

Aotearoa Infinite Academy

Attendance and Engagement Policy



Purpose and Scope

Aotearoa Infinite Academy (“Infinite”) is committed to providing a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff in every environment where teaching and learning occur — including our virtual classrooms, online communities, and digital platforms. Our goal is to foster an inclusive online school culture where students feel connected, respected, and supported to achieve their best, while being actively protected from harm and disengagement.

This policy sits alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Student Code of Conduct, Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment Policy, and the Enrolment Terms. Together, these policies ensure Aotearoa Infinite Academy meets its obligations under the Education and Training Act 2020 & relevant attendance regulations, and maintains a learning environment where wellbeing, participation, and achievement are mutually reinforcing.

This policy sets out how Infinite:

- defines and monitors attendance at our online school,
- responds to absence or disengagement early and supportively,
- meets its legal duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure students attend whenever the school is open for instruction, and
- maintains accurate attendance records and reporting.

This policy applies to:

- all enrolled students;
- parents/whānau of students;
- all scheduled learning activities delivered online, including live classes, tutorials, assessments, mentoring, and required asynchronous learning tasks;
- any in-person or offsite learning activities authorised by the school (e.g., exams, EOTC or meet-ups); and
- all staff responsible for attendance recording, engagement monitoring, and follow-up.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

Infinite’s attendance approach aligns with:

- Education and Training Act 2020, including the requirement that enrolled students attend whenever the school is open for instruction, and the Sponsor takes all reasonable steps to ensure attendance (s 36);
- attendance regulations and Ministry guidance applying to schools, adapted to online delivery; and
- reporting obligations to the Charter School Agency and Ministry.

Guiding Principles and Target

Infinite's attendance and engagement practice is guided by these principles:

1. **Access and inclusion:** attendance expectations accommodate diverse learners, circumstances, and locations.
2. **Early support:** absence is treated as a signal to help, not a trigger to punish.
3. **Consistency and fairness:** attendance is recorded in a transparent, uniform way for all students.
4. **Partnership with whānau:** parents/guardians are key partners in supporting attendance.
5. **Learning-centred:** engagement is measured in meaningful participation, not just log-ins.

The Ministry of Education uses four attendance categories to describe how regularly students attend school each term: regular attendance, irregular absence, moderate absence, and chronic absence. A student is considered to be attending regularly if they are present for more than 90% of the term — which is roughly the same as being absent for fewer than five days in a term.

Infinite adopts this benchmark and the Ministry's target: **we aim for every student to attend more than 90% of each term**, and for the school to **meet or exceed the goal of at least 80% of our students being in regular attendance** over time.

Attendance in an Online School

What counts as attendance

A student is marked **Present** for a school day when they meet the attendance threshold through meaningful participation in scheduled learning. Evidence may include one or more of:

- attending live online classes or tutorials (camera/mic use as required by the teacher);
- active participation in class activities, chats, polls, breakout tasks, or supervised work time;
- submission of required learning tasks scheduled for that day;
- attendance at school-directed mentoring, pastoral sessions, or learning conferences;
- sitting supervised online assessments; or
- participating in board-approved offsite learning or school-authorised events.

Attendance is evaluated based on time present plus meaningful learning participation, rather than physical location. Teachers record attendance for each timetabled session, and daily attendance is derived from that record.

Attendance categories

Infinite records attendance using Ministry attendance codes adapted for online learning. Each day a student will be marked as:

- **Present:** See above.
- **Justified Absence:** Absences are justified where a valid reason exists, such as illness, bereavement, approved medical needs, school-approved leave, stand-down/suspension, or other principal-approved circumstances.
- **Unjustified Absence:** Absences are unjustified where no valid reason is supplied, or where the reason is explained but not approved (e.g., term-time holidays).
- **Unexplained Absence:** Where no reason is yet known, the absence is initially coded unexplained and followed up within the same school week.

Notifying absences

- Parents/guardians should notify the school as early as possible on the day of absence, and no later than the end of that school day.
- Explanations should be provided by the end of the school week.
- Where an absence is planned (e.g., medical procedure, cultural or sporting commitment), parents should notify the school in advance so that learning support can be arranged and the absence coded correctly.

Monitoring and Early Intervention

Infinite monitors engagement continuously through attendance data, LMS activity, teacher observations, and pastoral check-ins. When a pattern of concern emerges (including repeated lateness, unexplained absences, or declining engagement), the school will respond proportionately, which may include:

- a check-in by the subject teacher or mentor;
- contact with parents/guardians to clarify reasons and explore barriers;
- an attendance/engagement support plan with practical adjustments;
- learning or assessment adjustments where appropriate;
- referral to wellbeing or learning support staff; and/or
- connection to external supports where needed.

Escalation for persistent non-attendance

Where attendance becomes irregular or chronic, Infinite will:

- contact the student and family to identify underlying causes;
- provide tailored support and agree clear next steps;
- set review points and document interventions;
- engage relevant external agencies if required (e.g., Attendance Service / Te Mahau regional offices).

If non-attendance continues without reasonable cause after support and follow-up, the school may determine that the student has effectively withdrawn. This decision is made case-by-case, documented carefully, and communicated to the family, and ENROL is updated accordingly.

Statutory and approved attendance variations

Infinite will apply lawful attendance variations where relevant, including:

- wellbeing/transition plans under the Act, recorded as attendance aligned to the plan;
- dual tuition or approved alternative provision where applicable;
- stand-downs and suspensions, recorded with the appropriate codes;
- extended illness, where the school may work with whānau and health services to plan a pathway back to learning;
- any other lawful exemption or Principal-approved arrangement.

Attendance Data and Reporting

- Attendance is recorded daily and coded using Ministry-approved codes.
- Data quality checks are completed routinely to ensure accuracy.
- Attendance information is shared with parents/guardians through regular reporting and direct follow-up where needed.
- The school meets all required reporting obligations to the Ministry of Education and Charter School Agency.

Attendance and engagement records are personal information and are managed in line with the Privacy Act 2020 and the school's Privacy Policy. Access is limited to staff who need the information to support the student.

Version Control

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