

Information for Attendance Service Providers



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Conducting effective initial school and ākonga / caregiver hui

Purpose

This guidance sets clear expectations for engaging with schools and caregivers to support ākonga experiencing chronic absence or non-enrolled status. Hui should be student-centred, collaborative, and information-rich, enabling coordinated action and sustained engagement. It also supports consistent recording of initial meetings in AS-CMS by clarifying what meaningful engagement should look like in practice.

Core principles of a good hui

A high-quality hui should:

- be culturally responsive: respect the school, ākonga and whānau's language, values, identity, and preferred ways of connecting
- demonstrate a joined-up approach: share accountability across all parties
- be purposeful: focus on returning the ākonga to an education pathway
- be collaborative: involve all relevant parties
- be action-oriented: result in clear, agreed next steps

Format and expectations for engagement

- Primary methods:
 - in-person hui (preferred)
 - virtual meeting platforms (where in-person is not feasible)
- Acceptable alternative (where other options are not feasible, particularly for caregiver engagement):
 - extended phone conversations
- Not standard practice:
 - Email: emails can support arranging a hui or follow-up but are not a substitute for meaningful engagement. Initial meetings should take place in person or virtually, unless there are genuine reasons why another approach is needed. Where this occurs, clear commentary should be recorded in AS-CMS. Prevalent use of emails as a format for initial meetings will be picked up in regular audits and addressed with you by your CRM.

If schools are reluctant to meet, reinforce that:

- schools are expected to actively participate and share relevant information
- quality engagement gives the provider the best chance of re-engaging the ākonga

Hui with schools

The school hui is the main opportunity to gather fuller context beyond the referral information, including what the school already knows, what has already been tried, and what may need to happen next.

A. Attendance Context

- attendance patterns (e.g. chronic absence, intermittent attendance)
- duration and severity of disengagement
- previous interventions attempted by the school
- any escalation already undertaken (e.g. referrals)

B. Educational Experience

- engagement in learning (likes, dislikes, participation)
- relationship with teachers and peers
- any known triggers for disengagement within the school environment

C. Learning and Support Needs

- identified learning needs or challenges
- behavioural needs or concerns
- existing supports in place

D. Cultural and Community Context

- cultural identity and values of the ākonga
- community connections or influences
- any culturally responsive approaches already trialled

E. Whānau Engagement History

- level and nature of caregiver engagement with the school
- any barriers to engagement (e.g. trust, communication issues)

A clear and structured discussion about the student plan.

Hui with ākonga and caregivers/whānau

Engagement should include both the ākonga and their caregiver(s), so the provider can build trust and understand what is affecting attendance. Where appropriate, the ākonga should also be engaged directly so their views and aspirations inform the hui.

A. Barriers to Attendance

- practical barriers (transport, cost, health issues)
- social or emotional challenges
- family circumstances impacting attendance

B. Home and Whānau Context

- household dynamics and responsibilities
- support systems available to the whānau
- any recent changes or stressors

C. Aspirations and Interests

- ākonga interests, strengths, and motivations
- career or future aspirations
- preferred learning environments or pathways

D. Cultural Identity

- whānau values and expectations
- cultural practices or considerations that may impact engagement

E. Perception of Schooling

- whānau views on the current school
- past experiences with education
- concerns or hesitations about returning

A good hui should result in

- a clearer understanding of the student's attendance pattern and barriers
- agreed next steps for the school, whānau, and provider
- the hui being recorded clearly in AS-CMS as an Event, using the correct Subject and
- any relevant barriers, plans, or follow-up actions being recorded in AS-CMS