



DOWNSELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance and Children Missing from Education Policy

Reviewed: September 2022



Vision

At Downsell Primary School, our vision is to promote our core values; Respect, Responsibility and Resilience in order to develop confident, inquisitive, happy learners who:

- are inspired to have a lifelong love of learning
- have high self-esteem, high aspirations and experience success
- show good behaviour, positive relationships and make a meaningful contribution to our school, local and global community
- celebrate our diverse environment where all are equal

We will achieve this by creating an inclusive, safe and stimulating environment with high quality creative learning experiences. We value the contribution of the whole school community – children, staff, governors, parents and carers in working towards making this vision a reality.

Aims

1. To ensure every child reaches their full potential both academically and socially.
2. To ensure all individuals are given equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
3. To work as a team to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children.
4. To offer a broad, personalised, balanced and enriched curriculum which will encourage academic, aesthetic, physical, social, emotional and spiritual development.
5. To ensure collaboration and respect between all individuals.
6. To have clear communication across the school.

Statement of Intent

Downsell Primary School aims to encourage and support all pupils to achieve excellent standards of attendance and punctuality.

This is so that:

- All pupils can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in the school.
- Children are able to create and maintain good relationships with other pupils and adults within the school community, thus developing their social skills and enhancing their emotional wellbeing.
- The school is able to effectively safeguard all members of the school community.
- Pupils learn good attendance and punctuality habits which will enable them to be successful in secondary school, further education and in the workplace.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

Parents

Rights

- Parents have the right to be kept fully informed of their child's attendance/ punctuality record.
- Parents can expect support from the school if they are finding it difficult to get their child to attend regularly or be on time.

Responsibilities

- Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Parents are also responsible for contacting the school, by telephone, letter or in person, to report their child's absence and the reason for it. This should be done on the first day of absence and will need to be done for each day of absence.
- Parents must ensure that all holidays are taken during school holiday periods and not in term time.
- Parents must ensure that all contact details are kept up to date and that they have at least one further contact for safeguarding purposes.

Downsell Primary School

The school has a responsibility to:-

- Maintain clear records of attendance and punctuality and investigate any unexplained absenteeism.
- Encourage, support and reward high standards of attendance and punctuality throughout the school.
- Work closely with parents to support them with any difficulties they may have relating to attendance or punctuality.
- Refer any issues relating to attendance and punctuality that give cause for concern to the school's education welfare officer.
- Refer any unauthorised term time absences, which could include travel delays, holidays, sickness etc to the education welfare service, with a view to issuing a fixed penalty notice or implementing further action.

Key Staff

- The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher have overall responsibility for school attendance.
- The Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring, chasing and ensuring up to date information on all aspects of attendances.
- The Attendance Officer is responsible for ensuring that records are updated and correct.
- The Attendance Officer will review and monitor all attendance and punctuality. They may contact parents either by letter, telephone or appointment to follow up cases of concern or for additional information as necessary.
- The school has a designated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who is not based at the school but who visits regularly. The EWO may conduct workshops, late gates or individual sessions with the Attendance Officer and Parents / Carers to develop improved levels of attendance and punctuality. They will also deal with any cases that require supervision of Persistent Absence (<90%), as well as attend and complete any supervision of cases that require legal action at the local Magistrates Court.

Registration

Why do we register?

Registers are legal documents and schools are required to call the register twice a day.

If a child is persistently absent, or persistently late after the registers have closed, the adult with parental responsibility can be prosecuted under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. If this were to happen, the attendance register would be required in court as the main source of evidence.

Registers are also important for health and safety reasons. If the school has to evacuate the building, the attendance register enables school staff to account for everyone present that day. Registers also enable the school to safeguard the wellbeing of pupils, particularly if they travel to and from school independently.

School timings

- The school has a Breakfast Club which starts at 7.30am for parents / carers who require childcare in the mornings. Children are not allowed to be on the premises before this time. If your child attends breakfast club then they must be registered.
- School gates open at 8.40am.
- Children are able to go into class from 8.45am. The register will be taken at 8.55am
- The register will close at 9am. This is to allow for the prompt start of lesson.
- For safeguarding purposes, at 8.55am, the internal school doors to classrooms are shut and the entrances on Hall Road and Brierley Road are shut. From this time, all children must come through the main entrance on Downsell Road. Children will need to enter via the school office to be registered.
- From 9am the attendance officer will be responsible for the marking children in on the register. They will be marked as late from this point.
- Children arriving from 9 – 9.15am will be marked as late using the 'L' code in the register. These 'L' codes will be reviewed by the Attendance Officer and the EWO on a regular basis. We may ask to meet with parents / carers if there appears to be a pattern of lateness as your child will be missing a significant amount of learning time.
- If children arrive in school after 9.15am, the register will record a 'U' mark which is an unauthorised absence for the session. This will mean that although the child is in school they will miss their registration mark for that session. This will affect their overall attendance percentage.
- The register is called again after the lunchtime break: 12.55pm for Key Stage 1 and 1.15pm for Key Stage 2.
- Any child removed from school during the school day must be signed out by the office, provided with a valid reason and evidence provided. Please note that informed absences will not automatically be authorised.

First Day Calling

- In order to safeguard all children, the school will contact the parents/guardians of all pupils who are absent each day and for whom no message has been received. This practice enables us to ensure that all children are safe and that the register can be coded correctly.
- This safeguarding practice can only be effective if the school has up-to-date contact details for those with parental responsibility for each child. It is important that the school has at least two contact numbers for emergencies. Therefore, it is essential that parents/guardians ensure the school has the information it needs to carry out its role effectively.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

In every instance when a child is absent from school, the school makes a decision as to whether the absence is **authorised** or **unauthorised**. **A letter from home or a phone call explaining an absence, does not necessarily mean that it is authorised by the school.**

Each period of absence will be looked at and a decision made as to whether this will be authorised or unauthorised. When looking at the absence, we will look at the overall attendance record for the pupil. What may be authorised for one family may not be authorised for another as it will be dependent on individually circumstances and the child's overall attendance record.

Religious observance (up to 3 days in an academic year) will be authorised.

Examples of absences which the school *will not authorise* include

- Accompanying a parent/sibling/family member to a doctor or hospital appointment.
- Holidays taken in term time
- Visits to family / friends
- Trips to the airport to drop off or collect family and friends.
- Waiting in for an appointment for electricity / gas etc
- Shopping for new school shoes
- Birthday treats
- Having your hair done for a special occasion!

If your child has been absent and you have not provided us with a reason, this will automatically be recorded as 'N' code – no reason provided. You will then receive a 'N' code letter, in which you have 1 week to provide us with an explanation and evidence for your child's absence. Please note that this does not mean that the absence is authorised, this will depend on your child's overall attendance record and the circumstances.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance level falls to less than 90% for whatever reasons (this includes authorised and unauthorised absences). Absence at this level is damaging to a pupil's educational prospects and will be dealt with by intervention from the Senior Leadership team and the Educational Welfare Officer.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Downsell Primary School will instruct the Educational Welfare Service to serve fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absences under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

As from 1st September 2013, the fixed term penalties will incur a fine of £120 per child per parent / carer (reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days). Failure to pay the fine will result in court action being taken.

Taking Children off the School Roll

Extended periods of absence could result in a child's name being taken off the school roll and the place filled by a child on the school's waiting list. The school may remove names from the school roll at the direction of the school's designated Education Welfare Officer, who will have made appropriate safeguarding checks.

Leaving the Site during the School Day

Parents must inform the school in advance if they need to take their child out of school to attend an appointment, interview or educational activity at another venue.

It is expected that appointments other than emergency ones are booked outside of school time where possible.

The school does not permit pupils to leave school grounds until a parent or carer has signed them out at the school office.

Other than in an emergency, a letter or an appointment card must be presented at the office or a phone call made in order for the school to be able to authorise the absence.

The school will not authorise early collection for reasons such as:-

- Seeing someone off or collecting them from the airport
- Going on holiday early
- Going to birthday parties, weddings and other celebrations

If the child is returning from an appointment in time to take a school lunch, this must be booked before 10.30am that day. Children returning to the school must report to the office to be signed in before they return to class.

Children missing from education

The school operates in accordance with statutory guidance Children Missing Education (DfE 2016)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation, radicalisation or mental health problems. Staff will also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored, and same day checks are undertaken on the first morning of absences.

The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing repeatedly and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

Elective Home Education

Wherever possible the school will seek to have a meeting with the family and LA when there is a request for elective home education to ensure that there is a smooth transition for the pupil. Schools will notify the Local Authority when parents inform them a child is to be home educated.

Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

The Attendance Officer analyses the attendance data weekly to identify pupils falling below 96% attendance (our school target), emerging patterns of absence or lateness. Parents are kept regularly informed of any relevant attendance and punctuality concerns the school may have. As a result of this monitoring, individual cases will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. The Deputy Headteacher provides the Governing Body with a termly report on attendance and punctuality. The school provides the Local Authority with attendance data on a half-termly basis and the Department of Education on an annual basis.

3) Confidentiality

Issues surrounding attendance and punctuality can sometimes be of a sensitive or distressing nature. All school staff should maintain the highest level of confidentiality when dealing with such issues.

Parents Consultations

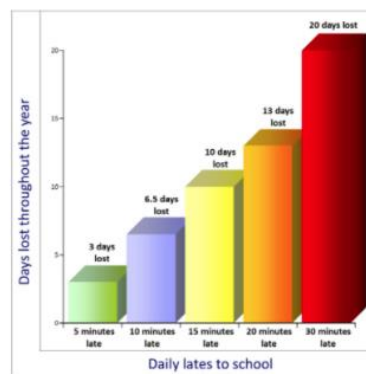
Downsell Primary School aims to encourage and support all pupils to achieve excellent standards of attendance and punctuality. We recognise it is important to report on a child's attendance and punctuality at each parents' consultation meeting. Your child's class teacher will inform you of your child's attendance and punctuality details.

REMEMBER

- A year has 365 days, 52 weeks and 12 months
- A school year has 195 days, 39 weeks and six terms
- Five days in each school year are training days for teachers (INSET days)
- Pupils attend school therefore for 190 days
- A school day is divided into two sessions. A pupil therefore should attend for 380 sessions

Missed days = missed learning.

Attendance percentage	Missed days of learning	
100%	0 days off school	Green
99%	Equates to 2 school days off school each year	
97%	Equates to 5 school days off school each year	
95%	Equates to 10 school days off school each year	Yellow
90%	Equates to 20 school days off school each year	Red
85%	Equates to 30 school days off school each year	



NB Figures are rounded up to the nearest half day

10 minutes late to school every day adds up. It is the same as losing 6.5 days of school each year.

Promoting and Rewarding High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

Downsell Primary School works hard to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality and those with improving attendance and punctuality.

Strategies include:

- Regularly reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it is exciting and stimulating making pupils eager to come to school.
- Displays in central areas to promote and inform about class attendance.
- Acknowledging all children who achieve 96% and above for the half term and for those with improving attendance.
- Raffles and prizes for those who achieve 96% and above and those with improved attendance.
- Including guidance, advice and information about attendance and punctuality on a regular basis in newsletters.
- Reporting on a child's attendance and punctuality at each parents' evening, in the end of year written report to parents and termly.
- Sending out of attendance statement letters to ensure parents can track and monitor their child's attendance.
- Holding well-structured meetings with parents / guardians and the Education Welfare Officer to support improved attendance and any returns to school following extended periods of absence.
- Using the traffic light system to provide parents / carers with an easy to use system of understanding their child's attendance and the impact.

	Percentage	Comment
Green	96 – 100%	Your child's attendance meets our school expectation. You have supported your child with achieving the best possible outcomes in life. If your child has achieved 100% - well done!
Amber	94 – 95.9%	Stage 1: Your child's attendance is a cause of concern. We know that this may be due to illness or other authorised absences but we hope that by bringing this to your attention now, will help you and your child.
	91 – 93.9%	Stage 2: Your child's attendance is a cause for concern. At this stage, we will need to arrange a formal meeting to support you and your child with improving this.
Red	90% and below	Your child's attendance is far from our expectations and they are now on the persistent absentees list . We will need to meet formally and draw up an action plan together. Unless rapid improvement is made you will be flagged up to our EWO and your case may be referred on further, which can also lead to possible fines.

Appendix 1 - Guidance to Staff on Attendance and Punctuality Matters

1) The role of SEAL and PHSE in securing good attendance and punctuality

To promote good attendance and punctuality, school staff should:

- Regularly review the curriculum offered in an attempt to make it as topical, exciting and fun as possible so that pupils want to come to school and join in.
- Work hard to create a welcoming and positive school ethos where children feel safe, settled and valued.

2) The roles and responsibilities of Class teachers and TAs

The member of staff in charge of the class at the beginning of each session should:

- Call the register promptly and any absence notes are returned to the office.
- Inform the Attendance Officer of any information you may have regarding a child's absence e.g. pupil has said they are going on holiday or moving house, as soon as you have been given that information.
- Mark children present as long as they arrive before the calling of the register has been completed.
- Save and close your register at 9am, ensuring you have only used present mark (/ or \) or a 'N' code.
- Communicate any concerns or observations about emerging patterns of absence or lateness to a senior leader and also adding it to CPOMS.
- Apply this policy consistently and fairly to all members of the school community.
- Reflect high standards in their own attendance and punctuality practice.