Emmanuel Christian School

Attendance Management Plan

Background

Boards are required to design, approve and implement an Attendance Management Plan (**AMP**) by term 1, 2026

AMP aims to improve student attendance by providing clear pathways to identify and address absences. **Goal**: 80% of the students attending school 90% of the time by 2030.

Attendance Management at Emmanuel Christian School

1. Attendance Objectives and Strategic Priorities

Absence from school doesn't just mean missing content—it disrupts learning patterns, reduces engagement, and disconnects students from critical school support systems. Research is clear: **regular attendance is one of the most reliable predictors of academic success**.

School attendance is vital to learning success for several key reasons:

1. Consistent Learning

- Daily lessons build on each other. Missing even a few days can leave gaps in understanding.

- Students who attend regularly are more likely to keep up with the pace of the curriculum.

2. Teacher Interaction

- Being present allows students to ask questions and get immediate feedback from teachers.

- Teachers can better understand a student's strengths and struggles when they see them regularly.

3. Classroom Participation

- Learning is not just about listening. It is also about participating in discussions, group work, and hands-on activities that help deepen understanding.

4. Spiritual, Social and Emotional Development

- Regular attendance at school means that students can participate in the fullness of school life, especially within the context of Christian Education. The Mission Statement of Emmanuel Christian School is To provide a high quality education from a Christian World View, and partner with families, guiding children to know God and grow in their gifts and

talents. Regular attendance will enable each student to gain a clearer understanding of biblical truths and how they apply to all aspects of life. It supports students to have the opportunities to develop their God given gifts and talents in a variety of areas.

- School helps students develop social skills by interacting with peers. This also provides opportunities for students to use their gifts and abilities daily to serve God and others

- Regular attendance supports routines and a sense of belonging (Turangawaewae), both of which are linked to better mental health and motivation.

2. Attendance Data Emmanuel Christian School 2025

- **Regular Attendance:** fewer than 5 days of absence in a term, i.e. over 90% attendance.
- **Irregular Absence[1]:** Up to 10 days' absence in a term, i.e. more than 80% and up to 90% attendance.
- **Moderate Absence:** Up to 15 days' absence in a term, i.e. more than70% and up to 80% attendance.
- **Chronic Absence:** 15 days or more of absence in a term, i.e. 70% attendance or less.

Regular attendance refers to the frequency of absences from school by individual students during a term. This differs from daily attendance rates, which describe the percentage of students attending school on any given day. The Government is focusing on Regular Attendance as it provides a picture of the number of students persistently missing school, using the four categories above. It enables the school to recognise and target those students with irregular to chronic absences.

	REGULAR ATTENDANCE		IRREGULAR ABSENCE		MODERATE ABSENCE		CHRONIC ABSENCE	
2025	Term 3	Term 4	Term 3	Term 4	Term 3	Term 4	Term 3	Term 4
Whole school	64%	73%	23%	18%	9%	5%	4%	4%

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[1] The MOE does not distinguish between justified and unjustified absences. All absences count towards the threshold descriptors.

Principal's Report to the Board

The Ministry of Education will publish the "Every Day Matters" Report for each term. This report is based on attendance data taken from the School Management System (SMS - Helix). The termly report highlights attendance patterns and provides actionable insights to improve student attendance.

The principal, in consultation with the Heads of School, will review the termly report. This includes reviewing the plans which are in place for students in the Moderate and Chronic Absence categories and identifying what further support may be needed. The School Management System should be used to identify individual students in these two categories.

The senior leadership team should further review the full termly report, as it provides a detailed analysis of the reasons for absence (Attendance codes used), trends over the last five terms, absences by Year level, ethnicity, gender, and weekday. Any trends or areas of concern are discussed, and actionable strategies should be implemented.

The principal will provide the Board, each term, a report on attendance over the previous term.

3. Success criteria for Emmanuel Christian School Attendance
   a) Emmanuel Christian School goal: 80% of students attend 90% of the time by 2028[2].
   b) The school community is provided with clear pathways to identify and address absences.
   c) Uniformity across the school for dealing with absences and coding of absences. This is particularly important when there are children from the same family across the school.

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[2] The Government has a goal of 80% of students attending 90% of the time by 2030.

4. Legal Obligations

Education and Training Act 2020

1. Except as provided in the Act, a student is required to attend school whenever it is open.
2. The principal must ensure that an accurate attendance record is kept for each student enrolled at the school.
3. The Board of Trustees must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend school when it is open.
4. Parents/Caregivers must ensure the student attends school whenever it is open.
5. Under Section 45, if satisfied that a student's absence is justified, the principal of the school may exempt the student from attending the school for a period of no more than five school days.

Attendance Rules (Ministry of Education)

Rule 1: The principal of a State school must ensure that attendance records are kept for each student enrolled at the school (either by half-day or period) for each half-day that the school is open for instruction. The principal must ensure that the school has an absence notification process so that absences can be notified by and to the school promptly.

Rule 2: The principal of a State school must use a Ministry-approved Electronic Attendance Register unless exempt. At Emmanuel Christian School we use the approved register system within HELIX our student management system.
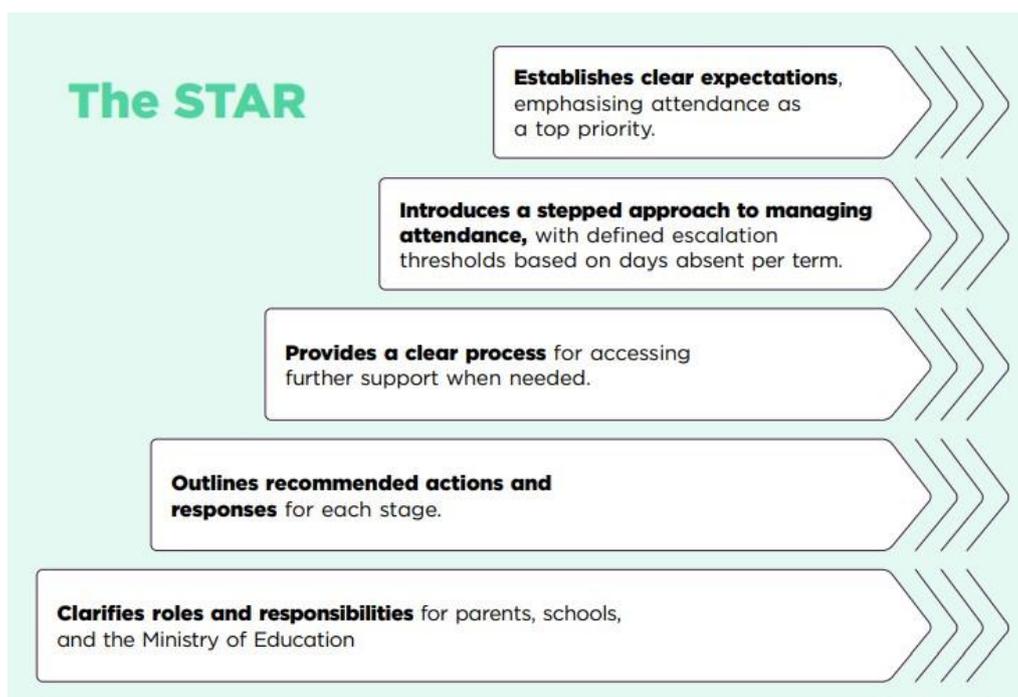
Rule 3: The principal of a State school must use Ministry-approved attendance codes, including a default attendance code, to mark a student's absence for each half-day or period that the student is absent without explanation.

5. Attendance Management Procedures

The Attendance Management Procedures at Emmanuel Christian School cover six key aspects to ensure high levels of attendance. This aligns with the **Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)** approach provided by the Ministry of Education. See the graphic below.

1. **Expectations:** Aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents, and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn.

2. **Monitor:** Use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at both individual and cohort levels) as soon as possible, so that all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. The school's "***Every Day Matters" Report*** should be regularly reviewed to track student attendance rates, including justified and unjustified absence reasons.

3. **Listen and understand:** When a pattern is identified, discuss it with students and parents to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance, and agree on how all parties can work together to resolve them.

4. **Facilitate support:** Remove barriers within the school and help students and parents access the support they need to overcome challenges outside of school.

5. **Formalise support:** Where absence persists and voluntary support is not effective or not being utilised, parties should work together to clearly explain the consequences and ensure that support is also in place to enable families to respond.

6. **Enforce:** Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention, which may include prosecution to protect the student's right to an education.

The STAR

Establishes clear expectations, emphasising attendance as a top priority.

Introduces a stepped approach to managing attendance, with defined escalation thresholds based on days absent per term.

Provides a clear process for accessing further support when needed.

Outlines recommended actions and responses for each stage.

Clarifies roles and responsibilities for parents, schools, and the Ministry of Education

6. EXPECTATIONS

- Clear communication to parents on attendance expectations on enrolment, at the start of the school year, and each term. The school should remind parents of the importance of high attendance levels, the educational costs associated with poor attendance, **the process by which parents can inform the school**, and how they can seek help as needed.

- During the year, reminders are sent to parents at the start of each term. Utilise various versions and layouts to overcome the 'seen it before' weariness.

- Teachers to remind students regularly of the importance of attendance at school.

- Pro-forma letters are sent to parents regarding specific issues, such as holidays in term time, prolonged medical absences, or students who exceed the higher threshold for absences.

- Information for parents should be available in their first language where necessary.

- Support staff involved in recording attendance, and Senior leaders are to be fully conversant with the Attendance Management Plan and the MOE Attendance Code Guidance document.

7. Determination of Attendance Codes in Helix

Definitions

Presence	**A student is present if they;** **P** are physically **present in class,** **L** arrive **late to class** within school/kura determined thresholds, **A** are physically present in **alternative provision,** **V** are engaged in onsite **exams or study,** **N** are **temporarily out of class** either **at school,** **D** or in an **appointment,** **Q** or are engaged in **Board approved learning offsite.**
Justified absence	**A student is justifiably absent if they;** **M** are **ill/unwell,** **U** have been formally **stood down or suspended,** **X** are engaged in offsite **study for exams,** **J** or the school principal has **approved their absence.**
Unjustified absence	**A student is unjustifiably absent if;** **?** the reason for the absence is **not yet known,** **T** they are absent **without parent/caregiver permission,** **G** they are taking a **holiday during term time,** **E** or their absence is **explained but not approved** by the principal.

School boards and principals have discretion on the application of attendance codes. Such as:

    a. **L** Late to class: Thresholds and acceptable timeframes for lateness
    b. **Q** Board-approved off-site learning: Presence at off-site learning is approved by the school board.
    c. **J** Explained and approved: Absences that are explained and approved by the principal
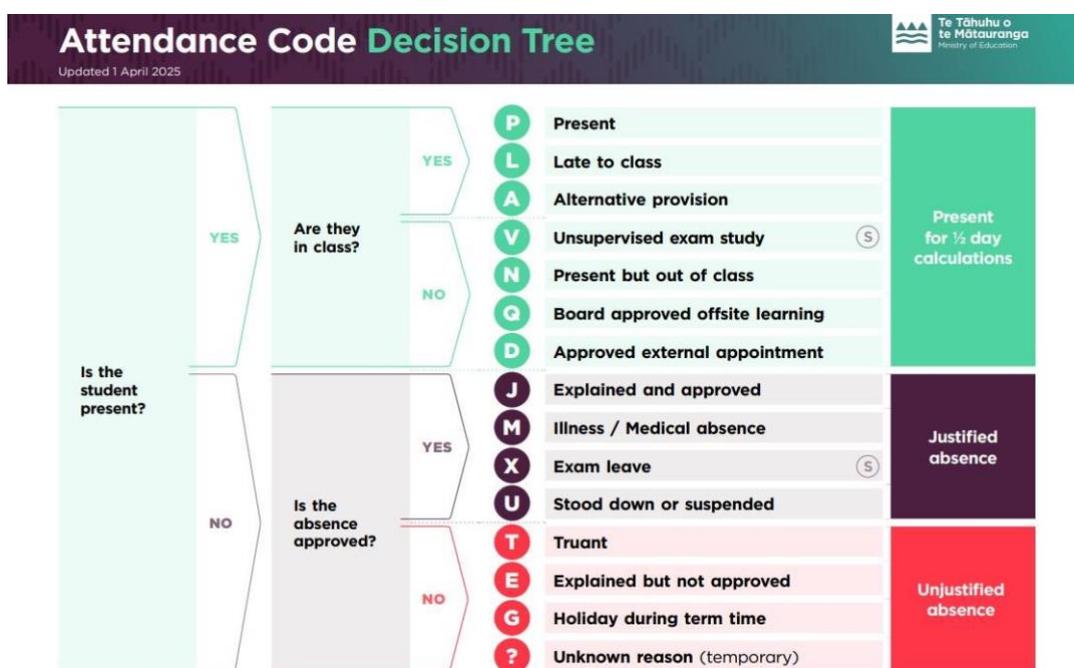   d. **E** Explained but not approved: Absences that are explained but not approved by the principal

Explained and Approved Absences

J Explained and Approved

According to Section 45 of the Education and Training Act 2020, the principal has the discretion to approve absences as justified. This is up to five consecutive days **at a time**. The student may have several occasions in the year that they are coded J, up to five consecutive days.

At Emmanuel Christian School, the principal approves the following events as 'Explained and Approved' to a maximum of five consecutive days:

- Family emergencies
- Bereavement
- Bus breakdown
- Accident
- Road closure
- Extreme weather conditions
- The student is participating in non-school events, such as regional/national sports, arts, community, and cultural events that are **not** board-approved off-site learning activities. Examples include club-level representation, individual participation, and blood drive.
- The student has a temporary well-being/transition plan.
- Attending the Graduation Ceremony of an immediate family member.

Attendance Code Decision Tree — Updated 1 April 2025. Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, Ministry of Education.

2. The Ministry of Education provides excellent resources to support school staff in making decisions about which code to apply when recording daily attendance.
   a. Attendance Code Decision Tree (shown above).
   b. Attendance Code Guidance Document.
   c. Revised Attendance Codes: FAQs

Note:

- Attendance is measured in **half days.**
    - Schools are generally open for two half-days. One in the morning, before noon, and one in the afternoon.
    - Attending for a half day requires a minimum of 2 hours of being present at school.
- Three categories for attendance
    - **Present:** Students are present at school or on a school-led activity on any given day.
    - **Justified Absence:** An explained absence within the attendance guidelines or the school's policy as an acceptable reason for the student to be absent from school.
    - **Unjustified Absence:** An absence that is either unexplained or explained, but the explanation is not acceptable.
- Medical certificates are required from the fourth day of medical (M) absences. Or where this is not practical a fuller written explanation of the absence reason

8. MONITOR

Key activities School-wide

- Communicate with parents about attendance issues.
- Maintain up-to-date contact details of parents.
- Report regularly to parents on the attendance of their child as part of regular reporting cycles
- Regularly review the school's "***Every Day Matters" Report*** to track student attendance rates, including justified and unjustified absence reasons.

9. Attendance monitoring process

1. Informing the school of absences

Parents notifying the school of absences are required to use one of the following means:

1. Phone call - voicemail
2. School App (noting current issue on Android phones being addressed)
3. Email to office@emmanuelchristian.school.nz

2. Recording absences

By 9:30 a.m., the office staff will record each day's absences using information sourced from the School App, emails or phone messages from parents.

The attendance code is recorded based on the reason for absence. Where the **reason** for absence is unclear, they will seek clarity from the parent.

If a student has not arrived at school by 9:30 a.m. and there is **no** notification from a parent, the office will send a text message to the parents. This is both to enquire of the reason for absence and more importantly to check on safety if they were expected to arrive at school.

Parents who intend to take their children out of school for a period of time, such as a planned holiday or overseas travel, must inform the principal by email before the time away. The office will record in advance the absence in Helix for that period.

3. Students arriving late

Coding for when a student is late to school in the morning

- The parent must provide an explanation for the reason for lateness. All students who arrive late must sign in at the office.
- For Appointments, parents must provide the nature of the appointment to determine if it is an approved appointment (e.g., doctor, dentist) and coded D, or if it is an unjustified appointment (e.g., a haircut), which is coded E.

Before 10:30 a.m.

- o   Valid Explanation: P or D
- o   Invalid explanation: L

From 10:30 a.m.

- o   Valid Explanation: P, J, D or M
- o   Invalid explanation: E

4. Monitoring absences

The office keeps an electronic folder for families where there is a concern regarding student attendance. Communication with the family is stored in the folder.

The office sends parents a pro-forma letter when a student has regular lateness to school, highlighting school concerns and the importance of punctuality.

The office prints an Attendance List fortnightly (usually on Friday or Monday), identifying for the Heads of Primary and Middle School any concerns or patterns that may require attention. This includes regular lateness to school.

Helix is set up to give auto notifications to the office and principal when students cross each threshold below.

5. Threshold Actions

REGULAR ATTENDANCE (under 5 days)	IRREGULAR ABSENCE (up to 10 days)
• Regular communication to parents regarding the importance of attendance. • Office monitors attendance. • Office communicates with parents about every absence if not notified.	• Office sends a formal notification on behalf of school. • Where clear reasons are not already known Head of Primary, Head of Middle School or Principal phones parents to discuss. • Support is provided as necessary for the student to catch up with missed work, unless absence is for unjustified reasons, for example, a holiday. • Provide in-school resources as needed, for example, a school counsellor.
MODERATE ABSENCE (up to 15 days)	CHRONIC ABSENCE (15 days or more)
• Office sends escalated formal notification on behalf of school and arranges a faceto-face meeting with parents and Head of Primary, Head of Middle School or Principal. • Meeting occurs with parents to discuss reasons for absences and collaborate on a support plan. • Develop and implement a plan tailored to the reasons and circumstances around the child's absence. • Provide in-school resources as needed, for example, a school counsellor. • Request, if needed, support from the Ministry and other agencies. • Meetings and outcomes are documented.	• Office sends a warning notice on behalf of school and arranges a face-to-face meeting with parents and Principal. • Escalate to multi-agency response if required. • Participate in a multi-agency response. • Implement and monitor an improvement plan. • Undertake school-led prosecution if parents are unwilling to engage. • Unenroll students who are not returning to school. • Meetings and outcomes are documented.

6. Students on holiday during term time

Once the school has been informed, the principal sends an email to the parents and copies the relevant Head of School and the class teacher. Office staff records in advance the absence on HELIX. The school will acknowledge notification from a parent taking their child on holiday but will **not** approve it.

Appendix One: Legal Obligations

Section 36. Students of registered schools are required to attend whenever schools are open.

(1) Except as provided in this Act, a student is required to attend a registered school whenever it is open if the student—

    (a) is required to be enrolled at a registered school:

    (b) is aged 5 years and is enrolled at a registered school.

(2) A board or sponsor must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend the school when it is open.

(3) For the purposes of this section, a student attends a school on any day if, on the day,— (a) It has

    been open for instruction for 4 hours or more, and

    (b) The student has been present for 4 hours or more when the class was open for instruction.

Section 45. Exemption of a student from attendance for no more than 5 days.

(1)   Despite section 36, if satisfied that a student's absence is justified, the principal of the school may exempt the student from attending the school for a period of no more than five school days.

(2)   In the absence of evidence to the contrary, a certificate from the principal stating that a student was absent from school for any period and that the principal is not satisfied that the absence was justified is sufficient proof that the student was absent for that period without being exempted under subsection (1).

237A Attendance records

(1) The principal of a State school must ensure that an attendance record is kept for each student who is enrolled at the school.

244 Offence relating to irregular attendance

(1) A parent of a student commits an offence if the student—

    (a) while enrolled at a registered school, does not attend the school as required by sections 36 and 42; or

    (b) While enrolled at a distance school, the student does not do the work of the course in which the student is enrolled.