



Stepped Attendance Response (STAR) – Strategy for St Matthew’s Collegiate School - 2026

Below are the targets for attendance for 2026. This document outlines the strategy for our school.

The Government’s target is for **80% of students to attend regularly**, that is to attend school more than 90% of the time



Attendance Strategies

Less than 5 days absence in a school term	Up to 10 days absence in a school term	Up to 15 days absence in a school term	15 days or more of absence in a school term
Parents/Guardians	Parents/Guardians	Parents/Guardians	Parents/Guardians
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage daily attendance and good habits for their future • Communicate with the school if daughter is absent via the app or phone call • Follow the school's Special Leave process for events not covered by illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return daughter to regular attendance • Contact with school to discuss reasons for absence and impact non learning • Support daughter in catching up on missed work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return daughter to regular attendance • Participate in meeting with Dean/SLT to discuss a support plan for a return to regular attendance • Implement strategies at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return daughter to regular attendance • Participate in regular meetings with Dean/SLT, and outside agencies • Make the support plan a priority
St Matthew's Collegiate	St Matthew's Collegiate	St Matthew's Collegiate	St Matthew's Collegiate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor daily attendance and contact parents where necessary (ADMIN) • Keep up-to-date records of parent contacts (ADMIN) • Regular reporting to parents on attendance through the EGR (SLT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor KAMAR alerts and contact parents to discuss reasons and impact on learning (Dean) • Liaise with teachers to provide work and support for missed learning • Refer student to in-school resources such as counsellor for support • Inform SLT of actions (Dean) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor KAMAR alerts (Dean/SLT) • Contact parents to escalate concerns (Dean) • Hold meeting to analyse reasons for absence and to collaborate on a support plan (Dean SLT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor KAMAR alerts (Dean/SLT) • Contact parents to inform them of escalated response • Hold meeting to discuss next steps which may involve outside agencies. • Undertake school-led prosecution where appropriate (where support is offered but not taken up) • Unenroll if student will not be returning to school
Role of the Ministry of Education			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with chronically absent and non-enrolled students and their families to identify and address barriers • Collaborate with schools to provide support 			

Implementation of STAR

1. KGI inform parents of STAR at the beginning of the 2026 school year.
2. Students are informed of their attendance in their Whanau class on a regular basis. Whanau time dedicated at the beginning of the year to explain STAR to students.
3. Attendance to be reported to parents via the Effort Grade Report (first report published at the end of Term One). This information will go out with the portal letter at the beginning of the year to explain the reporting system and how attendance information will fit into this.
4. Deans to manage alerts of KAMAR and follow the strategy on the table. Deans to have a conversation with the student (Y9-13) to help identify attendance issues. This can be used before letters are sent (maybe in the case of older students) or in conjunction with a plan when meeting with parents. When attendance matters escalate Deans/SLT to use the letter templates below. Meetings to be arranged in partnership with SLT.

Script for Interview with Student/Parent Meeting

1. Explain to the student their current attendance and where this sits on the Ministry guidelines. Discuss trends and reasons that have been recorded for absence. This will help identify the problem and if there are any common features.
2. What are the things at school that make it harder for the student to attend?
 - Social/peer challenges/staff relationships
 - Biased disciplinary practices
 - Lack of academic support
 - Feeling safe at school
3. What are the things outside of school that make it harder to the student to attend?
 - Transport
 - Family situation
 - Lack of medical/mental health support
4. What is the goal for improved attendance? Discuss with the student a realistic improvement target.

5. What does the student need to do? Identify any steps that the student needs to take e.g. letting teachers know of absence and providing work. Reiterate that the student will be supported in their steps to improve. At this point it may need the intervention of the school counsellor for extra support around external factors (home life).
6. What do my family need to do? Discuss this with the student and communicate their ideas with their whanau. This step will most likely take place in a face-to-face meeting with the family if attendance doesn't improve. Otherwise at the early stages it could be a phone call.
7. What does the school need to do? Identify what support the school will ensure to achieve the goal. It could come in the form of:
 - Referrals to other agencies or in-school
 - Timetable considerations
 - Spaces to go if feeling overwhelmed
8. Review date – establish a timeline for review
9. Plan to be written up and signed to strengthen the accountability of everyone to play their part.

Letter One: Worrying Attendance – Up to 10 days absence in a school term

Dear (Parent's Name/s)

I am writing to let you know that we are worried about (name) attendance this term. So far (name) has been absent for (days/%) this term which means her attendance rate is currently below 80%.

We value regular attendance to help students feel connected and have success at school.

I am happy to meet to discuss how we can support (name) to improve her attendance in the future.

Kind regards
(Dean)

Letter Two: Concerning Attendance – Up to 15 days absent from school from school in a term

Dear (parent's name/s)

I am writing to let you know that (name) attendance is a concern for us. At this stage (name) has been absent for (days/%) this term. This is well below that Ministry of Education expectations of 80%. This has not improved as much as we would have liked after our last contact.

We know that regular attendance helps students feel connected, confident and successful learners. We would like to work with you to find solutions to support (name) to be at school more consistently.

I would like to arrange a meeting with you to discuss this. Please contact me with times that would suit you best.

Kind regards

Alison Glass

Assistant Principal

Senior Manager in Charge of Attendance

Letter Three: Very Concerning Attendance – 15 days or more of absence from school in a term

Dear (parent/s name)

I am writing to inform you that (name) attendance is now of great concern to us. At this point (name) has had (days/%) absent from school. As you know, this is well below the expectation of the Ministry of Education of 80% attendance.

This letter is to inform you of your legal obligation to ensure that (name) attends school whenever it is open and request that (name) returns to regular school attendance immediately.

School staff have engaged with you on a regular basis on these occasions:

(list)

We have also engaged the support of (external agency) but this has not resulted in the improvement of (name) attendance.

Section 26 of the Education and Training Act requires a student to attend a registered school at which they are enrolled whenever it is open, while section 244 provides that a parent of that student commits an offence if they do not attend as required by section 36.

If there are insufficient improvements by (date), the board will consider the next appropriate steps available, which may include a referral to the Ministry of Education to consider prosecution for irregular attendance under section 244 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

Please contact me as soon as possible to discuss a way forward for (name) at St Matthew's Collegiate School.

Kind regards

Alison Glass

Assistant Principal

Senior Manager in Charge of Attendance