



Kia ora e te whānau o Te Kura Tuarua o Te Oko Horoi,
Good afternoon Parents / Caregivers,

As we settle into the year, I want to take a moment to update you on an important area of focus for all schools across New Zealand — student attendance rates. Ensuring that every student is present, engaged, and supported is essential to their learning, progress, and overall wellbeing. Regular attendance helps students build strong relationships, stay connected to their learning, and experience success across all areas of school life. This letter today is to outline what we are doing to support improving attendance rates at CHS and what communication you can expect throughout the year to support regular attendance.

National Expectations for Attendance

The Ministry of Education requires all students aged 6 to 16 to attend school every day unless there is a justified reason for their absence. Accurate attendance recording is a legal requirement for schools, and all attendance information is uploaded directly to the Ministry each day.

Attendance Categories

| ATTENDANCE CATEGORY | STUDENT WITH | EQUIVALENT |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Regular attendance* | Over 90% attendance | Absent for fewer than 5 days across a term |
| Irregular absence | More than 80% and up to 90% attendance | Absent for between 5 and 9 days across a term |
| Moderate absence | More than 70% and up to 80% attendance | Absent for between 10 and 14 days across a term |
| Chronic absence | 70% attendance or less | Absent for 15 days or more across a term |

**Note: The Government has set a target of 80% of students to be present for more than 90% per cent of the term by 2030.*



Our School's Approach

At Cambridge High School, supporting strong attendance is a shared responsibility among students, whaanau, teachers, Form Teachers, Deans, and our Senior Leadership Team. We are strengthening our processes this year to ensure early identification of concerns and strong support for students.

Communication with Home

To keep you informed we are sharing information with you about your child's attendance throughout the year. This includes:

- Weekly emails home summarising attendance and academic achievement (including live reporting for seniors) for the week.
- Letters home when students move between the attendance categories. This message is automatically generated as the student attendance percentage changes on our system. It is a proactive measure to ensure clear communication and early support. Please note that the attendance categories are for student absence and this includes both justified and unjustified absence.
- School Bridge provides up to date information on student attendance so please download the app to see a full attendance record.

Key areas that we get questions over are:

- When is sick too sick for school? We have attached a pdf as a guide to know when it is best to keep your child at home. If the absence extends beyond three days, a medical certificate may be required.
- Appointments during the day? We get that sometimes it is not possible to get an appointment outside of school hours. In these cases, you may use the School Bridge app to provide permission for your child to leave school during the day. Please note, we expect students to return to school if that is at all possible. For instance, an appointment during period 3 is still likely to provide sufficient time to return to school for the remainder of the day. If the student does not return to school their absence will be recorded as unjustified.
- Approved leave? We have some discretion about how we code leave requests, but this is limited. By law the principal can only use this discretion for up to a maximum of five days.



- Justified or unjustified absence? Both count as absence. With justified absence the school will support the learning where possible, working with home to assist with assessment and resources during the period of absence. When the leave is unjustified, the onus falls on the student and family to arrange for this and any catchup that is required. There is no expectation for the school to make accommodation for assessment and other significant events.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your student's Form Teacher, Dean, or our Attendance Administrator.

Kia pai oo raa whakataa,
Have a great weekend.

Greg Thornton

Principal
Cambridge High School