



When to request Chronic Absence (CA) support

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This guidance is for schools and what actions need to happen when deciding to make a request for support for a Chronically Absent student.

Before requesting CA support, schools must follow their Attendance Management Plan. This includes trying school-based strategies, documenting actions taken and creating an individual attendance plan for the student. Attendance Service support is intended for ākonga whose attendance concerns are ongoing, significant, or complex, and have not improved through schooled approaches alone.

This section provides guidance on when to request CA support. If you're still unsure whether a referral is appropriate, check your Attendance Management Plan and the STAR Framework, or talk with your local Attendance Service provider.

A request for CA support can be made if the ākonga is chronically absent (or shows a clear pattern consistent with chronic absence), or if there are exceptional circumstances that mean provider support is needed.

You should consider requesting support when:

- School-based actions and an individual attendance plan have been implemented and reviewed, with little or no improvement.
- The ākonga has barriers to attendance that the school cannot address on its own.
- Barriers are multiple, complex, or long-standing and would benefit from case management support.

Referral is **strongly recommended** when the ākonga:

- Has previously received attendance service support.
- Has a history of stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions, or frequent non-structural school moves.
- Faces significant barriers outside their control, such as housing instability, poverty, mental health or addiction issues, or disability or additional learning needs (for the ākonga or within the whānau).
- Is at risk of disengaging from education altogether, including where the ākonga or whānau are not engaging with school-led support.

Other situations where referral may be appropriate

Referral may also be appropriate when:

- Reasonable attempts to engage whānau have not been successful.

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- Wellbeing, behavioural, or social issues are contributing to non-attendance and remain unresolved.
- The ākonga is already supported by other services but attendance has not improved.
- The ākonga is transitioning between education settings or living situations and is at risk of disengagement.
- Another child in the whānau is already being supported by an Attendance Service provider.

When to wait

You should consider waiting if:

- The individual attendance plan has not yet been fully implemented or reviewed.
- Attendance is improving with current strategies.
- The barrier is primarily school-based and can be addressed internally.
- Another service (such as health or social support) is more appropriate and the school can make that connection directly.

When referral is not appropriate

Referral is not appropriate when:

- An international ākonga does not hold a valid visa to attend school in New Zealand.
- The ākonga is generally attending school but regularly misses a single class only.

If you are unsure

Contact your local Attendance Service provider or your local Ministry of Education regional office (Te Mahau) for advice.

Please note:

Each year, around 200,000 students are chronically absent for one or more terms. Under the new model, Attendance Service providers have capacity to support up to around 45,000 chronically absent students each year, as well as around 20,000 non-enrolled students.

Criteria for requesting support may be adjusted to manage service demand and maintain service quality. Schools and providers will be advised of any changes.

How to request Chronic Absence support

A **CA** attendance case is created by submitting a CA support request online – accessed through ESL.

To access the online CA support request you need an Education Sector Logon (ESL) and a role in the AS-CMS. Further information on **system access & user roles** is covered in the following section.

When completing the CA support request form you'll be asked to provide key information including:

- Contact details for the student/whānau
- Actions that the school has taken already
- The reason for the request
- Name and contact details for the key person at the school who will liaise with the attendance service provider on the case (School Primary Contact).

The CA request form is designed to be quick and easy to complete. You will share further details when you meet with the provider to discuss the case.

You can start the CA support request and save it as a draft if you're not ready to submit it straight away. You can then reopen your draft, to complete and submit it when you have all the required information.