



**Safer Mid Canterbury**  
**Hakatere Haumarū**  
Together we're safer • Me uru kahikatea

## Job Description

- Position:** Pou Whirinaki – Attendance Specialist
- Team:** Attendance Service / Child & Youth Services Team
- Location:** The premises of Safer Mid Canterbury
- Hours of Work:** Full time 40 hours per week
- Date Issued:** October 2024
- Reports to:** Child & Youth Services Team Leader
- Purpose:** To provide the specified attendance service across Central Canterbury. This area covers all of the Ashburton District and the Geraldine catchment of Geraldine High School, Geraldine Primary School and Woodbury School.

### Safer Mid Canterbury

#### Mission Statement:

To reduce and prevent crime in the community and its impact on the Ashburton District.

“Together We’re Safer”

#### *Strategic Goals of Safer Mid Canterbury*

- A Safer, Stronger Community
- Strong and Healthy Families
- Working Together
- Positive Pathways for Young People

## Background

Attendance and engagement in school has been declining since 2015 and was further impacted by COVID. This decline in school attendance has been experienced by every ethnicity, decile, year level and region. The declines are slightly larger among younger students and lower deciles, with the largest decline seen across primary and intermediate schools (Years 1-8) and ākonga Māori and Pacific learners. Alongside parents, schools are responsible for ensuring all students attend school every day it is open for instruction. However rising absences, particularly moderate and chronic absence, continue to put pressure on the system's capacity to respond to improve attendance.

The Ministry of Education Attendance and Engagement Strategy sets out expectations of ākonga and whānau, schools, kura, communities and government agencies in addressing this complex problem. The introduction of this role nationally is intended to support schools, kura and learning communities to turn around irregular and moderate (from 90 to 70% attendance) absence rates by providing direct support to address attendance patterns before they become frequent, persistent and entrenched.

## Purpose of the Role

The purpose of this role is to support schools to turn around irregular and moderate absence patterns before they become entrenched and persistent. The Pou Whirinaki – Attendance Specialist role will work across schools and communities to improve the attendance of students who are irregularly and moderately absent. They provide support for schools and communities to analyse and identify patterns of attendance, to develop consistent processes and effective practice, and develop and lead actions and initiatives to increase engagement more fully in the education system, thereby reducing the number of students falling into chronically absent patterns of attendance.

Working with key stakeholders including parent communities, the Attendance Service (tasked with supporting chronically absent and non-enrolled students) and existing attendance and engagement governance groups, the role contributes to and complements attendance responses within the community. It also supports the use of data and information to inform system improvements and connections between students, whānau and school and recognises the need to consider ākonga Māori in the context of their whānau, hapū and iwi. The role establishes effective and sustainable shifts to reduce barriers to attendance and support improved attendance.

The role is specifically focussed on universal and targeted attendance responses that address irregular, moderate and declining absence patterns of students in Years 1-12 across schools and communities. This is not a case management role of individual students. It is an across-the-community role, either targeted or general, in partnership with individual or multiple schools. The person in this role will carry out a number of small and large actions and initiatives, some innovative, some tried and trusted, targeted and general that will help engage students and whānau with their schools to increase attendance.

## Role Functions

The Pou Whirinaki – Attendance Specialist role will work with a broad range of stakeholders, supporting them to identify, examine, and respond to irregular and moderate school absence. The core functions of the role are set out in the table below, but the delivery of these functions will be flexible to ensure alignment with local attendance and engagement priorities and actions, and what makes sense in each community.

This is a role that will allow the employee to build relationships across community, develop effective initiatives, establish an all-of-community action plan, and lead, in partnership with schools and community, those actions. It provides the employee with the scope to be innovative, to ‘put their stamp on it’, and the opportunity to make a real and significant difference across our community.

Functions	In practice this may include:
<p>Identify irregular and moderate absence within the community and attendance related actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>working across the school community to identify irregular and moderate absence data, trends and patterns</i></li> <li>• <i>working with whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori and Pacific community leaders to better understand the drivers of absence for their ākongā</i></li> <li>• <i>working with parent communities to understand their experiences, recognising the importance of identity, language and culture</i></li> <li>• <i>supporting schools and school communities to analyse and understand irregular and moderate absence data and information</i></li> <li>• <i>utilising data and information to identify where attitudes, behaviours, systems and processes affect engagement and attendance.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Provide information to communities and schools on effective options to turn irregular and moderate absence around</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>identifying actions and responses that increase attendance and sharing practices across the community</i></li> <li>• <i>promoting attendance practices that are culturally sustaining, mana enhancing, and build inclusiveness</i></li> <li>• <i>supporting a range of responses that effect change, particularly for ākongā Māori and their whānau and Pacific learners and their ‘aiga</i></li> <li>• <i>targeting responses in line with identified populations in our district and the circumstances that create barriers to attendance.</i></li> </ul>

Functions	In practice this may include:
<p>Work in partnership with our district's schools to develop responses to increase regular attendance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>developing, reviewing and updating a district-wide attendance action plan incorporating initiatives that have already been identified; this is a key aspect of the role</i></li> <li>• <i>leading action plan initiatives, in partnership with individual or multiple schools</i></li> <li>• <i>leading action plan initiatives (either general in nature or to a targeted group or area) in partnership with the community</i></li> <li>• <i>reviewing outcomes of actions in partnership with respective school/s or community</i></li> <li>• <i>reviewing action plan annually, in partnership with schools, reporting on completed actions and setting timeframes for future actions to be completed.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Support communities and schools to put effective processes and systems in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>supporting the implementation of effective process and system improvements across the schools and community</i></li> <li>• <i>supporting conditions that promote collaborative understanding and decision making.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Establish and sustain effective connections with iwi, schools, community leaders and parent communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>supporting connectedness and trust across the community with sustainable and effective ways of working</i></li> <li>• <i>supporting enduring changes and improvements</i></li> <li>• <i>understanding and responding to emerging patterns, building on responsive processes within the community</i></li> <li>• <i>building and maintaining working relations with other Pou Whirinaki – Attendance Specialists across the region</i></li> <li>• <i>building and maintaining relationships with other agencies, organisations and government departments that have a stake in supporting students and whānau.</i></li> </ul>

# Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Pou Whirinaki – Attendance Specialists should:

- know their local community, iwi and schools
- have a deep understanding of the importance of regular school attendance for children and young people
- have an understanding of Māori rights and interests, a clear understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the rights and obligations established by Te Tiriti
- have a strong understanding of the drivers of irregular and moderate absence and leading practice approaches and initiatives to support engagement and attendance
- be skilled at working collaboratively with others to deliver shared objectives
- be confident in analysing and using data to provide insights and support decision making
- have strong interpersonal and communication skills including the ability to support and/or influence a wide range of stakeholders
- have an ability to build trusting relationships and partnerships to achieve shared outcomes
- have a full driver licence.

## General Functions

### **Comply with reporting, accountability and health and safety requirements**

#### *Outcomes*

- Contracts will be reported to as required. Ministry of Education (MoE) contract reports will be completed quarterly, in line with MoE reporting requirements and dates.
- Health and safety requirements will be complied with when working in and off the premises of work.
- Safer Mid Canterbury's Key Operating Policies and Procedures (KOPPs) will be complied with.
- Monthly line reports will be submitted to the team leader by due date and the team leader will arrange a meeting to discuss the line report.

### **Take part in supervision and training opportunities**

#### *Outcomes*

- The staff member will be supported in their work by their team leader, who will be available on a day-to-day basis.
- The staff member will receive professional supervision from an appropriate supervisor, as agreed upon by the staff member and team leader.
- The staff member will engage in appropriate training and professional development for the position.

**Attend relevant team and organisational meetings**

*Outcomes*

- The staff member will be a fully participating member of Safer Mid Canterbury through attending monthly team meetings and bimonthly full staff meetings.

**Be committed to Safer Mid Canterbury’s bicultural and multicultural development**

*Outcomes*

- Bicultural and multicultural development will be integrated into service responses.
- The staff member will attend required Te Tiriti o Waitangi training as well as other cultural training identified as being in line with populations being worked with.

**Maintain and keep systems and processes up to date**

*Outcomes*

- Both hard-copy filing systems and the electronic client management system will be kept up to date and easily accessible.
- Regular time will be put aside each month to ensure systems and processes continue to meet organisational demands.
- There will be regular planning each month to ensure goals and priorities for the month can be achieved.

*I have read and understood the above Job Description and accept all the above responsibilities incorporated herein.*

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Pou Whirinaki – Attendance Specialist**

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Date

Signed by: Bronnie McKenna

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Team Leader, Child & Youth Services Team**

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Date

---

CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

**Pou Whirinaki – Attendance Specialist – Central Canterbury**

---

Hours of Work:	Your ordinary hours of work will be 40 hours per week. Some flexibility will be required if/when initiatives and actions take place outside of what might be considered ordinary business hours.
Other conditions of appointment:	Other conditions of appointment shall be as prescribed in the Employment Relations Act 2000 and its amendments, other Acts which govern employment and an Individual Employment Agreement.
Place of work:	<p>The contract you work under requires you to provide services to schools in the Ashburton District and Geraldine, so you will be required to travel to those schools in the delivery of your role. Fleet vehicles are provided for travel.</p> <p>Outside of this travel, you will work based out of the Safer Mid Canterbury office in Ashburton.</p>

---