

Absences

Student Absences from School - Procedure

Please email your child's absence to the School Office (office@waimauku.school.nz) prior to 9am if your child is unwell or will not be at school. Alternatively you can telephone the school answer phone service on 411 8222 to leave a message indicating your child's absence. In the interests of student safety our Office Staff will phone parents or alternatively request support from School Attendance Services (SASH), to assist with any unexplained absence. **Lateness** – Students who arrive at school after 8.55am must report to the School Office.

Leaving the School Ground – Students who need to leave school early (for any reason) must report to the School Office and be signed out of school on the Vistab system by a parent or caregiver. If the student returns later in the day they need to be signed back in.

Long Term Absences – Please apply in writing by letter or email (office@waimauku.school.nz) if requesting leave for an extended period.

Attendance at School

Research has found that regular attendance at school is fundamental to student learning. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve educational success, and thus increase their life options. The law says that every child who is enrolled at a registered New Zealand school must attend each day the school is open. The Ministry of Education requires the school to have systems in place to monitor attendance and regularly requests information regarding attendance patterns from schools. The majority of parents / caregivers are aware of these factors and work very hard to get their children to school every day and on time.

Absences

Waimauku School has a system in place for you to report and explain your child's absence. You can do any of the following:

- telephone and speak to a staff member or leave a voice message
- email the office
- write a note

The ability to leave messages means that parents can notify us of absences at any time, night or day. Therefore:

- Whenever possible, parents / caregivers are encouraged to advise the school of an impending absence ahead of time
- When this is not possible, then parents / caregivers will be asked to inform the school as soon as possible after the event
- Child Safety – If a child is absent but the school has not been notified, staff will immediately attempt to contact the parent / caregiver. If this is not successful, the Attendance Service may be sent to the home.

When an absence is noted, the school is required by the Ministry of Education to classify it into various categories.

- If no explanation / report has been given to us by parents / caregivers, then the absence will be classified as Truant
- If an absence is reported to us, and the explanation for that absence is satisfactory, then it will be classified as Explained and Justified
- If an absence is reported to us, but the explanation for that absence is not satisfactory, then it will be classified as Explained but Unjustified

We have listed some examples of justified and unjustified absences for you.

Guidelines – Justified Absences

'Justified' absences occur when the explanation for a student's absence is considered by the school to be a reasonable, acceptable and defensible reason for the student to be missing out on schooling.

Examples are:

- Cultural or sporting representation (regional or national)
- Overseas Students returning to home country with parents
- Bereavement – Tangi
- Force majeure – road closure, flooding, bus breakdown, car accident
- Exceptional family circumstances – the discretion of the school / principal may be required
- Illness (hospitalisation) – details may be confidential. This will be respected by the school
- Sickness
- Medical or dental appointment – for ½ day unless appointment is out of town
- Health appointment, other than medical/dental
- Exam leave – Ballet/music (etc) exam – ½ day absence will be classified as 'Justified', more than ½ day as 'Unjustified'
- Incident at school e.g. bullying – provided follow up is happening at school
- Internal school activities, appointments, school trips – sporting or cultural, camp (these will count as present)

Guidelines - Unjustified Absences 'Unjustified' absences occur when an absence is either unexplained or the explanation given is not considered by the school to be a reasonable, acceptable and defensible reason for the student to be missing out on schooling.

- No explanation – truanting
- Lateness – due to family or child sleeping in / left home late / waiting for siblings
- Not wanting to participate in school activities, e.g. cross country, dance performances
- White baiting, deer hunting, attending Field Days
- Lambing season, working in family business
- Family holiday in New Zealand
- Family holiday overseas
- Taking family to the airport
- Recovering from weekend's activities / shopping / birthday
- Cat / dog run over, taking animal to the vet
- Babysitting siblings
- Mother sick – child doing household duties
- Waiting at home for service people to call
- Staying away from home (caregivers may be away) with no means of transport to school
- Moving house, packing, unpacking
- Travelling and attending sporting events and concerts
- Ballet/music/medical appointments – 'Unjustified' if absence is for more than ½ a day

Please note: These guidelines do not preclude the Principal from using discretion over a specific student absence.

Follow-Up to Absences

Because attendance at school is vital for student learning, and compulsory by law, the school is required to follow-up when students are persistently absent without justification. We will be proactive in contacting parents / caregivers.

A family's attitude to attendance is fundamental to the progress of their children at school. We look forward to working together with you on this important matter.