



Introduction

1. Students are required to attend school whenever it is open, and the Middleton Grange School Board recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure students attend the school whenever it is open (Education and Training Act 2020).
2. Because Middleton Grange School is a State Integrated School, the Board requires that our Special Character Policy guides all aspects of this policy.

Rationale

Regular attendance is one of the most reliable predictors of academic success. School attendance is vital to learning success for several reasons, including consistent learning, teacher interaction, classroom participation, and spiritual, social and emotional development. This policy sets out the Guidelines for recording and reporting attendance and outlines how the school management will respond to concerns regarding a student's attendance.

Definitions

1. **Regular Attendance:** fewer than 5 days of absence in a term, i.e. over 90% attendance.
2. **Irregular Absence:** Up to 10 days' absence in a term, i.e. more than 80% and up to 90% attendance.
3. **Moderate Absence:** Up to 15 days' absence in a term, i.e. more than 70% and up to 80% attendance.
4. **Chronic Absence:** 15 days or more of absence in a term, i.e. 70% attendance or less.
5. **STAR: Stepped Attendance Response.** This sets out the expectations for the school, students, parents, the Ministry of Education, and other agencies regarding student absences. The attendance management plan has aligned its procedures to the STAR expectations.

Guidelines

1. The school will implement an attendance management plan in accordance with regulations and have this in place by Term 1, 2026. The attendance management plan details school procedures for staff to follow.
2. Under the Education and Training Act 2020:
 - a. Except as provided in the Act, a student is required to attend school whenever it is open.
 - b. The principal must ensure that an accurate attendance record is kept for each student enrolled at the school.
 - c. The Board must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend school when it is open.
 - d. Parents/Caregivers must ensure the student attends school whenever it is open.
 - e. Under Section 45, if satisfied that a student's absence is justified, the principal of the school may exempt the student from attending the school for a period of no more than five school days.

3. Attendance Rules (Ministry of Education)
 - a. **Rule 1:** The principal must ensure that attendance records are kept for each student enrolled at the school (either by half-day or period) for each half-day that the school is open for instruction. The principal must ensure that the school has an absence notification process so that absences can be notified by and to the school promptly.
 - b. **Rule 2:** The principal must use a Ministry-approved Electronic Attendance Register unless exempt.
 - c. **Rule 3:** The principal must use Ministry-approved attendance codes, including a default attendance code, to mark a student's absence for each half-day or period that the student is absent without explanation.

4. Government target for Regular attendance
 - a. Regular attendance is when a student attends school for at least 90% of each school term. The government's target is that by 2030, 80% of students will be present for 90% of the term.
 - b. Middleton Grange School aims to have 82% of students attending 90% of the time by 2028.

5. The school community (parents, students and staff) will be provided with clear pathways to identify and address absences. The importance of attendance will be communicated to all parents and students from time to time.

6. Attendance recording: The school will code attendance and absences in accordance with the Ministry of Education approved Codes.

7. Courses, work experience, and visits outside school premises (Education and Training Act 2020 section 53)
 - a. A board may authorise students to undertake courses of education, gain work experience, or make visits outside the school premises.
 - b. Once authorisation is given, the student must be treated as attending the school while undertaking the course, gaining the experience, or making the visit.
 - c. The following activities have been approved by the Board as "Approved offsite learning" and will be coded as **Q**.
 - i. School-organised trips, for example, camps, competitions, and day trips.
 - ii. Cultural, academic or sporting activities, for example, noho marae, cultural performances, kapa haka, community events, inter-school events and sports tournaments.
 - iii. Visits and orientation activities, for example, transition visits to another school.
 - iv. Other learning experiences, for example, work experience, civic engagement, cultural practices, IEP (e.g. gifted students), commitments and obligations.
 - v. Emergency situations where the school is temporarily closed, and students are learning from home.
 - vi. Learning Support Students studying from home for selected periods
 - vii. University Open Days and workplace information days.
 - viii. School organised external tutoring or music lessons.

- ix. Overseas learning experiences, for example, the Chinese Summer Cultural Camp
- x. Canterbury Regional or New Zealand selection in a Representative Team for cultural, academic or sporting activities.
- xi. Driver's Licence Test if part of their qualification credits.

Ministry of Education Resources

- Attendance management Plans: <https://www.education.govt.nz/education-professionals/schools-year-0-13/attendance-and-enrolment/attendance-management-plans>
- Stepped Attendance Response STAR: <https://www.education.govt.nz/education-professionals/schools-year-0-13/attendance/stepped-attendance-response-star>

MIDDLETON GRANGE SCHOOL BOARD	
Board copy of the Policy to be signed by the Presiding Member	
Name	
Position	Board Presiding Member
Signed on behalf and with the authority of the Board	Original signed by Board Presiding Member
Date	Dec 2025
Next Annual Review	Nov 2026