Balfour School

Attendance Management Plan

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Overarching attendance objectives and strategic priorities

To ensure that all tamariki at Balfour School attend regularly, supporting their right to access education and reach their full potential. Our goal aligns with the government's national target: 80% of students attend more than 90% of the time. This plan outlines proactive and responsive strategies to improve and sustain student attendance.

Students who attend school regularly are more likely to succeed academically. Consistent attendance helps build foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking. Regular school attendance supports positive peer relationships, emotional resilience and a sense of belonging and routine.

Balfour Primary School's average attendance for 2025 was 73.2**%**, with 74.3**% of students attending more than 90% of the term**. This reflects a good improvement from 2024 (66.7%) and 67.8% of students attending more than 90% of the term. This shows positive momentum toward our school-wide goal of 80% of students reaching 90% attendance.

Our school follows the Ministry of Education's **Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)** framework to guide our attendance interventions. This focuses on reversing the decade-long decline in regular attendance and emphasises multi-agency collaboration, early intervention, and whānau engagement.

Sets the national goal: **80% of students attending more than 90% of the term by 2030**

Attendance policy

This policy is grounded in the Education and Training Act 2020, which sets out the following key obligations:

- **Compulsory Enrolment and Attendance** All children aged 6 to 16 must be enrolled at and regularly attend school, unless exempted under the Act.
- **Board Responsibilities** The Board of Trustees must take all reasonable steps to ensure enrolled students attend school regularly. This includes monitoring attendance, implementing interventions, and supporting families where necessary.
- **Parent/Guardian Obligations** Parents and legal guardians are legally required to ensure their children attend school every day it is open for instruction, unless there is a justified reason for absence.

Expectations:

Parents/Guardians

- Notify the school promptly of any student absence, including the reason and expected duration.
- Support the school in promoting regular attendance and addressing barriers to attendance.

Students

- Attend school every day unless ill or otherwise excused.
- Arrive on time and participate actively in learning.

Staff

- Record attendance accurately and promptly.
- Follow up on unexplained absences and report concerns to the appropriate school leaders.
- Work collaboratively with families to support regular attendance.

    Absences will be classified as:

- **Justified**: illness, bereavement, cultural observances, or other approved reasons.
- **Unjustified**: truancy or absences without valid explanation, e.g. holidays..

This policy should be read in conjunction withthe following policies: Student Attendance, Supporting Student Wellbeing, Board Responsibilities Policy, Communication and Engagement Policy & Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Attendance management procedures

Setting and Reinforcing Expectations

- **Communication with Families:** Attendance expectations are clearly communicated at enrolment, through the school website, newsletters, and parent meetings. Families are reminded regularly of the importance of daily attendance and the legal obligations under the Education and Training Act 2020.
- **Student Engagement:** Students are encouraged to value attendance through classroom discussions, goal-setting, and recognition of consistent attendance.
- **Staff Role:** Staff reinforce expectations by modelling punctuality, discussing attendance in pastoral care, and celebrating improvements.

Recording attendance

- **Timing:** Attendance is recorded twice daily—at the beginning of the school day and after lunch—using the school's student management system.
- **Storage:** Records are securely stored in the school's digital system, accessible to authorised staff for monitoring and reporting purposes.

Follow-Up on Unexplained Absences

- **Initial Contact:** If a student is absent without explanation, the school will contact the parent/guardian by phone or text on the same day.
- **Escalation:** If no response is received within 48 hours, a follow-up email or letter is sent. Continued unexplained absences may trigger a meeting and referral to support services.

Monitoring and measuring progress

- **Identifying Barriers and Patterns:** Weekly attendance reports are reviewed to identify patterns such as frequent absences on specific days or recurring health-related absences. Staff may conduct interviews with students and families to understand underlying issues.
- **Thresholds for Concern:** The school uses STAR (Stepped Attendance Response) thresholds to guide responses:
    - **5–9 days absent per term**: Early concern; initiate pastoral support.
    - **10–14 days absent per term**: Moderate concern; develop an attendance improvement plan.
    - **15+ days absent per term**: High concern; escalate to external agencies.
- **Escalation Pathways** If internal interventions are unsuccessful, the school may:
    - Refer to the **Attendance Service** for specialised support.
    - Engage with **interagency forums** (e.g., Oranga Tamariki, health services) for complex cases.

Refer to Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) framework.