work together with the school, and with all relevant government agencies and other local organisations where appropriate, to identify and address the barriers to attendance faced by the student.

Schools will be able to start referring chronically absent students to their new AS provider from the start of Term 1 2026.

For more information about the new Attendance Services please see [here](#)

**Q: Are there specific instructions given to attendance services that align to the AMP and what supports will be given to schools?**

A: Attendance Service Providers will be aware of STAR and the requirement for schools to have AMPs from the beginning of the new year.

It is expected that in schools' AMP they will mention their criteria for when to make referrals to the Attendance Service.

Schools and ASP are expected to work collaboratively which will include an individual attendance plan for each referral that supports the student back into regular attendance.

**Q: At what stage should we be engaging Attendance Services?**

A: From 1 January 2026, Attendance Service providers will be funded to provide support to chronically absent students (those in the 'of serious concern' in the STAR category) and non-enrolled students (those who should be, but are not, enrolled in school).

Guidance on when to request Attendance Service Provider support will be provided in the next School Leaders Bulletin on 9 December 2025 and posted on the website.



**Q: In the old system if you had 20 days non-attendance the student came off the roll - so you had families who played the 19 days. In this new system if a family plays the game of 14 days off a term, it does not become chronic as you are only working a term at a time and not collectively - what about these families? How will schools refer them to an attendance service if they do not fit into the chronic level before it can go to a provider?**

A: If a school is concerned about the ongoing attendance of a student and have exhausted their in-school options with no improvement the school can make a referral to the attendance service and collaborate on how best to support improved attendance.

**Q: Are there other support options when attendance services say they are waitlisting or unable to provide support?**

A: From January 2026, when the new Attendance Service delivery model takes effect, all Attendance Service providers will be adequately resourced to meet demand in their catchment and will be expected to do so. Waitlists will not be a permitted mechanism that is used by the new providers.

### **Public Information Campaign**

**Q: What and when will a public campaign look like to support school narrative with whanau?**

A: The Ministry is currently building its public information campaign to emphasise the importance of regular school attendance to parents and students. The campaign is currently largely social media based but is being expanded into mainstream media in the new year. We are also engaging the support of other agencies, such as MSD. We would encourage those schools who can to follow the Ministry's social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram and TikTok) and share our regular attendance posts.

Some attendance material for school use is available now on the Ministry [website](#). It includes posters and social media tiles you can use. There are also some [videos](#) you can share that feature young people talking about why school is important to them.

All of that said, early in 2026 the Ministry will be looking to enhance the resources it provides schools and community groups to communicate themselves about the importance of regular attendance. More information on that will be provided via the Bulletin and our regional staff.