



Attendance Service Provider Newsletter

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In this issue:

- Introduction
- National Attendance Service Delivery team established
- Operational guidance updates
- Reasons for declining a support request from schools
- Attendance data is expected to be available next week
- Further AS-CMS functionality for schools
- AS-CMS released to In-School Provision schools.
- Reminders on how to get support with AS-CMS
- Ministry of Social Development results are now live
- Information shared with schools
- Other attendance-related updates
- Coming up in our next newsletter
- Questions and feedback

Introduction

Kia ora koutou

Welcome to this edition of the Attendance Service Provider newsletter. As we settle into the first quarter of the new Attendance Service model, there continues to be a lot to share!

In this issue, we introduce you to the Ministry's new National Attendance Service Delivery team, provide important operational updates, and highlight enhancements to the AS-CMS, including new functionality for schools and ISPs.

We're offering webinars to demonstrate to your teams how schools can use the AS-CMS to request support from a provider and view cases. We encourage your teams to attend these where they are able. This will help you better support schools as they start to access and use the new system for requesting support.

And lastly, a reminder, all AS-CMS queries or user issues should now be referred to the Education Service Desk rather than the attendance service inbox.

Ngā mihi maioha

National Attendance Service Delivery team established

As a key element of standing up the new Attendance Service, we're pleased to share that the Ministry has established a dedicated National Attendance Service Delivery Team, led by Mel Harrington.

Mel and her team will be looking across the country to see what's working well and where improvements are needed. By having a national view, they can spot trends, share good practice, and support continuous improvement across all catchments.

The National Attendance Service Team is here to help with:

- providing guidance and support across all aspects of Attendance Service delivery,
- promoting consistency, helping ensure the service operates smoothly nationwide,
- continuing to enhance the AS-CMS in response to your feedback, and

- communication and coordination, ensuring you have the information and support you need, when you need it.

As we embed the new AS-CMS for providers and schools, we're experiencing a high number of queries. Please refer to the updated support pathways outlined below. We're actively tracking your queries and feedback and will keep improving our systems and guidance to better support you.

Your Contract and Relationship Managers (CRMs) remain your main day to day point of contact for any queries not related to the AS-CMS. They are still the people to go to for regular support, questions, and anything involving your contract or local delivery.

Operational guidance updates

New operational guidance is now available [here](#). This includes:

- **Guidance for schools** outlining what they need to know about the Attendance Services including what they can expect from you, when to request support for chronically absent ākonga and the correct process for unenrolling a student.
- Guidance for when and how to use **escalating attendance letters** to:
 - formally highlight the seriousness of ongoing absence with caregivers
 - provide information about the Attendance Service
 - offer support to whānau
 - explain possible next steps if attendance does not improve

It also sets out how to notify the Ministry's prosecutions team when a case needs review.

We are currently finalising a protocol with Oranga Tamariki that will enable providers to submit a request for a family group conference for chronically absent students. We expect this to be available soon.

Reasons for declining a request for support

While it is unlikely to happen often, there may be times when a request for support for an ākonga needs to be declined. Any decision to reject a request should always be made in partnership with the referring school.

You may consider declining a request when:

- The individual attendance plan has not yet been fully implemented or reviewed.
- Attendance is already improving with the strategies currently in place.
- The primary barrier is school-based and can be addressed internally.
- Another service is more appropriate (e.g., health or social support) and the school is able to connect the ākonga and whānau directly.

A referral is not appropriate when:

- The international ākonga does not hold a valid visa to attend school in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- The ākonga generally attends school but routinely misses only a single class.

How to Decline a Request

If a request is declined, update the case status to 'Closed' and select 'Rejected' as the case close reason.

This information is also set out in the guidance [here](#) .

Attendance data is expected to be available next week

We've had a few technical challenges with this! We now anticipate you being able to see daily and termly attendance for referred students next week. We'll email you to advise once this is available. Once live, data will update overnight so you'll always have the most current information.

Further AS-CMS functionality for schools

Additional functionality will be available to schools next week meaning that they will be able to:

- view existing attendance cases for students currently enrolled, based on the access level assigned by their Delegated Authoriser
- receive email notifications for updates related to attendance cases
- assign another person as the primary contact when submitting a support request.

At this stage, schools are not yet able to view the files they have uploaded to a student's case record, and Attendance Service Providers cannot currently share their uploaded files with schools. These capabilities will be introduced in a later release.

In the meantime, schools can continue to upload files. Files can be added when they create the support request, as well as after the request has been submitted.

Reminder: Referrals must be submitted through the AS-CMS

We have been made aware of a small number of providers receiving referrals from schools via email. To ensure consistency and accurate case management, all referrals **must be** submitted through the Attendance Service Case Management System (AS-CMS).

Providers must not accept referrals sent by email. Instead, please support schools to submit referrals correctly through the AS-CMS.

To help you to help schools to do this, we are offering webinars to demonstrate to your teams how schools can use the AS-CMS to request support from a provider and view.

- Thurs 5 March, 3-3.45pm - click [here](#) to register
- Fri 6 March, 12-12.45pm - click [here](#) to register

If a school is having difficulty logging in or accessing the AS-CMS, please encourage them to contact the Education Sector Service Desk for assistance on 0800 422 599 or service.desk@education.govt.nz.

AS-CMS released to In-School Provision schools

Attendance Service In-School Provision (ISP) is a new initiative, introduced in October 2025 intended to enable 170 selected schools to deliver targeted, in-school support for some students with chronic absence.

ISP increases a school's capacity to intervene early so that less complex attendance barriers are addressed before issues become entrenched or require additional support from an external Attendance Service Provider.

The AS-CMS has now been made available to schools that have received ISP funding.

For schools with an ISP contract, a school user can choose to direct a chronic absence support request form to either:

- their ISP service – appropriate when the barriers can be addressed through school-based supports within the scope of the ISP arrangements, or
- their local ASP – appropriate when the student requires additional or specialist support beyond what the ISP can provide.

Schools are responsible for setting up referral policies that suit their local context, systems, and student needs.

We expect the ISP case owner to monitor cases once support has been put in place and consider a referral to their local ASP if:

- attendance does not improve
- attendance levels are not sustained
- other more complex barriers emerge

Your Contract and Relationship Manager will be able to advise you of any schools in your catchment that receive ISP funding.

Reminders: how you can access support on the AS-CMS

Your first point of contact for AS-CMS support is the [Quick Reference Guides](#), which cover the key steps for navigating and using the system. These guides will answer many common questions.

Information on [significant known issues and frequently asked questions](#) is also available. We update this document weekly.

For any other AS-CMS queries, please contact the **Education Service Desk**:

Freephone: 0800 422 599 (NZ only)

Email: service.desk@education.govt.nz

Including the following information in your email will help the service desk respond more quickly and accurately:

- **Your details:** your name, role (e.g., Workflow Lead or Case Manager), organisation/school, and the device you're using (e.g., laptop, iPad, mobile).
- **Your user type:** whether you are contacting them as an Attendance Service Provider, a school user, or an ISP user.
- **Case details:** the case number and any screenshots showing what you're seeing when the issue occurs (if relevant).

- **What was happening:** a brief description of what you were doing at the time of the error (e.g., allocating a case, updating contact details).
- **Urgency:** whether the issue is preventing you from continuing your work.

You no longer need to contact attendance.service@education.govt.nz for AS-CMS related queries.

If the Service Desk cannot resolve your question, they will escalate it to the appropriate team.

Please continue to use attendance.service@education.govt.nz for all **non AS-CMS** queries.

Ministry of Social Development (MSD) results are now live

We've been working closely with MSD to reduce the backlog of outstanding checks and have now established an improved process. Thank you for your patience as we put this in place. We are now receiving a daily response file from MSD, and the backlog of information requests will be cleared over the next week. Once the backlog has been cleared you can expect a response from MSD within 2-3 days of making a request.

This new approach also means we will receive more complete information from MSD, including addresses, emails, and phone numbers for all named caregivers, as well as details for any additional caregivers MSD holds on record.

When an MSD response is received, the Case Owner will get an in-app notification. Go to your *Info Check* tab in the case record and open the MSD task. You will find the results in the Description field.

Information shared with schools

Last week, we held two webinars for schools to tell them about the new Attendance Service. You can see recordings of these webinars [here](#)

Other attendance-related updates

In this section, we will share what else is happening to support better attendance - from new initiatives to helpful resources and ideas that might be useful in your day-to-day work.

Students' sense of belonging and connectedness to school is critical for attendance

ERO research is clear that when students feel part of a school community, they are more likely to show up, engage, and succeed. A decreased sense of belonging is linked to lower motivation, increased anxiety, and early school dropout. Relationships are one of the strongest motivators for students to go to school.

To help students feel like they belong, schools can:

- 1) assign roles and responsibilities,
- 2) support students to feel connected to their teachers,
- 3) support students to feel connected to their peers, and
- 4) tackle bullying.

Source: 'Back to class: How are attitudes to attendance changing? Good practice guide' by the Education Review Office | Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga, 2025.

Coming up in our next newsletter

- Preparing for quarterly reporting
- Operational guidance updates
- Update on the AS-CMS
- Update on MSD check timeframes

Any questions or feedback

We want these updates to be useful for you so please let us know any feedback or feel free to ask questions via attendance.service@education.govt.nz. You can find this and previous newsletters [here](#)