# SHC Attendance Management Plan

Purpose and Context

At Sacred Heart College, regular school attendance is essential for student achievement, wellbeing, and belonging within our Catholic school community.

This Attendance Management Plan reflects our commitment to fostering excellent attendance through collaboration between students, families, and staff. It has regard to the Ministry of Education's Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) framework, which schools are expected to use when developing and implementing Attendance Management Plans from Term 1, 2026. Students are required to attend school whenever the school is open (Education and Training Act, s 36), with some exceptions.

This plan sets out how the College promotes regular attendance, monitors attendance patterns, and responds in a timely, supportive, and graduated manner when attendance concerns arise.

Ministry of Education STAR

Below is the **STAR (Stepped Attendance Response)** model as outlined by the Ministry of Education (Version 2: July 2025) showing attendance thresholds and corresponding categories. This is the version we will use to help guide attendance responses.
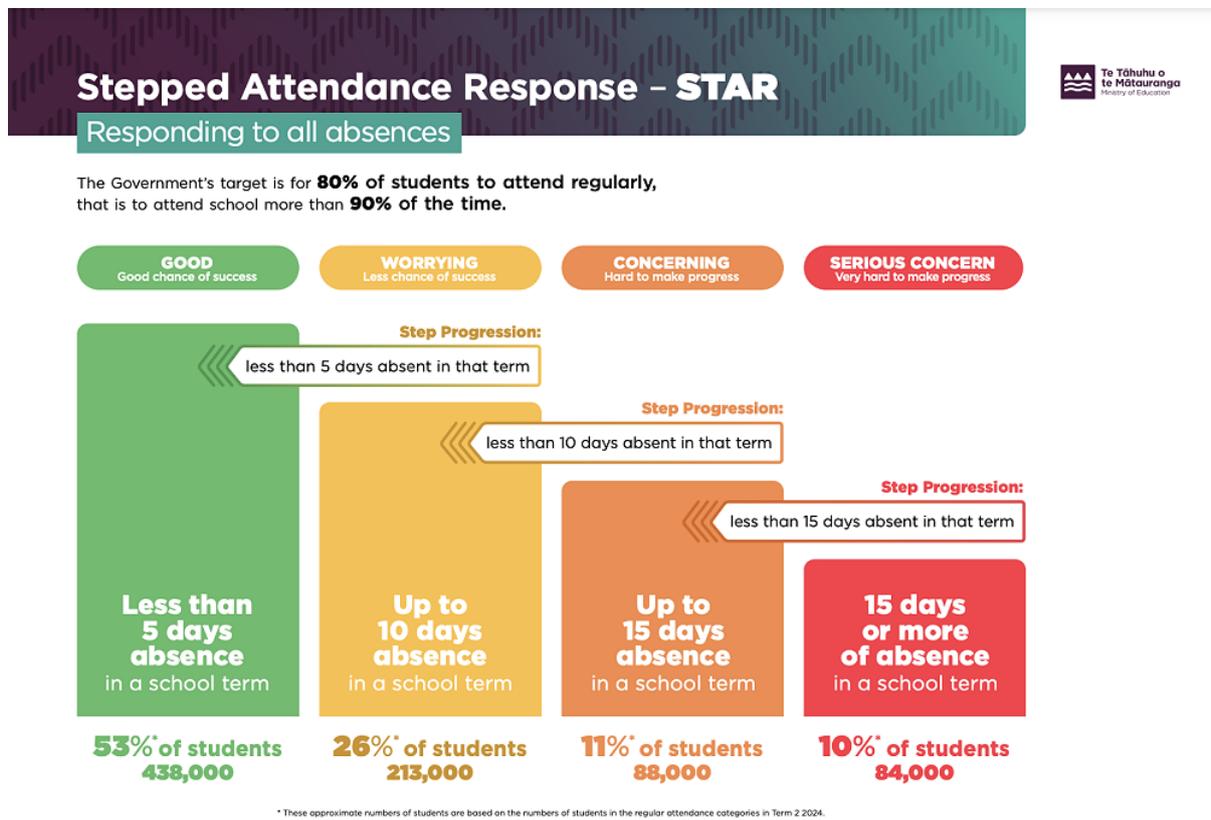
STAR Visual Summary

- **Good Attendance:** Less than 5 days absence in a term
- **Worrying Attendance:** Up to 10 days absence in a term
- **Concerning Attendance:** Up to 15 days absence in a term
- **Very Concerning Attendance:** 15 days or more absence in a term
  — This reflects the Government's target that **80% of students attend school more than 90% of the time**.

Responding to Attendance Concerns

Good Attendance (Less than 5 days absence per term):

- Reinforcement of positive attendance.

Worrying Attendance (Up to 10 days absence per term):

- Contact with family to understand reasons for absence.
- Early engagement and support from Deans.

Concerning Attendance (Up to 15 days absence per term):

- Formal meeting with school and family; co-develop support strategies.

Very Concerning Attendance (15+ days absence per term):

- Escalated multi-agency response
- Targeted plans to address barriers
- Possible referral to Attendance Services

Attendance Expectations

- Students are expected to maintain an attendance average of **90% or higher**.
- All students should attend school whenever it is open, unless there is a **justified reason** for absence.
- Parents/Caregivers must notify the school of their son's absence **daily**.
- All staff actively reinforce attendance expectations in teaching and pastoral routines.

How to Notify Absences

- Parent Portal - SchoolBridge App (for daily absence, lateness, and exit pass requests).
  - Refer to the following Ministry of Education guidelines for definitions of justified and unjustified absence: Attendance Code Decision Tree.

Daily Procedures

- Absences must be reported by **9am** each school day.
- The school will send a **text notification** by **10.30am** for any unexplained absence; families should reply with a reason to ensure accurate coding.
- If no explanation is received, the absence is coded as **Truant by the Attendance Administrator** and followed up by the school.

Attendance is monitored daily using student management systems and reviewed regularly by:

- Teachers
- Attendance Administrator
- Year Level Deans
- Weekly attendance summaries are communicated to families

Appointments During the Day

- Exit/Leave Passes must be requested via the Parent Portal – SchoolBridge App.
- Students leaving during the day must sign out with the Attendance Administrator and have a printed pass.
- Leaving school grounds without permission will prompt contact with caregivers.

Late Arrivals

- Students arriving after the start bell (8.40am) must sign in with the Attendance Administrator before attending class.
- Parents/Caregivers should notify the school and provide a reason for lateness.

Unwell During the Day

- Students who feel unwell should visit the Health Centre.
- Nurses assess and, if necessary, contact home for collection.
- Students should not leave school grounds without following the proper process.

Holiday and Extended Leave

- Term-time holidays are not approved except in special circumstances.
- Requests for exceptional leave must be made four weeks in advance to the Headmaster's Executive Assistant.
- All schoolwork set during approved leave must be completed.
- Applications for extended lea e can be found on the parent portal.

Medical Certificates

- Required for three or more consecutive days of absence due to illness.
- Email certificates to absences@sacredheart.school.nz.

Monitoring and the STAR Framework

Sacred Heart College uses the Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) to identify when intervention is needed, based on absence thresholds:

- Attendance data is monitored daily by teachers and the Attendance Administrator.
- Year Level Deans oversee ongoing tracking and communication with families.
- Weekly attendance summaries are shared with parents/caregivers.
- When absence thresholds are reached, targeted support or intervention is applied in line with STAR guidance.

This aligns with Ministry expectations that attendance plans set out escalating responses at defined absence thresholds.

Shared Responsibility

Attendance is a partnership:

- Students engage fully in learning and school life.
- Parents/Caregivers support regular attendance and communication.
- School staff provide follow-up, support and pastoral care.

Escalation and External Support

Where attendance does not improve:
- Individual Attendance Management Plans are implemented
- External agencies may be engaged
- Multi-agency responses are coordinated in line with Ministry guidance
- All responses are documented and reviewed.

Legislative and Strategic Alignment

This plan aligns with:
- Education and Training Act 2020
- Ministry of Education Attendance and Engagement Strategy
- Ministry of Education **Stepped Attendance Response (STAR)** framework (Updated 2025)

The School Board has responsibility to ensure that **all reasonable steps are taken to support student attendance whenever the school is open**.

This plan is reviewed annually. Attendance data and trends are reported to the Board to support governance oversight and continuous improvement.

APPENDIX – STEPPED ATTENDANCE RESPONSE

Stepped Attendance Response – STAR

Responding to all absences

The Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) sets expectations for school, student, parent/guardian, Ministry of Education and broader system responses to student absence.

It provides a series of activities that should be considered when students meet absence thresholds. The actions taken will be tailored to the reasons for absence, for example a student with a chronic illness will require tailored supports for their education.

The activities include considering prosecution for absences if appropriate support is offered and not taken up.

Day-to-day operations

Schools:

- Assess attendance history of new students and share attendance history when students move between schools.
- Survey students and parents to support effective teaching practice and engagement
- School Leadership and Boards actively minimise disruptions to the school day and week e.g. use callback days, parent teacher meetings held after school
- Support students to continue learning if unable to attend school every day, including using Ministry approved well-being or transitional plans, or health schools where appropriate.

Ministry of Education:

- Convene termly meetings for leaders from local schools and relevant agencies to discuss students with serious attendance concerns where a multi-agency response is required
- Prepares templated materials for schools to adapt and use to promote or respond to attendance
- Provide attendance data reports for individual schools and Kāhui Ako
- Provide schools with a regularly updated list of agencies that schools can work with to support students
- Contract supports and services that are effective at returning students to regular attendance (e.g. Attendance Service)

Less than 5 days absence in a school term

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Ensure student attends every day they are able
- Reinforce good attendance habits
- Support other parents to reinforce good attendance habits
- Open communication with school
- Follow school attendance management plan and associated policies and processes

SCHOOLS

- Clear communication to parents on attendance expectations on enrolment, at the start of school year, and each term
- Communicate to parents what steps the school will take in the event their child is absent from school
- Communicate good attendance habits to students and parents
- Monitor attendance
- Communicate to parents about every absence
- Maintain contact details of parents
- Provide students with regular updates on their own attendance
- Report regularly to parents on attendance of their child
- Support students getting to school
- Use school level approaches to promote good social and learning environment

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

- Monitor that schools have their attendance policy and attendance management plan on website and it is reviewed as required
- Monitor aggregate data and attendance patterns to identify challenges and opportunities at regional and national levels
- Maintain regular contact with schools and support policy development and interventions/supports
- Support schools to be inclusive and safe

53% of students, 438,000

Up to 10 days absence in a school term

Plus previous responses +

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Return student to regular attendance
- Contact school to discuss reasons for absence
- Support student to catch up on missed learning
- Engage in supports offered

SCHOOLS

- Send formal notification and contact parent/guardian to discuss reasons for absence
- Support students to catch up missed learning where required
- Use in-school resources as appropriate to remove barriers e.g. counsellor, 2nd hand uniform shop, PB4L

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

- Support school with formal notification where required

26% of students, 213,000

APPENDIX – STEPPED ATTENDANCE RESPONSE

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Stepped Attendance Response – STAR
Responding to all absences

Up to 15 days absence
in a school term

PARENTS/GUARDIANS
- Return student to regular attendance
- Attend meeting at the school to analyse reasons for absence and to collaborate on a support plan
- Implement strategies at home

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

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
- Identify schools with a significant proportion of students at amber level and offer additional support
- Facilitate multi-agency response and support school to implement and monitor improvement plan
- Promote resources and services to support schools to return students to regular attendance
- Identify and respond to localised barriers
- Monitor regional interventions
- Facilitate involvement of other agencies.
- Reprioritise regional support resources to where most needed/effective
- Develop new initiatives/policies if needed
- Support parent/guardian and school to resolve conflict if needed

11% of students. 88,000

15 days or more absence
in a school term

Plus previous responses

PARENTS/GUARDIANS
- Return student to regular attendance
- Engage in improvement plan
- Participate in regular meetings

SCHOOLS
- Send warning notice and make contact to arrange meeting with parents
- Escalate to multi-agency response
- Participate in multi-agency response
- Implement and monitor improvement plan
- Undertake school-led prosecution, or request Ministry-led prosecution, when considered appropriate if supports are offered and not taken up.
- Unenrol students who will not be returning to school

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
- Identify schools with a significant proportion of students at red level and offer additional support
- Facilitate multi-agency response and support school to implement and monitor improvement plan
- Provide direct support to parents where required
- Coordinate regional response where required
- Consider system-wide initiatives for high-risk attendance
- Undertake Ministry-led prosecution when considered appropriate if supports are offered and not taken up, when requested by schools
- Work with the Attendance Service to re-enrol students who are not enrolled

10% of students. 84,000