

Masterton Primary School Attendance Management Plan 2026-2028

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Overarching Attendance Objectives and Strategic Priorities

Regular school attendance is fundamental to academic success, social development, and overall wellbeing of our tamariki. Consistent attendance ensures that students can build strong educational foundations and continuously engage in their learning. The New Zealand government has established a national target of achieving 80% regular attendance, defined as students attending school at least 90% of the time, by the year 2030. This benchmark, which allows for no more than one day of absence per fortnight, is a key driver of our school's attendance strategy.

At Masterton Primary School, our approach is guided by our core values and a commitment to ensuring every child has the opportunity to succeed. This plan outlines our multi-year strategy to monitor, support, and improve student attendance, ensuring that every tamaiti can strive to reach their full potential.

Baseline Data Informing our Attendance Management Plan

This plan is informed by a comprehensive analysis of attendance data from 2024 and 2025. The most recent data from **Term 3, 2025**, provides a critical and concerning baseline for our strategic targets. This latest report indicates a reversal of previous positive trends.

Term 3 2025 Attendance Data

Attendance Category	Percentage of Students	Comparison to Term 3, 2024
Regular Attendance (>90%)	50%	▼ 3% (53%)
Irregular Absence (80-90%)	28%	▲ 3% (31%)
Moderate Absence (70-80%)	13%	▼ 9% (9%)
Chronic Absence (<70%)	9%	▲ 6% (6%)

Masterton Primary School – Board of Trustees Attendance Summary (Term 4, 2025)

Regular Attendance

In Term 4, 2025, 57% of students met the Ministry of Education threshold for regular attendance (attending school more than 90% of the time). This is a 12 percentage point decrease from 69% in Term 4, 2024.

Attendance Risk Profile

Regular: 57% (2024: 69%)

Irregular: 23% (2024: 22%)

Moderate: 11% (2024: 6%)

Chronic: 9% (2024: 2%)

Reasons for Absence

Illness/Medical: 59%

Accepted but unjustified: 22%

Unexplained/Trivial: 9%

Explained & Approved: 9%

Holiday: 1%

Punctuality

87% of students arrive on time more than 90% of the time.

Strategic Focus for 2026

The school will prioritise Attendance Management Plans, early intervention, family engagement, and improved monitoring.

Annual Targets

To counteract the recent decline and realign with the national goal, we have set the following aspirational targets for 2026-2028. These targets are ambitious and signal a whole-school commitment to reversing the current trend.

Attendance Targets – (2026–2028)

Whole School (Baseline: Regular 57%, Chronic 9%)

Year	Regular Attendance Target	Chronic Absence Target
2026	65% (▲ 8%)	6% (▼ 3%)
2027	72% (▲ 7%)	4% (▼ 2%)
2028	78% (▲ 6%)	3% (▼ 1%)

Annual Target: Māori Students

Māori (Baseline: Regular 43%, Chronic 13%)

Year	Regular Attendance Target	Chronic Absence Target
2026	55% (▲ 12%)	9% (▼ 4%)
2027	65% (▲ 10%)	6% (▼ 3%)
2028	75% (▲ 10%)	4% (▼ 2%)

Pacific (Baseline: Regular 29%, Chronic 10%)

Year	Regular Attendance Target	Chronic Absence Target
2026	45% (▲ 16%)	7% (▼ 3%)
2027	60% (▲ 15%)	5% (▼ 2%)
2028	70% (▲ 10%)	3% (▼ 2%)

Female (Baseline: Regular 51%, Chronic 10%)

Year	Regular Attendance Target	Chronic Absence Target
2026	62% (▲ 11%)	7% (▼ 3%)
2027	72% (▲ 10%)	5% (▼ 2%)
2028	80% (▲ 8%)	3% (▼ 2%)

Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan

This Attendance Management Plan is a key component of our school's broader Strategic Plan and is will be integrated into our Annual Implementation Plan. It directly supports our strategic goals related to student wellbeing and academic achievement.

Attendance Policy

Masterton Primary School has established procedures to accurately record, monitor, and follow up on student attendance. As required by the Education and Training Act 2020, all students aged six to sixteen must be enrolled and attend school regularly. The Board of Trustees is responsible for taking all reasonable steps to ensure enrolled students attend when the school is open for instruction.

Whānau hold a legal obligation to ensure their children's attendance and are expected to:

- Notify the school of any absence or lateness as soon as possible.
- Schedule appointments and trips outside of school hours or during holidays where feasible.
- Collaborate with the school to address any attendance concerns.

Attendance Management Procedures

Recording Attendance: - **Kaiako (Teachers):** Mark rolls on HERO SMS twice daily, before 9:05 am and 1:00 pm. - **Tari (Office):** The Administration Clerk checks registers, follows up on unexplained absences via text message, and updates attendance codes as information is received. - **Whānau:** Notify the school of absences via phone, letter, or in person.

Monitoring Practices: - The principal and relevant staff will review attendance data weekly to identify patterns, coding errors, and students tracking towards different absence thresholds. - Attendance data and trends will be reported to the Board of Trustees twice per term. - The plan will be reviewed termly in response to the *Every Day Matters* reports.

Absence Thresholds and Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)

Our response to absenteeism is structured around a tiered approach, ensuring that support is tailored to the needs of the student and whānau.

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Proactive Attendance Strategy
Manaakitanga, Belonging and Engagement

At Masterton Primary School, we understand that attendance is not a compliance issue — it is a wellbeing, connection and belonging issue. While the Ministry’s Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) framework guides how we respond to patterns of absence, our core approach is proactive, relational and culturally grounded.

Our focus is on creating a school where ākonga want to be, because they feel seen, valued, safe and successful. This commitment sits within our dual pou of The Art of Teaching (TAW) and Te Arawhakamana – Mana Enhancement.

We recognise that persistent absence is rarely about choice alone — it is often a signal of health, anxiety, trauma, housing instability, transport barriers, or whānau stress. Our approach therefore centres on removing barriers through care, connection and practical support.

1. Manaakitanga – Proactive Care Before Crisis

We intervene early and kindly, long before students reach statutory thresholds.

Curriculum of Care

Our holistic wellbeing framework ensures that attendance is supported through:

- High-quality health and hygiene practices
- Calm, predictable classroom environments
- Trauma-informed and restorative approaches
This is particularly important given the high level of illness / Medical absence in our data.

We also recognise that staff wellbeing directly impacts student attendance — calm, supported teachers create calm, supported classrooms.

Whānau Liaison – Early Connection

Our Whānau Liaison proactively engages families when students first move into the “Worrying” (5–10 days) attendance band.

This prevents students drifting into entrenched absence.

These conversations are not about blame — they are about:

- Transport barriers
- Health needs
- Housing instability
- Food security
- Emotional wellbeing

Whānau are connected with:

- Health providers
- Social agencies
- School-based supports

The aim is simple: remove the barrier so the child can come to school.

Attendance as a Strength

We actively reinforce attendance as something to be proud of through:

- Weekly classroom recognition
- Visual tracking of improvement
- Termly Principal Awards

We celebrate improvement, not just perfection — reinforcing the belief that every day back counts.

2. Whanaungatanga & Awhi – Relationships That Anchor Students

Students attend when they belong.

Every child must know:

“There is someone at school who cares if I’m here.”

Te Arawhakamana Programme

Students at risk of chronic absence are intentionally connected to:

- Leadership roles
- Peer support
- cultural roles
- service opportunities

This builds identity, agency and mana, turning school from a place of avoidance into a place of purpose.

Targeted Mentoring

Students identified in Chronic Absence are assigned a named adult — a Kaiako, Learning Assistant, or Senior Leader — who:

- Greets them daily
- Checks in emotionally
- Follows up immediately on absence

No student becomes invisible.

Wrap-around Support

We strengthen partnerships with:

- Local iwi
- Health services
- Social agencies

This creates a network around whānau, not just a school response.

Equity – Closing the Attendance Gap

We acknowledge the attendance inequity for Māori and Pacific learners. Our response is culturally grounded, not punitive.

Mana-Centred Communication

Attendance conversations are guided by:

- Respect
- dignity
- relational trust

We use preferred communication methods and culturally responsive language so whānau feel heard, not judged.

Culturally Responsive Engagement

To achieve our accelerated Māori attendance targets, we ensure:

- The curriculum reflects Māori identity, language and culture
- Te Reo, tikanga and whakapapa are visible in daily learning
- Learning feels relevant and affirming

Students attend when school reflects who they are.

Equity Data Monitoring

Each term we run deep-dive analysis for:

- Māori learners
- Pacific learners
- gender patterns

This allows us to adapt rapidly and ensure supports are working.

Whānau Communication & Partnership

We keep attendance visible, normalised and supported through:

- Weekly Pānui
- Facebook reminders
- Personal phone calls
- Face-to-face kōrero

Where concern escalates, we follow Ministry guidance, but always through a lens of manaakitanga and partnership.

Our Belief

When students feel connected, culturally affirmed, safe and successful — they attend.

Attendance improvement at Masterton Primary is not about chasing numbers — it is about lifting mana, strengthening whānau, and creating a school our tamariki want to be part of.

Tier	Attendance Level	Whānau Responsibilities	Kura (School) Responsibilities
Good	< 5 days absence	Reinforce good attendance habits.	Communicate regularly with whānau about attendance. Wā whānau initiative
Worrying	5-10 days absence	Contact school to discuss reasons for absence.	Contact parents to discuss impact on learning and offer in-school support.
Concerning	10-15 days absence	Participate in meetings to develop a support plan.	Hold meetings to analyze reasons for absence and co-create a support plan.
Very Concerning	15+ days absence	Engage with support plan and external agencies.	Request support from Attendance Services or other agencies as needed.