

POLICY

BLOMFIELD SPECIAL SCHOOL & RESOURCE CENTRE ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN & POLICY

RATIONALE:

Regular school attendance is essential for students to achieve their full educational potential. The government target is that **80% of students will be regularly attending school by 2030.**

Our school currently (2025) has **50.75 %** regular attendance and a target of raising regular attendance to **80% by the end of 2026.**

This policy guides the school staff in their roles and responsibilities when attendance is not regular, and communicates to our whānau community the graduated steps we will take to support school attendance. This enables the school to meet its obligations of the Education and Training Act (2020) which requires students of registered schools to attend whenever schools are open.

PURPOSE:

The benefits of regular attendance are:

Consistent Learning and Routine: Predictable routines and specialized teaching are the foundation of progress for our students.

Full Access to Therapy: Regular attendance ensures access to vital in-school support like Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy.

Social Connection: It helps them maintain friendships, practice social skills, and feel confident within the community.

Meeting Legal Requirements: It helps school and whānau meet our legal obligations to ensure every child is receiving an education.

BACKGROUND:

Bands of attendance

- **Regular Attendance (over 90%)**
No action required.
- **Irregular Absence (80–90%)**
Monitoring only; no formal intervention unless attendance drops below 70%.
- **Moderate Absence (70–80%)**
Monitoring and intervention where absences are unjustified.
- **Chronic Absenteeism (Below 70%)**
Action required. This group receives intensive intervention

Patterns of Attendance

Types of Absence

- **Justified:** Illness, medical/dental appointments (with proof where possible), religious observances, or school-approved trips.
- **Unjustified:** Unreported absences, unexplained absences, or holidays taken during term time (not approved except in exceptional circumstances determined by the principal).

Objectives

- Achieve at least **80% regular attendance** schoolwide.
- Identify and support students at risk of **Chronic Absenteeism**.
- Build strong partnerships with **whānau, iwi, and community agencies** to address attendance barriers.
- Ensure **accurate and timely recording** of attendance data and appropriate follow-up.

GUIDELINES:

Whanau Responsibilities

For Whānau

To let the school know **before 9 AM** on the first day of absence. **(This remains essential for safeguarding purposes, regardless of the attendance percentage.)**

- **How:** Call or text the **kura** office. Please leave a clear message or speak to an Administration Assistant

- **What we need:** Student's name, class, clear reason for absence, and when they are expected back.

If the absence continues, please contact us daily unless we have agreed on a definite return date.

For Staff

We use two distinct tracks for support: one for failure to report absences (Unexplained) and one for low overall attendance (Chronic or Unjustified Moderate absence).

Track A - Graduated Response to Unexplained Absence

This track focuses solely on the number of times a student is absent without the required notification from whānau, as this is a potential safeguarding concern. This applies to all students, regardless of their attendance percentage.

Cumulative Unexplained Absences

Our Action

1st Instance (One Day)

First Day Contact: Phone call to whānau by 9:30 AM from the Administration Team. Record the reason and reinforce whānau of reporting expectations.

3rd Instance

Formal Communication: Phone call from the Assistant Principal/Associate Principal noting the pattern and reminding whānau of the reporting procedure.

5th Instance

Assistant Principal Contact: Phone call from the Assistant/Associate Principal and formal request for a meeting to discuss home/school communication barriers. Support plan created if needed.

10th Instance

Principal Review: Referral to the Principal for review and determination of next steps, which may include a referral to Attendance Services or a review of whether safeguarding is a concern.

Staff may refer to Attendance Services at any stage if concerns escalate.

Track B - Intensive Support for Chronic or unjustified Moderate Absenteeism (Below 80%)

This track is the sole response for students whose overall attendance percentage has dropped into the **Chronic** or **Moderate Absenteeism** band.

Trigger

- Student attendance falls below **80%**.
- Absence patterns appear unjustified or problematic.

Procedural Steps

Step 1 — Attendance at 70–80% (10–15 days per term)

- Assistant/Associate Principal contacts whānau.
- Identify reasons for absence.
- Offer support and collaborative planning.
- Document intervention plan.

Step 2 — If No Improvement

- Escalate concerns.
- Hold a formal meeting with whānau.
- Engage the School Specialist Team, SWiS, LSC, health professionals, Transition Advisor, etc.

Step 3 — Referral to Attendance Services

- Initiate referral when:
 - Interventions have been exhausted,
 - Whānau engagement is limited, or
 - Attendance remains below 70%.

Step 4 — Persistent Non-Attendance

- Review enrollment status.
- If a student is not returning, follow unenrolment guidelines (as per MOE regulations).

Documentation and Record Keeping

Staff must ensure the following:

- Accurate attendance coding in the SMS
- Notes in SMS from all whānau contacts
- Copies of support plans

- Leadership Team reviews attendance concerns fortnightly and minutes decisions.
- Board reports include a review of chronic absenteeism and other emerging attendance concerns.
- Evidence for Attendance Services referrals

Promoting Good Attendance

We wish to affirm our students and whanau when school attendance is regular. We use positive reinforcement to acknowledge their commitment:

- **Termly Certificates:** Certificates for students achieving 90% + or making significant progress on their personal targets.
- **Annual Recognition:** Special mention at our end-of-year assembly for our most dedicated attendees.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees 26.02.2026

Signed by Presiding Member: _____