

Implementing an Attendance Management Plan

Information for School Leaders

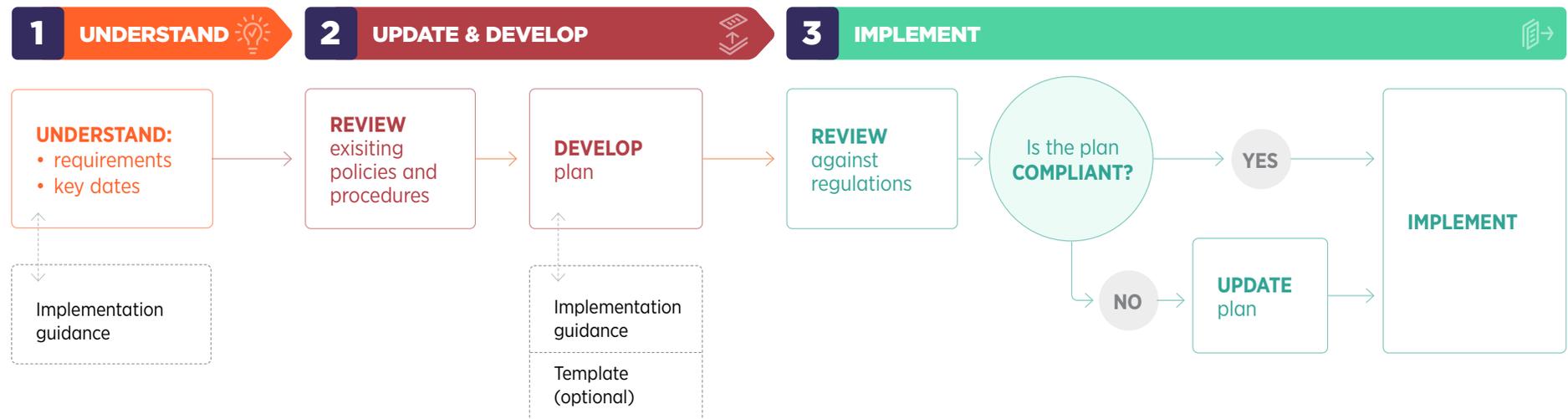
Background

All state and state-integrated school boards must implement an Attendance Management Plan (AMP) from term 1 2026.

These plans must set out how schools will identify and respond to student absences at specific thresholds.

This information supports schools to work through the steps to develop and implement an Attendance Management Plan using the Stepped Attendance Response (STAR).

- 1** Understanding what is required in your plan
- 2** Updating or developing your plan
- 3** Implementing your plan



1

Understanding what is required for your plan



School boards are already required to take all reasonable steps to ensure students attend school.

Attendance Management Plans aim to improve student attendance by providing clear pathways to identify and address absences.

School boards are required to:

- Develop and implement an Attendance Management Plan and publish it online by the start of Term 1 2026.
- Align your Attendance Management Plan with the Ministry of Education's Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) framework, which outlines required actions at four absence thresholds: fewer than 5 days, 5-9 days, 10-14 days, and 15 or more days per term.
- Review and update the plan at least once every three years.

Regulations can be found [here](#).

Attendance Management Plans must include:

- The board's attendance objectives and strategic priorities.
- Processes to identify patterns, barriers, and underlying causes of absence.
- Methods for monitoring and measuring progress, including links to student achievement.
- Strategies and actions at each absence threshold, aligned with the STAR framework.

Take a look at an [example Attendance Management Plan](#) for ideas on how you could structure yours.

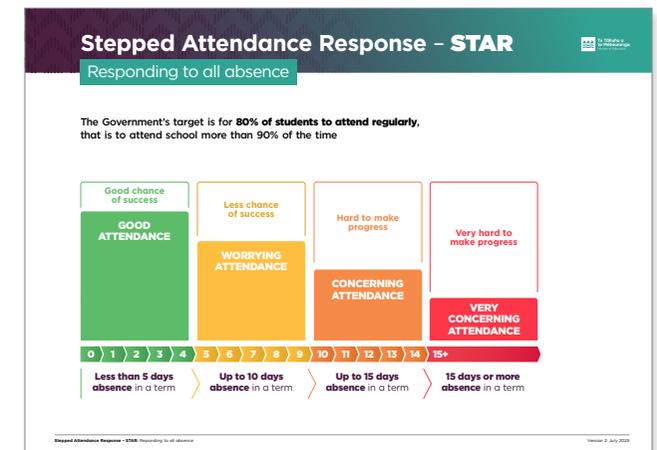
The Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)

The STAR is a Ministry of Education framework that schools are expected to use when developing their Attendance Management Plan. It sets out expectations for how schools, parents/guardians, the Ministry, and system partners respond to student absence.

The STAR defines four absence thresholds: fewer than 5 days, 5 to 9 days, 10 to 14 days, and 15 or more days per term. These thresholds provide a nationally consistent structure for identifying and responding to absence, and schools must use them to guide their attendance responses.

While the thresholds are required, the actions associated with each level are flexible. Schools are encouraged to adapt the recommended actions to suit their local context, existing practices, and the needs of their students.

A range of STAR-related resources will be available [here](#), including the full STAR framework, an editable template, and examples of how schools are currently using STAR or how it could be applied in different school contexts.



2 Updating or developing your plan



Using your current attendance policies and procedures

If your school already has strong policies and procedures in place, you may be able to adapt them into an Attendance Management Plan.

Developing a new plan

If your school decides to develop a new plan there is an optional template available [here](#).

Review your current attendance policies and procedures

Before updating or developing your new Attendance Management Plan, it is important to reflect on your current policies and procedures. This helps identify what's working well and where changes need to be made.

Reflect on your existing policies

Note when your attendance policies were created and last updated. What changes were made at the time, and why? Check whether your policies still reflect your school's values, strategic priorities, and community needs.

Compare policies and procedures with daily routines

Review your day-to-day attendance routines. Do they align with your written procedures? If there are discrepancies, determine whether your routines or your documentation need updating.

Gather and use data

Use your attendance data to identify patterns and trends, and engage with staff, students, and whānau to understand what supports regular attendance and what barriers may be present.



IMPORTANT - SMS has built features to support your Attendance Management Plan, including identifying students who meet AMP thresholds and recording response activities. [See details here](#).

Consider the actions set out in the Stepped Attendance Response

Schools are required to include the absence thresholds in their Attendance Management Plan. While the thresholds are fixed, the actions taken at each level can be tailored to suit your school's context. Consider how different types of responses can be applied at each threshold to support students' return to regular attendance.

Identify strengths and areas for improvement

Highlight what's working well and how you know it's effective. Then, focus on areas where improvements can be made to support student attendance.

Involve the right people

Developing an effective Attendance Management Plan requires input from the right people. Involving your wider school community and external partners ensures your plan is well-informed and supported.

Involve your school community

Gather insights from those directly affected by attendance policies and procedures. Include voices from:

- **School staff** – teachers, support staff, and leadership.
- **Students** – across different year levels and backgrounds.
- **Whānau (families)** – to understand home and community perspectives.

Connect with external support

Engage with people and organisations outside your school who can offer expertise and assistance. Depending on your school this could include Ministry of Education advisers, social services, youth workers and attendance service providers.

Identifying key groups

For help identifying key groups in your school community, check out the [Te Whakangārahu Ngātahi | Planning Together](#) planning and reporting toolkit.

3 Implementing your plan



Before finalising, check your plan:



- Clearly states your board's attendance objectives and strategic priorities
- Includes processes to identify patterns, barriers, and causes of absence
- Outlines how progress will be monitored and linked to student achievement
- Uses the thresholds (5, 10, and 15+ days) to guide strategies and actions
- Has a review cycle of at least once every three years

Finalising Your Plan

Your plan must be **approved by your school board**.

It must then be **published online** so your school community can access it.

If your school doesn't have a website contact attendance.management@education.govt.nz.

Implementation activities

Schools can determine the best approach to implementing their plan.

You're encouraged to:

- Set a clear date for when your plan will take effect and when you will first review it.
- Communicate this with your school community, students, and whānau.
- Make sure everyone follows the actions and activities set out in your plan.
- Stay consistent to build trust and effectiveness.
- Plan for how you'll handle issues or concerns as they arise.
- Set up ways for staff and students to give feedback if something isn't working.
- Set clear attendance targets, regularly review your progress, and use the features in your SMS to identify AMP thresholds and record response actions. Your SMS will demonstrate these features when they are available.
- If attendance isn't improving, consider what changes might be needed.

Further information and support

[A detailed reference guide on AMP requirements.](#)

[Stepped attendance response - STAR - Ministry of Education for more resources to support STAR related activities.](#)

[Attendance Management Plans - Ministry of Education for more resources to support the development of your Attendance Management Plan.](#)

[The NZSBA website for school boards support.](#)

[Your Ministry of Education regional office will be available to provide further support.](#)