# Nelson Park School
# Attendance Management Plan

*Whāia ko te taumata - In all things seek the highest*

At Nelson Park School, we aim for all learners to attend regularly so they can engage, achieve and thrive at school. All students in Aotearoa are legally required to attend school every day when well, and schools are legally required to have an attendance management plan in place to support this expectation. Our plan has been informed by the attendance data we have gathered over 2024-2025 and addresses the patterns in this data. This plan aligns with the Government's target for 80% of students to be present for more than 90% of the time. If a student misses one day of school every two weeks, they will have missed more than a whole year of school by the time they complete Year 10. Together, school and whānau can build strong attendance habits and attitudes that set every child up for success.

**Context - analysis of 2024-2025 attendance data**

Attendance rates for tamariki at Nelson Park School are higher than the Hawkes Bay average but they are not high enough. Over the past two years, the number of students attending regularly - i.e. more than 90%, has ranged between 55% and 72%, the average being 64%. We have increased our focus on attendance with our tamariki however, with 65% of our tamariki currently attending school for at least 90% of the time, continued improvement is needed in order to reach the Government target of 80% of students attending 90% of the time.

There are some trends to consider:

**Illness**

Over the past several years, particularly since covid, we have noticed higher rates of illnesses which last longer. In addition, we suspect that whānau are being more careful about keeping sick children at home. Medical issues and illness are by far the most common reasons for absence, accounting for between 37% (in Term 4, 2024) and 63% (in Term 2, 2025) of student absences, with an average of 49% across the last two years.

**Holidays and unjustified absence**

Families taking students out of school for family holidays during term time is a major contributor to absence at Nelson Park School, making up around 14% of all absences. While we acknowledge that overseas travel and family time can provide valuable experiences, these absences are unjustified under Board policy and the law. Holidays can be conducted during school break time. Teachers observe that time away on holiday affects tamariki when they return, including lost learning opportunities planned for with their class and with their peers at school, reduced confidence, and challenges in maintaining social connections.

**Friday absence**

Friday is the least attended day at Nelson Park School, with around 13% of students absent. (average of 2024 and 2025 data). There are several assumptions to explain this - whānau going away for long weekends, children feeling tired at the end of the week, and possibly an historical perception that Fridays don't matter as much academically.

**Procedures to support attendance**

At Nelson Park School, we have developed the following procedures to support and manage

student attendance. Some of these procedures are well embedded, others are happening continuously, and others will be more fully implemented from the beginning of 2026. These procedures have been developed in response to:

- Our attendance data over the past two years
- Our analysis of Ministry of Education: *Every Day Matters* reporting
- Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) guidance

| **Monitoring attendance** | **Personnel Responsible** |
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| 1. Every day a child is away, by 9:15 am, parents are expected to notify the school and provide a clear reason for absence. Saying a child is "not at school today" will not be accepted as an explanation and will be recorded as truant. Notifying the school can be done by:<br>• Using Hero, our school app<br>• Calling 06 8356078 or calling/texting 02711838147<br>• Emailing admin@nelsonpark.school.nz<br><br>Comments: Over 50% of absences are currently reported on Hero.<br>At the beginning of 2026 we will send an attendance newsletter home, explaining government expectations and caregiver responsibilities for reporting absences daily. | Parent/caregiver<br><br>Office managers |
| 2. Every day, classroom rolls are marked on Hero by 9:15 am and 1.40 pm. Non-school staff use paper rolls and send these to the office. The office then records the paper roll on Hero. For every student away, the teacher uses the ? code. | Teachers<br><br>Office managers |
| 3. The school monitors daily attendance by checking on any students with a ?. Using parent/caregiver notifications, the correct code is recorded. By 9:20 am, any ? codes still in place are followed up by a Hero absence text. If this is not responded to, a follow-up call may be made. If no explanation message is received, a T (truant) code will be recorded until a parent notification is received to say otherwise. Please refer to the tables in Figure A Attendance Codes and Explanations for further detail.<br><br>Comment: This system relies on families being active users of our Hero app. We estimate that currently, this is probably about 90% of our whānau, although we are unable to identify who the non-users are. Whānau are proactively encouraged and supported to download and use the app. | Office managers, supported by the principal and the deputy principal. |

**Monitoring absences**

*Note: These responses are based upon the Ministry of Education's Stepped Attendance Response which was released in January 2025. Implementation has begun and will continue to be strengthened over the coming school year.*

**Unjustified absence**

If a student is absent for more than 5 unjustified days in a term, the school will consider carrying out an intervention following the STAR plan:

- Send a formal notification and contact the parents /caregivers to discuss the reasons for the absences
- Support students to catch up on missed learning where required
- Use in-school resources as appropriate to remove barriers, e.g. provide food, or counselling with school staff, address support strategies for parents and teachers for school refusal.

If unjustified absence continues for 10 days in a term, the school may:

- Send escalated formal notification to parents /caregivers
- Hold a meeting to discuss the reason for absence and to collaborate on a support plan
- Develop and implement a plan tailored to the circumstances around the child's absence
- Use in-school resources as appropriate to remove barriers and request support from the Ministry or other agencies as needed

If unjustified absence continues for 15 days in a term:, the school may:

- Send a warning notice and make contact to arrange a meeting with parents / caregivers
- Escalate to multi-agency response

**Justified absence**

Where justified absence is longer than five consecutive days for illness, the school may request a doctor's certificate.

Where justified absence from school is more than 10 intermittent days over two terms, the school may notify the parent/caregiver and request a conversation about how best to support wellbeing and attendance.

**Attendance Policy and Communications**

Once a term, parents and caregivers are reported to about their child's attendance for the year so far.

Reporting to the Board: The "Everyday Matters" report is made available to the board each term, and twice a term, an attendance update is noted in the principal's report to the board.

Leadership team: Intervention actions are decided upon receipt of Hero notifications. Intervention actions are initiated to support chronic absence if required. Clear attendance expectations are made for students, where appropriate, involved in school-level interventions.

Attendance policy: Parents and caregivers have ongoing access to the school-wide attendance policies on School Docs. They're invited to provide feedback about these policies as part of the Board review process.

Parent/caregiver communications: Information about school wide expectations, procedures, data and reminders about attendance is frequently communicated to parents and caregivers through:

- The school newsletter
- Learning Conversations
- This attendance management plan is posted on our website.

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| • Knowing if your child is well enough to go to school, information is provided to all whānau. |

| **FIGURE A: Attendance Code and Explanations** | |
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| **Present codes** | **Explanation** |
| Present (P) | The student is present in class |
| Late to class (L) | The student has arrived at school after 9:05 am and is in class. A student arriving after 10.00am will be marked absent for the morning. |
| Board approved off-site learning (Q) | The student is off-site on board-approved activities:<br><br>School-organised trips, including camps<br><br>Tutoring when a specialist tutor has been gained for diagnosed barriers to learning (e.g. a SPELD diagnosis). Prior permission from the principal must be sought, and the diagnosis must be from a reputable nationwide source.<br><br>Activities organised through MOE support<br><br>Nature Connect - with prior approval from the principal.<br><br>*When students do not return from school activities, parents should inform the school of the reason why, or a T code will be used.* |
| Approved external appointment (D) | The student is off-site at a short-term appointment, such as:<br><br>Medical appointment - e.g. doctor, dentist, physiotherapist<br><br>Appointment with a social worker, counsellor, or psychologist<br><br>Meeting with government agencies or court proceedings<br><br>Principal-approved learning specialists<br><br>*When students do not return from appointments, parents should inform the school of the reason why, or a T code will be used.* |
| **Justified absence codes** | **Explanation** |
| Explained and approved (J) | Explained family emergencies<br><br>Bereavement<br><br>Extreme weather conditions/road closures<br><br>Competing in non-school events at a regional or national level (not board-approved) requires prior leave to be sought from the principal.<br><br>Important cultural events, such as citizenship ceremonies, require prior leave to be sought from the principal. |

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| | *The school determines the duration for which the J code is used. After a period of time at the principal's discretion, the J code may be replaced by an E.* |
| Illness/medical absence (M) | Short illness, injury, or medical event; the student is unable to self-regulate or co-regulate. |
| Exam leave (X) | Sitting an exam that cannot be arranged out of school hours (e.g. ballet or music exams) |
| Stood down or suspended (U) | The student is absent due to a formal stand-down or suspension. |
| **Unjustified absence codes** | **Explanation** |
| Truant (T) | The parent or caregiver supplies no reason, or "xx is not at school today".<br>The student arrived at school after 10am. |
| Explained but not approved (E) | An explanation has been provided for the student's absence, but it does not meet the school's attendance policy. Examples include:<br>Personal grooming<br>Visiting family or friends<br>Student is avoidably tired - e.g. after holidays, late nights<br>The student is avoiding school-arranged events such as sports days or special days<br>Birthday celebrations<br>The parent is sick<br>Parent is working away from home<br>Persistent and unaddressed school refusal<br>Attending private coaching, lessons or outside of school activities (e.g dance or swimming lessons) |
| Holiday during term time (G) | The student is on holiday - domestically or internationally. |
| Unknown(?) | The temporary code is used when a student's absence is unexplained - replaced by the appropriate code or T after attempts by the school to reach the parent/caregiver have failed. |