

School Attendance and Support Services (Years 1 to 8)

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1. Yrs 1 to 8 - Why do children have to go to school_

Hi, I'm Megan and I'm a parent of a young child and I'll be asking some of our experts questions today about school attendance. Kia ora, my name is also Megan and I'm a parent of three tamariki at Tikumanawa-Rowley School. Kia ora, I'm Graeme Norman, I'm the Tumuaki of Tikumanawa-Rowley School in the heart of Hoonhe. Kia ora, I'm Adam Tukac, the co-leader of Tupuranga Attendance Service based out of Purupuru-Fetu in collaboration with Odyssey House and Stepping Stone Trust. Kia ora, I'm Maa Kera, I work for Purupuru-Fetu Trust in Tupuranga alongside Adam. Thanks for those introductions. I had never heard of some of those organizations before.

I wonder if you could tell us a little bit more about what your roles are in the community. Tupuranga Attendance Service is a holistic wraparound support service for children and family who are experiencing chronic absence. Chronic absence is 70 percent and below. The reality though is that number is far less than 70 percent. We pride ourselves on the fact that the number is far less than 70 percent. We pride ourselves on the fact that the number is far less than 70 percent. We pride ourselves on being positive and strength-based

and we have a team of kaimahi that go into the community and work with families that schools have identified as being in the chronic absence space.

Do you want to add to that? I think we also come from a mana-enhancing way and really making sure that whānau are aware around attendance, what that looks like and how it affects, you know, things that are going on in their whānau, how that affects their Tumaiti's attendance at school. So experts on the couch, you know, we've got a lot of experts on the couch. We've got a lot of experts on the couch. We've got a lot of experts on the couch. There's a number of reasons. One of them is that it's legislated and it is the law, so you have to go to school. But the main reason is that the benefit for the children in getting an education that is going to help them to get into a job or be a productive member of society as they grow up.

When they don't get that education later on in life, they find it a harder, a struggle to integrate into things that they want to do. You know, a good example of a boy that I dealt with over a number of years ago when I first started teaching, he wanted to be a lawyer, but decided at high school he didn't want to attend anymore, didn't attend, and now he's in prison. He just then couldn't have the, didn't have the facilities to go on, but he could have done it. Very bright kid, could have done it, but by not being at school, he then struggled. So the ripple effects. Yeah. One, you just start not going, and then it suddenly starts rippling into the rest of your life.

Yep. Yeah, good point. One of our big messages to answer that question too is that school is the epicenter for social, physical, and emotional wellness for students. School is the best bang for the buck for everything you get for a growing mind, a growing human, a growing brain, and all those things can't be replicated outside of the school environment. School can take a number of forms, right? For us, mainstream school, Rowley, that's always the first option. Number one, because you can address all of those things, and your child gets all of those pieces that help them to become productive members of society.

And as you mentioned as well, life outcomes are far greater when you go to school. It's that simple, right? The research shows that if you go to school, chances of positive life outcomes, and that means a wide variety of things, those are far more positive. Yeah. And having that sense of connection, connection to your community, connection to your peers, and you know, it takes a village for our Tumaiti. Yeah. To raise them, and you'll learn, you know, you're getting the best from everybody in that area. So it's fair to say attendance matters. Hugely, yes. 100% it matters. Yeah. It's a very important attendance and regular attendance for the fact that if you miss parts of the week, you miss parts of the learning, and then you've got to try and catch that up.

So put it in the sense of, say, a maths program, and you're learning about fractions, for example, at the beginning of the week, if you have missed the understanding around half, quarter, whole, and then you're there for the end of the week, and the lesson's now stepped into adding fractions, but you don't understand the first part, it makes it hard to catch up, and then it gets harder and harder to catch up, and then the children start to become disengaged because they're struggling to catch up. And as much as we can, we understand that children are sick within a school setting, and things happen.

So we try and catch them up, but when it's regular, and it's every week or every fortnight, it's very difficult to catch that child up. Sickness, we can catch that up easy, but the other things where it's constant, it's very hard, and all of a sudden you find that they're two years behind where they should be.

2. Yrs 1 to 8 - Why missing a day at primary school matters!

Following up on that, some people I've spoken to have the opinion that they're not learning anything that important in primary school. It's okay, it's later on in high school you have to worry about attendance, but what would you have to say to those parents? I'll start with that one because you get the basics in primary. You learn how to read, write and mathematics. That's where you learn to access the curriculum. So you get to high school, you can't do it. It's like me going to be a doctor without having done any pre-courses and then going, I'll just go straight into medical school. I can't do that.

I've got to have, and that's why you go to university, do your first year pre-med and if you pass that, you go on. So you've got to go and do the pre-part, the primary part where you learn the skill. Absolutely. I would second that and say that the primary part, those younger years that sometimes get overlooked and people say, oh, a day here and there doesn't matter. Those are the most important things. So I would say, oh, a day here and there doesn't matter. Those are the most important things. So I would second that and say that the primary part, those foundational times for a child to be in school, because it sets the basis for everything.

And it's not only the learning, it's those so-so emotional soft skills as well, right? Like how do you interact with kids? How do you interact with a teacher? How do you interact with all these folks in this space where it's dynamic and fluid? And that's what you learn at a young age. And if you miss out on that young, and then you go into intermediate or secondary school, you don't have those basics. And then that social piece is that much bigger and you're maybe not in a situation where you can handle it as well because you don't have that background and those foundational skills. So the numbers, if you look at regular attendance, 90%, 90% sounds good, right?

A, 90% on a test, an A, but 90% attendance leads to an entire month of school miss per year. That's massive. So if you think about what Graham was saying in the beginning and all those little things you're going to miss day-to-day in class, and it's frequent, that's when you start seeing the issues. And that's when you start seeing the gaps in learning. And that's really hard to come back from. And that sets you up for, you know, you can't do that when you're working. You can't take a month of work for no reason. Yeah. Or every Friday. And I think sometimes it goes back to, you know, educating parents around attendance from that primary age when they are, you know, initially starting school, how important attendance actually is in school.

Because if you start missing bits and pieces here, there, and everywhere, then it's like by the time they get to intermediate or high school, it becomes a pattern. You know, that pattern is just following them through, right through, and it'll probably follow them through to their job. So I think it's, you know, it goes back as well to educating parents. I think a key word here was foundation. And the building we're in now, the foundation is done, and you see, you don't see that, but the building doesn't stand up without it. And it's the primary school that gives you the foundation to do high school, go on to be the doctor or plumber or whatever you want to go on to be.

But without that foundation, the part you don't see. And I think that's the thing that with primary school, because it's the foundation, people think, oh, it's not important. It's not important. But this building, without the foundation, yeah. Thanks for answering that so well. I think Christchurch is a good example where pre-earthquake, the foundation wasn't a good example of what we did. And now we realise we need to make sure the foundation's proper.

3. Yrs 1 to 8 - Not taking holidays in term time

With regards to holiday, can I take my child out of school to attend a holiday? No, is the short answer. You can't. Legally, you can't. They are. But also, just what we've been covering around the foundational skills, they lose two weeks, for example, of a term. That's a big portion of that learning that they've learned. So when they come back in, they might have a good suntan, but then they've lost that base skill that they need there. And again, taking back to that infractions example, you lose two weeks of that, that's a lot to catch up. So if a parent has to tell a school, they're just not here, we're on holiday, how might that transpire?

What would happen? Sure. So that would be an unjustified absence, right? Okay. And that leads into the consequence you talked about. So if you have enough unjustified absences. And a pattern starts emerging, and it gets below a certain percentage, then the school, Graham and his team can decide to refer them to our service. So that's one of the outputs. But again, it's down to that every day matters. And every time we have a call-out, go on vacation, or holiday for two weeks, three weeks, that's such a large amount of time to miss consecutively. And there's so much learning and social-emotional growth happening during that time that is really detrimental to the kids.

So yes, they might be in Australia, having fun on the roller coasters. And there is something to be learned there. For sure. But it's not the same as school. And it can't replicate what the child is missing within the school in all of those different contexts. Yeah. So as a parent that would take the kid out, say, am I kidding myself thinking they're getting exposed to other learning? Or is that just, yeah? No, no, no, no. That's a good question. Yeah. Yeah. But why during school time, why not in the holiday? Does it make a difference? Right. The holidays, what's the purpose of a holiday? You don't go to your school.

You don't go to your boss and go, look, I've had my four weeks off. Now I'm going to take another week holiday at this point. The only reason people do it is because generally it's cheaper. So don't take them out of school, but we need to put pressure on the airlines and those organizations to stop hiking the prices up. And then it's, so we've got to look at it in a different way to make things change. It's that community messaging. Absolutely. And we've sat down with a lot of community partners. And if everybody's on the same page with messaging around attendance, then yeah, it's not that economic benefit of taking them out because of this.

So that, does that answer your question kind of in a nutshell? It's like, yes, like come to school. We get it. But at the same time, everybody needs to be singing the same message about, you know, attendance across the board. And then we can start seeing hopefully some equality in that space to make it more affordable for people to go during the holidays. So whose job is it to tell a parent? No. Educate them on that. Or is it just the given like, okay, have fun? Or is there a bit of pressure put on parents when they come to you for that? It's a conversation that generally the senior leadership team of the school will have, or the principal, DP, SENCO, someone like that might have, just to make the parents aware of the consequences of their decision to take the child out and that they might be missing out on quite a lot.

You know, we've got Matariki coming up. If they were going through that period, they're going to miss out on the Matariki celebration and possibly at the end where we have the big hangi and the celebration, they miss out on all that social and emotional that we've been talking about, things that come with all those things. It's not just the sitting in the classroom. It's learning new ball skills, game skills, social skills. We've just finished having life education. If you've missed that, then all the kids are talking about life education. You've missed that. So you might have been in Australia.

But 90% of your class are talking about life education and Harold, and you're on the outskirts. It's that shared experience. And it goes back to that well-being side of it as well, that you'll see if they do miss a large amount of attendance at school and all of their friends are at this level, then it's like when they re-engage, it's that sense of isolation because I don't know. It's that anxiety of, you know, I'm dumb. I don't know what I'm doing. So I think it's a lot of that well-being side of it as well. Again, education. Education to the parents if they are thinking about it, reminding them that although it's fun, but that this is the long-term effects that it's going to have on your child and it's already hard enough being a kid, that this is another added pressure on them going on holiday.

Good thing I can't afford to take my kids on holiday.

4. Yrs 1 to 8 - My child is unwell – when should they go to school_

So we spoke about holidaying, no no. How about the reason of my child, I feel my child is too unwell to go to school. How do I as a parent know what is unwell, too unwell, well enough? I think I should be looking for some guidelines from my school but where do I find those? How do I go about it? At the moment there are guidelines that are being issued by the Ministry of Education. So on the Ministry of Education site you go into the parent portal and you can follow the guidelines. I'm not a doctor so I can't make those calls but I think as a parent you do know I've got three of my own children, four grandchildren, two of them at school and you know my oldest son used to spend a bit of time having a sore tummy but it wasn't he just had the anxiety around going to school.

So unfortunately both his parents are in education so he got pushed into it but it helped him push through that anxiety and their social emotions. And he built that resilience up. So as a parent you tend to know if they are sick yes you do need to keep them at home and for ourselves we need to do that but if you're making excuses and going they are sick that's different when you know sometimes that upset tummy is anxiety and it would be better for them. You're building them up, you're helping them, your child become more resilient. When you play into it, when you get to high school level, that becomes harder and harder because we know what teenagers are like and so if we can stop that at the primary level and get them into that rhythm and routine and build up the resilience then it is.

There are sickness and it's been difficult with the COVID at the moment and being told that we had to stay at home for five days and we understand that but you know when your kid's right and not. So it's plain that sometimes there can be. It might be that you need to get going and see a doctor. Get proper medical advice at that point. Yeah I think a big thing too is if your child is sick communicate that with the school and let the school know. So each school's got a dedicated number for attendance. Call them, let them know and then they can mark you accordingly. They can say it is a justified absence so it's not going to count against you over the course of the year.

So that's that's a real key piece that we get frequently. Just communicate with school if your kid is sick. That kid if your child's sick multiple days too let the school know they might have some resources they can point you in the right direction. Just important help. Notifying school early. Don't leave it too late so that you have the office admin ring you. Yeah. Yes. And most schools have like numbers you can text you don't have to physically phone people or the office admin to let them know that your child's not going to be. And if it isn't ongoing there are things that we can do then to help.

So we have links to the public health nurse and at school we regularly meet once a month with them. So if it isn't ongoing issue we can then put you in touch with the health public health nurse that can then help support you as well. So if it is just again it's that talking to the school and then we can help support.

5. Yrs 1 to 8 - When you call in to say your child won't be attending what happens with the information

Adam, you were mentioning that it's important to communicate to the school each morning if you're legitimately sick. I, as a parent, am fascinated because they said a few years ago, last year, you must give a specific reason. I kind of wanted to know what is done with that information. Do they send it off every day? Does the school have to report on it? Or are they just trying to put us parents in line? What happens with that info? Sure. So when you call in sick or not, your child is marked accordingly. So if you're sick, your child may be marked as a justified absence. If you just don't call at all, and there's no reason why the school might mark you as an unjustified absence.

And over time, the school will look at those patterns, right? So in our case, if a child has missed 30% plus of school, the school has the right then to refer them to our service. Okay. Right? So it stays with the school, that information. It stays with the school. They're not sending it off every day. Yes. They're collecting the data to figure out if there's a problem or not. Yes. Yes. But though, now there's the new government reporting mechanism, which is weekly, I believe, for schools. So schools are sharing attendance data, weekly, and that's not specific kids. That's the school as a whole that does that.

So kind of as a community, you can get an understanding of like what attendance levels are at respective schools in your areas. I think it's important for parents to know that the reasons why things get done so that we can comply with it and not just go, oh, they're just, you know. Yeah. No, it's definitely not needless data collection. It's very important because it just shows patterns and it shows where support is needed. And then if you need to get outside individuals to come in and help like ourselves, then we can do that. Right. Right. Right. Right. Right. Right. Right. Right. Right.

Right. Right. Right. Right. That's how we get the community funding for more help for stuff like this. So it's important to log that correctly. Just communicate, communicate, communicate. Yeah. It helps us sometimes. We had a tummy bug going about two weeks ago going through the school. So we knew the absences were going to be quite high because tummy bugs tend to go through fast. So we know on the Monday there's a few going around. We know it's going to catch up. Oh, yeah. So we can strip our programs back slightly for the week to adjust because one day we had about 30% of the school away because of the tummy bug.

Yeah. And with the tummy bug, you can stay away for 48 hours until after your last bout of sickness. Yes. So we can adjust our programs and adjust things slightly to account for that. That's enough. So it is beneficial. Yeah. And when that communication's there too, it just helps the school stay ahead of things and stay on top of things and maybe reassess what's going to be happening in the school that week if a third of the school is going to be absent possibly. So, yeah. Okay.

6. Yrs 1 to 8 - Anxiety and other reasons why a child can't get to school – talking to the School

Okay. So onto some more trickier topics, more sensitive topics. Some kids we know have got challenges or disorders and they have legitimate reasons for not going. Like, for example, if there's no public transport for them to get to school and no parent to drop them off, how can they get to school? I can talk around what we do at Tikumana, but it's a matter of talking to your school and that we have a school van that will go out and pick children up. So we're picking up upwards of between 10 and 20 children at the moment today. There's one boy that we've got at the moment. He was used to going to his old school in a van.

And so now it's easier for us to pick him up, even though he lives just around the corner. But it makes it easier for everybody. We've just started picking up another couple of boys that were struggling and they jumped in. I went into the van this morning and they were just smiling. They think it's great fun because sometimes I pick them up or someone else picks them up. And it's just a fun way of getting them. So talk to the school. There are ways that they can work. And we use, I've actually got a van that picks up and a couple of teacher aides that on their way in pick kids up as well. So there are avenues around that can use to support.

Yeah. And I think too, making sure if your school is aware, whether there's like a Facebook, a Facebook group that your parents are on so you can pop a Facebook message just to let them know that, hey, you know, you might be struggling to get your child to school. Can someone support? You might have people that live in your community that also go to the same school. So definitely reach out on whether it's social media, your school newsletter, anything like that, just to take some of that pressure off. And yeah, definitely recommend talking to school. And this is another one too, where attendance is a community issue.

So if people don't know that your child needs to arrive to school, right. Talk to the neighbors. Talk to the school. Let people know and people will pull together and support in that space. So lots of schools have walking buses. The kids can join in with them. And there are a couple of parents that will help there. So again, just put that information out and there will be someone that can help. Yeah. We're, we're lucky to that within the city. Um, I would say most schools for most kids are walkable, bikeable, scootable in most instances, right? Some of the further areas in Selwyn in North Canterbury that we cover, um, if it's too far out, buses will run within space of those places.

So, but just talk to schools, talk to the community and there's, there's always going to be an option and answer with transport. On a related note, um, you spoke about the tummy bug example. Uh, what if a child is having severe anxiety and that's a big one, cause that's not a, just suck it up kind of conversation. Cause you want to try and support your child. What's a way to deal with that or to encourage them to go to school? And is that a valid reason not to go to school? Again, you need to talk to the school and we do have a number of children with anxiety. Um, but when they come and talk to the school, we've set up things to help the children.

So example on Monday mornings, we have a Lego club where they go and do Lego therapy, have some breakfast with one of the teacher aides. And it's our children that we know that on Monday mornings, first day back at school struggle. And there's about 10 kids in this little club. And they love coming to school. Now they want to be there on Monday morning. So we've set something up to make that happen. My office quite often has 10, 15 kids in it. Um, and it's kids that do have that anxiety. They have a safe zone. Most schools have a safe, safe zone. And Te Kūmāna a Rāui, the safe zone is my office where I work with my DP.

So there's two of us in there working, but they will set things up. So talk again, talk to your school and come up with a plan. Yeah. And as a parent, you're the expert. So come in and tell them what your child likes and what is the part that helps them. Yeah. And then we can try and put those things in place. We're with anxiety too. It's we, we see this very, very commonly. And I don't think keeping a child

at home helps necessarily. And you're also looking at diagnosed anxiety versus like perception of anxiety. Right. And being anxious is, is part of life and growing up, especially in the intermediate and the secondary years.

So it's okay to feel anxious. Mm-hmm. And, and to have those feelings, but it's like, what do you do with it? Right. And there are gonna be the very few cases that would actually like medically need to stay home for anxiety. So I think to build resilience in kids is key in, in supporting them to go to school is gonna be the best way forward. And it's probably gonna be difficult a little bit of time to get them through the door, but once you do, and they do build that resilience and that anxiety slowly ebbs because they realize they can do it, that's really empowering. And that's, that's powerful for the family and for the child.

Yeah. And I think it goes back as well, like talking to school to see what other resources they have, available to them. There's obviously mana aki, for example, they can do support with the individual and as well as the, the farmer. So if mom's struggling to get her child to school or understand what anxiety is, these resources that can go home, um, to the family as well, to support when the child's feeling anxious, just to encourage them to attend school. But yeah, definitely work alongside the school, um, for anything like that. Yeah. Um, one more on this too, with anxiety for parents to know, and I think this is really crucial.

We've kind of been on a campaign the past couple of weeks, um, to get people, outside of our services to refer children to outside agencies for help and support. So you have mana aki, which is in school outside of school. You have mano karere, which is a really easy, fast online referral that anybody can do. Graham could do it as a principal. You could do it as a parent. We can do it as a attendance service. 13 to 24. Yep. 13 to 24. Um, there's this space available because that's a big thing. Yeah, right now is that parents are struggling with the wait times and there's no help available. And mana aki, I think had unlimited spots and it's, is that a resource that is, yes, um, we, we, we just got done with, uh, great, uh, pastoral care conference on Friday and they, they have space right now, um, which is awesome.

Another one, um, if there is not space is to Tahi youth and to Tahi youth has dropping clinics on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, uh, in town and then on Mondays at the auto new center, and you can drop in with your child from 2 30 to 4 30, Monday to Wednesday, or 10 to 12 30 on Friday, and you can see a mental health nurse on the spot and just get at least a bit of an understanding of what's going on and then get in the wait list for possible mentorship. Okay. Okay. Okay. Those kind of things are out there for parents to use. Um, and it's, it'd be awesome to see more people refer to them just cause they can really, really help get back in school and keep those, those attendance numbers going forward.

Again, communicating with the school helps because with the mana aki, yes, there is a wait list. But sometimes if we've got a group of parents, then we can go to mana aki and go, we've got a group. And so then there's a group referral that can go through that they can work with, and then that will get it a lot faster than you as a parent, trying to wait for the services. So we can do things to help support, but it's that communicating with the school and then we can help. The other thing that just really needs to reinforce is that if a child does have that anxiety and you keep them at home, that builds and it goes back to what we're talking, then they then are worried about what if I go, I'm not going to know about that thing in maths or reading or writing.

So it builds that anxiety and will my friends want to talk to me because they haven't seen me for three days now. So it builds that anxiety. So the regular attendance can help stop that. And there are things to support that we can put in place to make sure an anxious child can get there. So following on with the anxiety, is there any resources out there to tell parents what is also normal? My child is seven and she's sort of showing more signs of anxiety at the moment. And I don't know if that's because of specific things or if that's quite a normal thing for a seven year old. A seven year old girl, a seven year old.

I just, how do we find support with that? Sure. Um, there, there's a great answer for that and it's the, uh, listening to families anxiety video that was just recently done so you can find that on the listening to families homepage. They also have videos as well regarding mana aki and manu karere. So definitely refer to the videos. There are a lot of good resources out there. So it is just use those. Yeah. And the same goes at the school is also really good to talk to. Yeah. Yeah. Definitely. And right. Okay. So perhaps schools could be advertising that for those parents that aren't aware to ask for help necessarily, or aren't comfortable coming in.

Absolutely. Yeah.

7. Yrs 1 to 8 – What if the child is being bullied – talking to the school

similar to the anxiety question if a child refuses to go to school because they're getting bullied whether it's verbal or maybe even it's physical bullying do we still just have to force our kids to go to school or are there ways that we can get supported with that definitely ways you can get supported and again it's come and talk to the school because if we don't know we can't put things in place to help so if we know what's going on we can put supports in place again at we have a large number of teacher aides within the school we call them learning support assistant but if we know that there's an issue going on in a class that might be Megan's daughter's having some anxiety and so she's feeling a bit bullied at the moment we can put extra support in that class to ensure that she's got the support that

she needs just by having an extra adult wandering but there are things that schools can do to help that there are services that we can refer to there are services that we can refer to there are services that we can refer to there are links to videos and that we can go to as well to help but there are lots of things we can do but it's that conversation again that becomes really important so just like the theme has been come up with a plan communicate um but at all above all else try and keep your attendance don't let that be a reason yeah yeah get onto it early yeah so the child is coming home saying i'm getting bullied in the class sometimes it's not bullying it's um sometimes it's just um behavior that's coming through all behavior tells you something so it might be that they are anxious but they are actually using the word bully so when you're talking to the school they could be then going okay well we can investigate a bit further or get mana aki we have social workers in schools we might just do a quick referral to them and then they can come and go now we think it's more a bit more anxiety but they're using the word bully yeah kids are very smart too and they know that and it's an emotive word so if i come home and go to mum i'm getting bullied yeah i'm all in my back it's a lot of anxiety yeah yeah um then builds up yeah so yeah sometimes we have to be aware when we're using the word bullying yeah it's one that's just thrown around sometimes and it's not always the case okay yeah and and i think too for parents because sometimes you just don't know what to do right your child comes home they're in distress you're you've got work to worry about you got to cook dinner all these things so you had mentioned make a plan communicate i like to think sometimes just communicate to the school first and then they can help you make a plan and we've worked with a lot of schools where the perception was bullying and the school came back and they've made a safety plan to re-integrate the child back into the classroom and that's a conversation between the school and the child and the teacher that's directly accountable for that child and so just just communicate and talk and that's going to be best and people are willing to help you make those plans if you can't make that plan on your own that's okay

8. Yrs 1 to 8 - What if parental anxiety is effecting a child's attendance__

I wanted to know, so when it comes to attendance, does a half day count as attending? So if they go to school but they have to leave every day at 12 because they're not coping, does that get marked as not attended or does that still count as they're trying their best? It depends on the situation. So if it is a child that's got high anxiety and diagnosed and we've got all the information and we're running a plan, they would be marked as justified in the afternoon because it's sticking to the plan and it's growing the plan. If it is the other scenario that was brought up that it's just your hunches that they've got anxiety, so you're making the choice to do that, then it would be an unjustified or truant absent.

So that reinforces the plan with the school, stick to the plan, reintroduce. Attendance is though marked in half days. So yeah, that's a thing to know as well. Thank you. If the non-attendance for a student is coming from the parent's anxiety, how do you deal with that? So in our caseload, we have a lot of cases and some of them are that. And so if that is the case, well-being is number one before education, right? It's going to be really difficult to get the child back in school if the parent's well-being is not handled first. So in our holistic wraparound support service, we try to put things in place that can support the parent to get to a better situation.

So if the non-attendance for a student is coming from the parent's anxiety, we want to give them space to then support their child in going to school. So that's how we work. Schools, you guys might have a different answer for that. We want to work with the families. And quite often, we find that when we work with the families and then the children start coming to school, they are enjoying school. And then when they're going home, Mum and Dad then start to feel bitter because their little child's coming home and is going, oh, I'm loving school. And so it helps relieve their anxiety. Society. So putting in a plan to support the parent is important, and it might be a number of different things you can do.

To start with, it might be they just want to sit in the class for half a day with the child just to make sure everything's OK. And quite often when you talk to the parents, it's come from their own bad experience at school, and getting them then to understand that school's different from when we were at school, and it's quite a different place and space now. So getting them to understand that and allowing them to come in and see it for themselves usually helps. Absolutely. It's really connecting them with school for the whānau to really have that connection with people and the environment itself to them.

I feel at ease that their child is going to be enjoying school and safe and having heaps of fun, and it's not back to their experience when they were younger and what they experienced. Sometimes. Sometimes we can pair them up with another parent that then can go around and have a cup of tea or something with them and then help talk them through things. Sometimes it's not the school that's the best person. It could be someone in the community that could be that person that could be the champion for them. I guess like you say about Matariki, having the hangi, having opportunities for parents to come in for reasons that aren't just school-focused.

See all that cool stuff happening at school. Intrinsically. I don't think anybody wants their kid to miss school. Everybody wants to see their child coming home, beaming, having a good day. And when you see that, that can allay a lot of concerns by itself and just make the home space better in general.

9. Yrs 1 to 8 – Getting routines in place – its so important

okay so if i'm a parent and my child just flat out refuses suggests or um says that they just don't want to go to school today what can i do to encourage them to go i think routine is key having you know a routine from when they come home from school what does that night look like you know are they going to bed early enough are they having a nice dinner you know i think it's just making sure that there is a routine in place for your child so that you know if we've got this routine it's normal i'm kind of in sync to get up and go to school i think routine is key um we see it a lot in mana ake when we're supporting whānau when their kids don't want to go to school and they just don't know why but if we create a routine with them alongside them to be like oh we're going to have dinner here bed here you know if they're having social media time it's limited um so i think that is you know it sets it up for a good week you start it from sunday definitely is it's a good point yeah um just following on from that how long would you expect that sort of routine to need to be in place to see results do parents often pull out too early or i just think it's a continual like it's a continuum i don't think you even not you don't that's just your schedule that's your kind of roster that's how you operate um i do that with my child and you know he goes to school every day loves school but we have a routine so when i pick him up or his dad picks him up from school this is what we do and this is our norm so it becomes i think you you will see results after i would hope a week or two weeks but it is hard at the start definitely it is hard but i think after the weeks go by it does become very easy and it just becomes your life really i feel like you could even turn it around in two nights even sometimes like after holidays you sometimes lose yourself and you stay up later and we you know we don't have bedtime and and i think once you get it back on track i see results if they are doing what they're told they go to school there's definitely and it may change you know when you have like winter sports and you've got a lot of trainings and stuff does change but you can adapt it but if you try and keep your schedule or your routine to kind of match then it will just yeah in time you'll get your child will get used to it and it just becomes yeah even with winter sports it becomes that natural routine anyway on thursday at five o'clock we come home you have your shower now because you're dirty and then we have dinner instead of have dinner then have your shower so it can change just because of the route what's happening but then that becomes what i'm doing yeah i think another big piece too in the routine is is social media in screen time in general and the research that coming is coming out is is damning to say the least right and so with with the routine you've really got to question how much of that routine is dedicated to screen time and social media and then you mentioned sleep as well and those biorhythms getting thrown off by looking at screens right up until bedtime right and so i think one of the best things we can do for kids is just get them in a good sleep pattern number one and we've seen with a lot of our kids sleep is an issue once we're able to get them back on that good biorhythm of normal night sleep you have these massive changes these really really positive changes so that's a really good question to ask you know your own family like how much of this are we willing to invest in that social media time and is it worth it in the long term

10. Yrs 1 to 8 – Screen time – another routine

It's just what I'm hearing. It's so much pressure on parents, isn't it? Which is, but there's just so many parents that aren't able to do that. It's terrifying, but that's when you guys wrap around for the parents. We can, but I think too though, it's back to that community, it's a community issue. And so, as a community, it's like we need to be looking at screen time as a whole, not just these isolated cases of like... Yeah, just in general, that routine. And I mean, you know, if you look at like schools all across Aotearoa, schools have banned phones, that is going to be a positive move in the very near future.

Like you're at least protecting kids' time away from screens during that time. And so, it's like, how do we get the messaging out that as a whole, this needs to happen? As opposed to saying, right, yeah, you family, you're doing too much screen time, because that doesn't work. That's deficit-based. That's like pointing the finger and it's not going to yield positive results. We were having an off-screen conversation earlier about how this is like a generational thing. You've got to break the cycle because your parents might be, you know, staying up late and they don't know what to do. They're partying, having their friends over at 10 while you're trying to sleep for school.

And that's setting you up for failure. And then you as a kid grow up to do the same thing, and it's going to affect your jobs and your success in life. And you've almost got to be the one that breaks the cycle, don't you? And that's kind of something that you said that really got through to me earlier. I think that it all comes down to routine and setting our kids up for success. Yeah, and I think because we see it a lot in some of our cases, you know, they come through to us and it's like massive generational trauma. Their own experience with their parents. So it does really require that full wraparound support for their whānau because, you know, you're protecting your child.

You know, go to school, get an education, do well. You've got the skill set and ability to do it. Believe in yourself. So I think a lot of it is what we do see is around that. Some of it is generational, whether it's, you know, trauma from culture, trauma from their own experience with school. There's a range of different things. But, yeah, sometimes it can be quite challenging. And when it comes to that routine, be creative. Like I know when I started with my son, it was a sticker chart. Like it's just using little things that they're interested in. And, okay, yeah, there might have been a little reward at the end of it.

But it's just get creative and fun for your child. Like I think a lot of us, when we work and become busy, we don't necessarily spend that one-on-one time with our child. Be on the ground. Do funny things. Do silly things. Color. Like just really embrace the child because I feel like this day, our kids are growing up way too fast. They're not getting to experience the childhood that maybe we got to experience when we were younger with social media and, you know, everything that's going around currently. So I think it's just really embracing them where they're at and how old they are just, yeah, is key.

That routine piece too is so interesting because kids on the face, value of it, you're like, oh, they don't need routine. They're kids. But routine is key because routine is safety. And kids want to feel safe. So if you have that safe routine at home, that safe routine falls into school as well. And it's just going to lead to like a really strong school record in general. It's not just kids though. It's adults that have routine. We all love routine and we love to know. I've got to get up at 6 o'clock to go to work and do that. And then if that routine is coming in, some of those parents that might have a bit of anxiety, once that routine sets in for them, it alleviates some of that.

And so those routines are really good for everybody, not just the children. On the reward thing, the best reward you can give your children is time. That one-on-one time. I took all my children on a road trip, each boy individually on a road trip, one-on-one time as they were going into their teenage years. It was the best thing I ever did as a parent. And it cost me a little bit of time going for a little bit of a road trip, camping out, staying out and doing things. It's that one-on-one. Mm. Just how can I find five minutes one-on-one with Johnny or Fred? And it might be just as part of the routine that when you put them to bed, you have five minutes to read a story or tell them a story, give them some of their whakapapa.

Do something that just gives them that little bit of one-on-one time. And it only has to be five minutes. It doesn't have to be long. Yeah.

11. Yrs 1 to 8 - How do I get help as a parent_

So with regards to your services, at what point can a child seek your help? Like, are we looking if, say, I feel that my child is at the beginning of maybe wanting to stay home more? Is that something you guys can help me for, or how do I go about getting help for that? Sure. Tupuranga Attendance Service only takes referrals from schools directly. So if a school identifies that a child's attendance pattern is below 70%, they can refer that child to our service as an unjustified absence case. It takes about 10 business days to get from the school into our books, and then we triage according to needs and according to Kaimahi availability. We have 6.8 team members with hundreds of cases right now. So that's where we are with that. The other route schools can take is if the child is non-enrolled from the school, then the school will put through a non-enrollment submission, and then we'll end up with our non-enrollment team as well. So 70%, that's actually, that's higher than I thought. You don't have to wait until it's a dire situation.

12. Yrs 1 to 8 - Key messages

Well, thank you so much for your time today. I think we've all learned a lot. It's a really helpful video We want to do key takeaways to end with so I wanted to go around and ask each of you What's the main point you want to get across? For me the main thing I learned today that I didn't know and a key takeaway was that Telling the school whenever my child is sick because they're unwell. You're actually doing something with that data. It's really important data It's actually informing the ministry that there's an underlying issue and that we need help So it's really important to do. Can we go around and Capture your key takeaways.

My key takeaway would be to communicate with the school early and just make sure you're talking with either the principal the deputy principal of the SENCO at the school to get the supports and help that's needed around attendance My key takeaway is that attendance is a community issue. It's it's everyone's responsibility As a global society Attendance is downward trending but we have a chance to stop it and to push it back into the positive That's gonna have really profound positive societal outcomes Key takeaway for me is going to school every day matters for social connection education being in the community Is yeah key But also want to you know acknowledge the videos that we've that have previously been shared Um that cover a lot of the tips and tricks around anxiety supports that are out there for whānau to access So just yeah See those videos.

Thank you. And I love your comments around routine as well. So As a parent Megan, did you have any? Yeah, I think you've all highlighted everything I was thinking. It's all been really good takeaway information I think some of it's been reassuring as well knowing that perhaps I am doing some things, right? also realizing how I guess I didn't realize how Important every day that my children do have good attendance. That said sometimes I have been like Okay, maybe a day at home is what you need and I still think trust your instincts and you've got to go on that for your own child, but actually It is really important to get them there And I think what you're saying once they're there and if you can communicate to the school They might need a little bit more athi or a little bit of this today.

Then that sets them up for a Better week or big day and carrying it on. So it's been amazing. Thank you