

Attendance Management Plan

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Overarching attendance objectives and strategic priorities

At Opihi College, our attendance procedures ensure students are accounted for during school hours and activities as well as emergency events. This allows school staff to identify and respond to student attendance concerns. We recognise the importance of regular attendance to support student welfare and help students achieve their educational potential.

As required by the Education and Training Act 2020 (s 35), students between six and sixteen years old must be enrolled at school. Once enrolled, it is compulsory to attend school regularly, unless a specific exemption has been approved by the school and the Ministry of Education. The board takes all reasonable steps to ensure all students enrolled at Opihi College attend school when it is open (Education and Training Act, s 36).

Opihi College records and monitors attendance using set attendance procedures. We have annual targets for student attendance, and work with students, parents and caregivers, staff, and external agencies where necessary to improve our levels of student attendance. We share our attendance information with the Ministry of Education, which ensures we receive correct funding and staffing entitlements. We keep our attendance registers for seven years from the date of last entry.

The principal assures the board that student absences are correctly recorded, monitored, and followed up.

Attendance policies and procedures can be accessed here <https://opihicollege.schooldocs.co.nz/>

Username: Opihi College

Password: care

Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation documentation can be accessed here

<https://www.opihicollege.school.nz/governance>

Parent/Guardian and student responsibilities

Parents and guardians have legal obligations to ensure their children attend school (Education and Training Act, s 244). We expect parents/guardians to:

- notify the school as soon as possible if their child is going to be late or absent
- arrange appointments and trips outside school hours or during school holidays where possible
- work with the school to manage attendance concerns.

We share attendance expectations with students and their parents/guardians and caregivers, and require students to be present and attend classes on time.

Parents/Guardians may ask for their child to be excused from certain areas of the curriculum for religious or cultural reasons. The principal reviews these requests and considers the preferences of the student. The school provides supervision for any students who do not participate in certain areas of the curriculum.

Recording attendance

We record attendance accurately to ensure all students are accounted for, including for emergency situations. The school provides attendance data to the Ministry of Education each day, as required by the Education and Training Act 2020 and Education (School Attendance) Regulations 2024. We monitor absence patterns using our student management system and notify parents/caregivers of any concerns as outlined in the Stepped Attendance Response (STAR).

Classroom teachers, learning support staff, and office staff work together to ensure attendance is recorded correctly. Relievers, itinerant teachers, and specialist teachers provide attendance information as necessary to the relevant teacher, or directly to the school office.

We record students as present or absent using Ministry of Education attendance codes. An absence may be justified (e.g. for medical reasons) or unjustified (e.g. for an unapproved holiday or other unsatisfactory reason), and we record this in our attendance register.

Monitoring attendance

The school office receives attendance information from classroom teachers and/or relievers, itinerant, or specialist teachers, and is responsible for checking and updating attendance information (e.g. due to students arriving late or going home early). Office staff follow up absences, monitor for changes or trends in student attendance, and coordinate with relevant staff as needed.

Staff are encouraged to report any attendance concerns to the principal.

The Ministry of Education collects attendance data from the school, including:

- the proportion of students who attend regularly
- students with five or more full days of unjustified absence in a term
- absences remaining unexplained at the end of each week.

Student absences

Parents/Caregivers are expected to notify the school as soon as possible (before or during the school day) if their child will be absent. A reason for absence must be provided no later than the end of the school week. Opihi College will contact parents/caregivers directly if no explanation is provided for student absence.

Under the Education and Training Act 2020 (s 45), the principal may allow a student to be absent from school for up to five days if there is a justified reason for absence (e.g. due to illness, a funeral or tangihanga, or other approved reason at the discretion of the school). For planned absences, requests must be made to the principal at least one week before the planned event.

The principal has discretion to approve or deny requests, based on criteria including:

- the benefit to education for the student (including qualifications and experience of course providers as relevant)
- the length of time away from regular school programmes that the activity will require.

If a student does not arrive at school or goes missing during the day (including from an EOTC event), we check there are no errors in how attendance information was recorded or updated (e.g. if a student has gone home due to illness). If necessary, we follow up with parents/guardians and/or emergency contacts. We may also follow our Missing Student Procedure

Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)

Less than 5 days absence In a school term	Up to 10 days absence In a school term	Up to 15 days absence in a school term	15 days or more absence In a school term
Parents/Guardians	Parents/Guardians	Parents/Guardians	Parents/Guardians
Parents and caregivers will encourage and support regular, on-time attendance, communicate promptly about absences or barriers, follow school attendance procedures, and work with the school to address any concerns early.	Parents and caregivers will work constructively with the school to support their child's return to regular attendance, engaging with the school counsellor where appropriate and participating positively in any support or interventions offered.	Parents and caregivers will engage constructively following formal notification and attend a meeting with the school to develop an Attendance and Engagement Plan, actively contributing to the creation of strategies that support their child's regular attendance.	Parents and caregivers will engage constructively when notified of 15 days or more of absence, meet with the school to review the current Attendance and Engagement Plan, support the agreed actions, and attend regular follow-up meetings as required.
School	School	School	School
The school maintains early, positive communication with whānau for every absence, ensures contact details are current, and provides regular attendance updates to students and caregivers. Staff encourage strong attendance habits, support re-engagement where needed, and offer catch-up learning or wellbeing support if absences occur.	The school will make every effort to support the student's return to regular attendance. A formal notification will be sent to parents or caregivers after 10 days of absence, and contact will be made to discuss the reasons for the absences and identify any support required.	The school will make every effort to support the student's return to regular attendance. A formal notification will be sent to parents and caregivers after 15 days of absence, and a meeting will be arranged with the whānau to discuss the reasons for the absence and agree on next steps to improve attendance.	attendance. A warning notice will be sent to parents and caregivers after 15 days or more of absence, and a meeting will be arranged with the whānau to discuss the reasons for the absences. Where needed, a range of agencies may be engaged to provide additional support.
> Principal > Attendance Team > In-school supports or resources	> Attendance Team > Student Support Lead > In-school supports or resources	> Attendance Team > Student Support Lead > Learning Support Coordinator > Senior Leadership > Attendance Service	>Senior Leadership >Multi-Agency Team (ROCK ON) >Board of Trustees >Ministry of Education
> Communicate attendance expectations. > Communicate to parents about every absence. > Maintain contact details of parents. Provide students with regular updates on their own attendance. > Report regularly to parents on the attendance of their child. > Communicate in-school supports or resources Student attendance acknowledgements.	> Contact parents to discuss reasons for absence and impact on learning. > Support students to catch up on missed learning where required. > Use in school resources as appropriate to remove barriers.	> Contact parents to escalate concerns. > Hold a meeting to analyse reasons for absence and to collaborate on a support plan. > Develop and implement a support plan tailored to the reasons and circumstances around the child's absence. > In-school supports or resources > Refer to Attendance Service and other agencies as needed.	> Contact parents to inform them of an escalated response. > Request support from Attendance Service and other agencies as needed. > Participate in a multi-agency response. > Maintain implementation and monitoring of support plans. > Undertake school-led prosecution or request Ministry-led prosecution, when considered appropriate if support offered and not taken. > Unenrol students not returning to school.

Attendance at Opihi College 2020 - 2025

Over the past five years, attendance at Opihi College has reflected many of the national trends seen across New Zealand schools, with fluctuations linked to post-pandemic disruption, health-related absences, and wider social and economic factors. From 2020 to 2022, regular attendance (students attending more than 90% of the time) averaged around 50%, before declining during 2022 when illness and justified absences peaked. Attendance gradually improved again through 2023 and 2024, with the strongest results in early 2025 when 56% of students attended regularly in Term 1. However, by Term 3 2025, regular attendance sat at 40%, with 30% of students identified as having irregular attendance and 19% in the chronic absence category.

Across the period, the most common reasons for absence have consistently been illness or medical appointments, making up over half of all recorded absences, followed by unexplained or trivial absences and approved justified leave. The data also shows clear seasonal variation, with attendance strongest at the start of each school year and lowest in winter terms.

While attendance remains below the national goal of 80% of students attending regularly by 2030, there are positive indicators. Female students and Year 11 cohorts have shown relatively stronger attendance, and improvements are being seen in the consistency of attendance coding and follow-up processes. The introduction of a structured Attendance Management Plan, combined with targeted communication, pastoral interventions, and strengthened home-school partnerships, provides a strong platform for further progress in 2026 and beyond.

Annual Implementation Plan 2025 - Annual Target for Attendance

Strategic Goal 2:

Opihi College aims to increase student attendance by ensuring that 80% of students are present for more than 90% of the term by 2026. This aligns with the national target and reflects the College's commitment to improving attendance through the implementation of the Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) framework, enhanced data collection, and strengthening accountability. Opihi College will also foster positive changes in attitudes towards regular attendance by utilizing targeted communication strategies and will continuously review and enhance attendance supports and services for chronically absent students in line with the government's attendance action plan.

Annual Target *Regulation 9(1)(a)*

Opihi College is committed to progressing toward the Government's target of 80% of students attending regularly (90% or more of the time) by 2030. For 2024, the school aims to achieve a 70% regular attendance rate, laying the foundation for sustained improvement in the years ahead. Additionally, we aim to reduce chronic absence to below 12%, ensuring more equitable access to learning opportunities.

What do we expect to see by the end of the year? *Regulation 9(1)(a)*

- Gradual Progress Toward the Government Target: A measurable increase in the proportion of students with regular attendance, showing steady progress toward the 80% target.
- Targeted Reductions in Chronic Absence: Focused interventions will lower chronic absence rates among specific groups, particularly Year 9 and MELAA students.
- Sustained Punctuality Improvements: Maintain or improve on-time arrival rates, aiming for a punctuality rate above 90%.

Supporting Documents

1. Attendance Management Plan Visual Summary (PDF)
2. Attendance Management Plan Whānau Visual (PDF)
3. Attendance Management Plan Student Visual (PDF)