

Māruawai College Attendance Management Plan and supporting STAR procedures

Approval Date	Effective Date	Review Date
	26 th January 2026	14 th November 2026

At Māruawai College, we believe that regular attendance is essential for every student's learning, wellbeing, and long-term success. Every day at school provides opportunities for learning, building friendships, and developing the skills needed for life beyond the classroom. Daily attendance helps our tamariki experience a full and rich education, enabling them to become inspired and prepared for success.

When students attend consistently, they benefit from uninterrupted learning and the support of their teachers and peers. This helps them stay on track with the curriculum, participate fully in activities, and feel a strong sense of belonging in our school community. Conversely, irregular attendance, whether through lateness or unexplained absences, can disrupt learning, lower confidence, and make it harder for students to achieve their goals. Over time, poor attendance can lead to disengagement and fewer opportunities later in life.

The Board of Trustees recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure students attend school regularly. The Board is committed to investigating patterns of absence and responding to each case in accordance with the procedures and expectations outlined in this document. One of our strategic goals is to focus on ensuring learning is engaging and accessible for all. As part of this goal, the development and implementation of a clear Attendance Strategy is a key action for 2026, with two primary objectives:

- Improving regular termly attendance rates.
- Reducing the number of students experiencing chronic absence each term.

We know that parents and caregivers play a vital role in supporting attendance. Our Attendance Management Plan outlines the steps we take to encourage regular attendance and the responsibilities we share with whānau. By working together, we can create a culture where every student feels safe, supported, and motivated to be at school every day.

Each day away from school makes the journey toward success more challenging. That's why we work proactively to maximise attendance and engagement for all learners because every day matters.

Current Attendance Rates

	2025				2026			
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Regular Attendance (Above 90%)	64%	55%	55%	64%	63%	TBC	TBC	TBC
Irregular Attendance (80% - 90%)	20%	24%	24%	19%	24%	TBC	TBC	TBC
Moderate Absence (70% - 80%)	8%	10%	13%	11%	7%	TBC	TBC	TBC
Chronic Absence (Below 70%)	8%	11%	8%	6%	6%	TBC	TBC	TBC

Student Attendance

At Māruawai College, our attendance procedures ensure that all students are accurately accounted for during the school day, during school activities, and in emergency situations. These procedures enable staff to identify attendance concerns early and to respond promptly and appropriately.

In accordance with the Education and Training Act 2020 (Sections 35-36):

- Every student between six and sixteen years of age must be enrolled at a registered school.
- Once enrolled, students are required to attend regularly, unless a specific exemption has been approved by both the school and the Ministry of Education.
- The Board of Trustees takes all reasonable steps to ensure that every student enrolled at Māruawai College attends when the school is open.

Attendance information is shared with the Ministry of Education to ensure accurate funding and staffing allocations. All attendance registers are securely retained for seven years from the date of the last entry, in line with legislative requirements.

Parent, Guardian, and Student Responsibilities

Under the Education and Training Act 2020 (Section 244), parents and guardians have a legal obligation to ensure their children attend school regularly.

At Māruawai College, we expect parents, guardians, and caregivers to:

- Notify the school as soon as possible if their child will be late or absent, providing the reason for the absence.
- Arrange appointments, holidays, and trips **outside** of school hours or during school holidays wherever possible.

- Work collaboratively with the school to address and manage any attendance concerns should they arise.

We clearly communicate our attendance expectations to both students and their families. Students are expected to attend school regularly and punctually, and to be present in all timetabled classes unless excused for an approved reason.

Recording Attendance

Māruawai College records attendance accurately and consistently to ensure that all students are accounted for at all times, including during emergency situations.

Attendance data is provided daily to the Ministry of Education, as required by the Education and Training Act 2020 and the Education (School Attendance) Regulations 2024. Attendance patterns are regularly monitored through our Student Management System (SMS), and parents or caregivers are notified promptly of any attendance concerns.

Classroom teachers and office staff work collaboratively to ensure attendance is recorded correctly each day. Relievers, itinerant, and specialists staff (such as counsellors) are required to provide accurate attendance information to the relevant classroom teacher or directly to the school office.

Attendance is recorded using the Ministry of Education's official attendance codes. Each student is marked as present or absent, and absences are categorised as either:

- Justified (for approved reasons such as illness, medical appointments, or bereavement), or
- Unjustified (for unapproved absences, including unauthorised holidays or other unsatisfactory reasons).

All attendance information is recorded in the school's official register in accordance with Ministry guidelines and is retained in line with legislative requirements.

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance data is reviewed on a weekly basis by the Deputy Principal in collaboration with Year Level Deans. This process involves identifying emerging patterns or trends in student attendance and coordinating with relevant staff to implement timely interventions. The goal is to address concerns early and ensure students receive the support they need to maintain regular attendance.

The Hauora teacher receives weekly attendance information from the office, and is responsible for checking with students and updating this information as needed - for example, when students arrive late or leave early.

Office staff follow up on unexplained absences, monitor for emerging patterns or trends in student attendance, and coordinate with relevant staff and Senior Leaders to support early intervention where concerns arise.

All staff are encouraged to report any attendance concerns or patterns of irregular attendance directly to the Deputy Principal, so that appropriate follow-up can occur.

The Ministry of Education collects attendance data from Māruawai College to monitor national attendance patterns, including:

- The proportion of students attending regularly,
- The number of students with five or more full days of unjustified absence in a term, and
- The number of absences remaining unexplained at the end of each week.

This monitoring helps ensure that attendance data is accurate, timely, and supports both school-level and national strategies to improve student engagement.

Student Absences

Parents and caregivers are expected to notify the school as early as possible (ideally before the start of the school day) if their child will be absent. This can be done by calling the school office on 03 208 9130, option 1 for the Senior Campus and option 2 for the Junior Campus, or through the Helix Parental App. A reason for the absence must be provided. If no explanation is received, Māruawai College will contact parents/caregivers directly to follow up.

Under the Education and Training Act 2020 (Section 45), the Principal may approve a student's absence from school for up to five days when there is a justified reason (for example, illness, injury, a funeral or tangihanga, or another reason deemed appropriate). For planned absences, parents/caregivers are asked to submit a request to the Principal at least one week in advance.

When considering planned absence requests, the Principal will take into account:

- The educational benefit of the activity or time away for the student, and
- The length of time the student will be absent from their regular school programme.

If a student is marked present but does not arrive at class, or if a student goes missing during the school day (including during EOTC activities), staff will first check for any

internal recording errors (e.g., if the student has gone home sick). If necessary, the school will contact parents/caregivers or emergency contacts. We may also follow our [Missing Student Procedure](#).

Following Up Unexplained or Concerning Absences

Māruawai College takes all reasonable steps to support regular attendance and to follow up on unexplained or irregular absences.

Follow-up actions may include:

- Reviewing attendance data to identify patterns,
- Contacting parents/caregivers to clarify expectations and reasons for absence,
- Meeting with students and whanau to plan strategies that support improved attendance,
- Working with teachers and support staff to re-engage students in learning where needed.

Under the Education and Training Act 2020 (Section 48), the Board has appointed an Attendance Officer to follow up directly with students and families. Where ongoing or persistent absence continues, we may also refer students to Attendance Services or other external agencies for further support.

School Practice

Setting and Reinforcing Attendance Expectations

At Māruawai College, regular attendance is promoted as essential for student wellbeing, progress, and engagement. We set clear expectations with whānau and reinforce these consistently:

- At enrolment, attendance expectations and procedures are explained to parents/caregivers and students.
- Weekly emails to whanau showing their child's attendance to reinforce the importance of attendance and share reminders or guidance where needed.

Process for Recording Attendance

- Class teachers complete the morning roll on Helix in the first 10 minutes of every lesson. Students will either be marked with a P for present or a ? if they are not present. If a student arrives after the roll has been submitted, the teacher will reopen the roll and change the ? to a L and note the minutes late.

- A Teams message is sent to staff if any rolls are not completed in time.
- If the office staff member is away, the Deputy Principal will complete this follow-up.

Steps for Following Up Unexplained Absences

1. The office staff member checks Helix for any students marked Unknown (?) and cross-references these with phone calls, texts, app messages, and other notifications from whānau.
2. Any absences still unexplained are followed up by phone call, and the roll is updated accordingly by the office administrator on Helix.
3. If a reason provided may be unjustified or indicate truancy, this is referred to the Deputy Principal to determine the correct attendance code.
4. Ongoing illness may require a medical certificate where appropriate.
5. The Attendance Officer may undertake home visits where needed.
6. For repeated unjustified absences, letters are sent home, and follow-up meetings are held with whānau.
7. In cases of chronic absence, a referral is made to the Attendance Service.

Use of STAR Response

Māruawai College uses the Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) thresholds to identify when absence patterns require action or support.

- Responses are guided by the [STAR Attendance Policy](#)
- Communication with whanau is supported by Ministry of Education attendance template letters and guidance.
- Where appropriate, [Individual Attendance Plans](#) are developed with whanau.



Actions for Attendance by Threshold Level

Up to 5 days absence per term

- Monitor attendance daily and log on HELIX.
- Notify parents of every absence via SMS and weekly reports.
- Hauora Teachers discuss absences with students and whānau if unexplained.
- Provide regular attendance feedback to students and parents.

5 to 10 days absence per term

- Send formal notification letter to whānau and request contact to discuss reasons.
- Deans and SLT link review case and inform Attendance Officer.
- Support students to catch up on missed learning and remove barriers (e.g., counselling, uniform, loan laptop).

10 to 15 days absence per term

- Send escalated formal notification and hold whānau meeting to analyse reasons.
- Develop and implement an Individualised Attendance Plan.
- Engage in-school resources and request Ministry or agency support if needed.

Over 15 days absence per term

- Send third letter (warning or potential prosecution) and insist on whānau meeting.
- Escalate to ROCK ON (multi-agency response) and refer to MoE Attendance Services.
- Implement and monitor improvement plan; consider prosecution or unenrolment if supports fail.

Supporting Students Returning to School

When students return to school after a period of absence, Māruawai College takes steps to ensure they are welcomed back positively and supported to re-engage in learning and friendships.

- **Differentiation of Learning:** Classroom teachers will adjust and scaffold learning to help students catch up and re-establish progress without unnecessary pressure if required.
- **Positive Classroom Culture:** teachers will actively foster an inclusive and supportive classroom environment so returning students feel valued, settled, and connected with peers.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** The level and duration of absence will determine the degree of follow-up. Hauora Teachers and Deans will monitor wellbeing, engagement, and learning progress to identify any emerging concerns early.
- **Whanau Communication:** Deans will maintain regular communication with parents and whanau to share reintegration progress and discuss any supports, adjustments, or next steps needed.

Monitoring and Measuring Progress

- The Principal holds overall responsibility for leading and overseeing attendance improvement across the school.
- The Deputy Principal and Office Administrator work together to ensure attendance coding is accurate and consistent, discussing coding decisions in a timely manner as they arise.
- Attendance data is monitored regularly, with the Principal providing a termly attendance summary to the Board of Trustees.
- The Guidance Team will review attendance patterns and progress at fortnightly meetings. These reviews will inform next steps, targeted support, and any required adjustments for the following term.

- A comprehensive attendance report will be provided to the Board of Trustees each term. This report will include analysis of data, trends, patterns, and relevant contextual narratives.