

Regular Attendance at School

In 2025 the Ministry of Education introduced the Stepped Attendance Response in attempt to raise student attendance at school.

In 2026 the goal for New Zealand schools is having 80% of students attending 90% of the time.

At Big Rock

We understand that there can be many reasons for a child not attending school regularly. As a school we want to be able to help, but to do that we need to know what the challenges are and how we can support children attending school regularly. Things that may affect your child attending school regularly include:

- Transitioning from Early Childhood Education to school
- Friendship issues
- Bullying
- Anxiety in the classroom or playground
- Ongoing illness or medical challenges

We are capable and more than willing to help children deal with these challenges, but we need to be fully aware of what they are so that as families and as a school, we can work together to best support children to achieve to their capability and that starts with regular attendance.

Ministry of Education Requirements (Legislative requirements for Boards of Trustees)

- Teachers take the roll every morning and every afternoon
- Roll information is forwarded to the Ministry of Education every morning and afternoon (This happens automatically)
- **In cases where attendance is near or below 80% the Ministry of Education will contact schools and Ministry of Education Attendance protocols will be triggered. (This is out of school hands)**
- Schools *must* follow the Stepped Attendance Response STAR (Appendix 1)
- On January 1st 2026, all New Zealand schools must have completed a school Attendance Plan that reflects the Stepped Attendance Response and legislative requirements
- Review Attendance data regularly
- Contact parents and whanau at all 4 stages of the Stepped Attendance Response

While at times this will be challenging, because as a school we try to foster positive relationships with all families and whanau. We will endeavour to do our best to support children with low attendance rates to improve those, so that school is happy, welcoming place where they can thrive in all aspects of school life.

To do that, staff, families and whanau will need to work together for the benefit of every child.

There are many benefits to regular, consistent attendance.

Benefits of Regular Attendance

Academic achievement through regular engagement in class programmes, especially Reading, Writing and Mathematics

Fully immersed in all class programmes and routines (Children learn best in regular routines)

Build stronger relationships and friendships with peer group

Understand and value the importance of their learning and that their parents and whanau support their learning

Negatives of Poor Attendance

Children are less likely to achieve academic success in the key areas of Reading, Writing and Mathematics

Children will be out of sync with classroom routines

Children are less likely to build strong relationships and friendships within their peer group

School and learning is not as seen as valuable or important

In senior classes, children can feel unwanted in group tasks because their peers do not have trust that their partner or team member will turn up for all of the 'project'

Attendance Rates and what they mean in real terms

An attendance rate of 80% means that the child, on average, is away from school for at least one day per week.

An attendance rate of 75% or less means that the child has missed the equivalent of at least a whole term at school.

Even an attendance rate of 90%, means an average of one day off school per fortnight

High attendance provides children with a greater chance at success and happiness at school. We all want happy, successful children.

95%-100% Excellent Attendance

90% - 94% Very Good Attendance

Less than 90% Of Concern

Less than 85% Alarming

Less than 80% Ministry of Education Attendance Protocols Triggered

Ministry of Education directed Attendance Management Plan and supporting STAR procedures

Strategic Priorities

Regular school attendance is important for students to achieve their educational and social development potential. The government target is that 80% of students will be regularly attending school by 2030.

Big RockI currently has 62% regular attendance and a target of lifting regular attendance to 80% by the end of 2026.

Board responsibilities

The board is responsible for taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend the school when it is open for instruction.

The board will comply with the provisions in the legislation in relation to student attendance by:

- having a commitment to support students to maintain regular attendance
- having processes and procedures in place to support a Stepped Attendance Response to student absence that uses data-based thresholds to identify students
- recording all absences, and responding accordingly
- having an effective method in place for identifying and monitoring student absence, including identifying patterns and barriers to student attendance
- publishing this attendance management plan on the school's website.

Principal responsibilities

The principal is responsible for:

- developing and implementing a stepped attendance response aligned with the thresholds to support student attendance
- ensure that student absence is investigated, responded to and actions taken recorded aligned with the thresholds
- ensure all students, whanau and staff understand the processes and procedures that support student attendance
- report to the board on any trends, barriers to attendance and interventions being used to support student attendance.

Procedures/supporting documentation

Attendance management Procedure - Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)- see below

Monitoring

The principal will maintain reporting of daily attendance data.

The board will receive termly attendance reporting- including information provided by the Every Day matters report. Included in this reporting will be any emerging trends, barriers to attendance, and areas of concern for the board's consideration.

Legislative compliance/ Legislation

[Education and Training Act 2020](#)

[Education Attendance rules](#)

[Education Attendance Management Plan regulations \(yet to be passed\)](#)

Written: December 2025

Next review: November 2028

Attendance Management Procedure- Stepped Attendance Response

Big Rock recognises the importance of regular attendance to help our students achieve their educational and social development potential.

Our attendance procedures ensure students are accounted for during school hours. This allows school staff to identify and respond to student attendance concerns.

We have a stepped attendance response to ensure we are able to identify students and offer appropriate interventions at the thresholds to support students to return to regular attendance.

We have annual targets for student attendance and work with students, parents and caregivers, staff and an external agency, where necessary to improve our levels of student attendance.

Parent/Whanau responsibilities

- ensure students attend every day they are able
- reinforce good attendance habits
- open communication with the school
- follow the school's attendance management plan and associated attendance policies and procedures.

School responsibilities

- clear communication to parents and students on attendance expectations on enrolment, at the start of the year and each term
- communicate to parents what steps the school will take if the student is absent from school
- monitor student attendance
- provide students with regular updates on their own attendance
- report regularly to parents on attendance of their child.

School Procedures

The principal will appoint staff and delegate duties, so as to manage the recording of the electronic student attendance register and the follow-up procedures for non-attending students.

Non-teaching staff with duties associated with our attendance system will support teachers to maintain accurate up-to-date attendance information.

Classroom teachers are responsible for recording student attendance in their class on a half day basis.

Class teachers are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date records and supporting the attendance systems. They will also monitor and follow-up on lateness, attendance and other attendance issues.

Senior leaders are responsible for monitoring student attendance for their respective groups, ensuring that parents are informed of attendance concerns. Senior staff and relevant personnel will be kept informed of serious student absence situations.

Parents will receive student attendance data via termly updates, mid year and end of year reports.

Outside agencies will be used as appropriate to support attendance.

Students will be identified at the thresholds. Follow-up response actions will be tailored to the reasons for absence.

Patterns of attendance and specific interventions being used will be evaluated by all teaching staff termly or more regularly if required, to review outcomes and effectiveness of these interventions

Attached is the Stepped Attendance Response Activities for our school. Any action taken can be considered at any threshold. All actions taken to respond to absences will be recorded in Edge. If you have any questions about our Stepped Attendance Response or procedures, please contact David Grant or Lisa Lamb.

School Stepped Attendance Response Activities

Below is our stepped attendance response for responding to individual student absence. Actions can be taken at any stage and there is no requirement to wait for a student to be identified at a threshold to take action to address non attendance. Contact parents asap (ideally within 2 school days) and arrange a meeting for as soon as possible.

Day-to-day operations			
Activities	Practice	Responsible Person	Notes & Actions
Communicate with parents	Set expectations, procedures and follow-up steps the school will take when a student is absent. Use enrolment forms, newsletters, website or other communication methods to set expectations and provide guidance to parents	Class teacher Principal School board	Termly attendance features including updates on data in newsletters. Expectations and guidance for parents published on our school website. Expectations for student attendance and steps that will be taken to address attendance included in enrolment forms. Work with parents and students, where appropriate.
Following up absences daily	Use procedures in place (and supporting software) to quickly identify all student absences and communicate these to parents Follow-up daily with parents any unexplained absences	Administration team	Text based reminder to be sent from 10 am for all unexplained absences.
Minimise disruptions to the school day and week	School boards and school leadership prioritise school hours to be for learning	School leadership team	
Assess history of new students	When enrolling, identify issues or trends in attendance history. Seek more support as needed	Principal All staff as appropriate.	Discuss with family and whanau as required Staff are encouraged to escalate issues according to these procedures. If you are unsure, please discuss with David Grant or Lisa Lamb.
Escalate attendance issues as needed Develop support plans Involve other services, consider referral to Attendance Services			

Students with less than 5 days absence

Activities	Practice	Responsible Person	Notes & Actions
Communicate with parents/caregivers Maintain contact details	Identify all student absences Communicate these to parents	Administrator	Follow-up all absences to confirm the reason for absence. No action taken
Report regularly to parents on attendance of their child			
Between 0-4 days absence all absences need to be followed up to ensure the correct code is recorded against the absence. Any students, already on the attendance list from the previous term will be identified by the class teachers at their weekly meetings.			
Students with less than 10 days absence (5-9 days)			
Activities	Practice	Responsible Person	Notes & Actions
Contact parents to discuss reasons for absence and impact on learning	After 5 days send email to parent Phone contact to be used if this is not the first time a student has met the threshold.	Principal	Record actions taken in Edge. If there is no action taken due to individual circumstance- record this against the student record. Follow-up to be within 2 schools days of meeting the threshold.
Support students to catch up missed learning where required	Identify missed learning objectives and consider notes or activities to bring student back up to speed	Class Teacher	Discuss with parents and student.
Use in-school resources as appropriate to remove barriers	Contact senior management and the class teacher if barriers are identified that the school could assist with.	Class teacher/ Principal	Parents and student provided access to additional resources. Consider friendship issues and bullying.
Between 5-9 days absence, investigate reasons for this absence and if there is a pattern across the year consider actions listed at higher thresholds. Record all actions taken to address non-attendance. For students that have progressed from having higher absences, provide feedback on the positive improvement on their attendance to both student and whānau. If there is no action taken due to individual circumstance- record this against the student record.			

Students with less than 15 days absence

Activities	Practice	Responsible Person	Notes & Actions
Contact parent to escalate concerns	Further contact with parent Email and/or phone call as required for escalation.	Principal	Record actions taken in Edge. If there is no action taken due to individual circumstance- record this against the student record.
Hold a meeting with parent/caregiver and student (where appropriate) to analyse reasons for absence	Arrange meetings including parents and student.	Principal/class teacher	Consider who is needed at this meeting.
Develop and implement a support plan tailored to the reasons and circumstances around the child's absence	Hold everyone accountable for their part in the plan.	Principal/class teacher	Take action quickly where expectations aren't being met
Use in-school resources as appropriate to remove barriers and request support from as needed	Discuss with senior management and teacher what further supports are available	Principal/class teacher	
Between 10-14 days absence, investigate reasons for this absence and if there is a pattern across the year consider actions listed at higher thresholds. Record all actions taken to address non-attendance. If there is no action taken due to individual circumstance- record this against the student record.			

Students with greater than 15 days absence

Activities	Practice	Responsible Person	Notes & Actions
Contact parent to escalate concerns	Further escalating email	School leadership	
Hold a meeting with parent/caregiver and student (where appropriate) to analyse reasons for absence.	Arrange promptly for a meeting including parents and student. Consider who will be in attendance.	Principal/class teacher	Plan to return student to regular attendance
Request support from Attendance Service or other agencies as needed	Refer to Ministry of Education attendance services or other agencies	Principal/class teacher	Before referral check all previous actions like support plans are in place
Participate in multi-agency response	Support access to services and collaborating with specialists		Resources and supports will continue to be provided as appropriate Reintegration plan in place to return student to regular attendance
Maintain implementation and monitoring of support plan	Hold everyone accountable for their part in the plan, and take action quickly where expectations aren't being met	Principal/class teacher	Support plan in place Continue monitoring Steps taken to reintegrate student
Over 15 days absent, investigate reasons for this absence and refer to the Principal for further actions. Record all actions taken to address non-attendance. If there is no action taken due to individual circumstance- record this against the student record.			