



# Attendance Policy

**January 2023**

(Review: January 2024)

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## 1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Downlands Community School (hereafter, referred to as 'School') believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Our school values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying and relationships. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

This school policy should be read alongside 'Promoting Attendance in Dorset' Dorset Council guidance (available on school website), considering that Downlands Community School is a Local Authority maintained school,

## 2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### What does the law say?

- This advice summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.
- These requirements are contained in:
  - The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

### 3. Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. **All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.**

Parents should advise the school by telephone, before 8:50am, every day when a child is absent and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness: In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances: This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Excluded (No alternative provision made): Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.

Family Holidays and Extended Leave: Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday. Should a parent wish to apply for leave of absence they must write to the Headteacher and they will consider if the leave is for exceptional circumstances. In line with the Dorset Council guidance, term time absence should only be granted for exceptional circumstances. If parents take children on holiday during term time without authorisation, they may be subject to a Penalty Warning Letter and then potentially be fined. Nevertheless, the school is very mindful of the MoD advice ([see link](#)) pertaining to services families and recognises that the educational needs of the service children affected will always be a critical factor when determining whether term-time absence should be granted.

Parents wishing to take their child on holiday during term time must send a written request to the Headteacher before holiday arrangements are made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Restrictions and pressures due to service deployment of family members (see MoD guidance)
- Length of the proposed leave
- Age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work missed

- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time holidays taken
- When the request was made

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may issue a Penalty Notice or a fine.

Religious Observance: Downlands Community School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

Traveller Absence: The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

Late Arrival: Registration begins at 8:40am; pupils arriving after this time will be marked as, present but arriving late. The register will close at 9:10am; pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late. This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause; for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry. Persistent lateness will trigger Letter 7 (Appendix J) and possible referral to the inclusion panel.

Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school.

#### 4. Children Missing in Education

There are many reasons why a child may become missing in education. Although not exhaustive, the most common being:

- Pupils at risk of harm/ neglect – for children who are in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children’s social care and the police, if appropriate
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
- Children of Service Personnel
- Missing children and runaways
- Children who cease to attend school
- Children of new migrant families.

(Taken from CME 2016)

**Schools’ responsibility:** Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child’s whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. School will return a form to the Local Authority, detailing information on the child. Schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, therefore must closely monitor pupils’ attendance through their daily register. As part of this, it is important that pupils’ poor attendance is referred to the local authority. (CME 2016)

**Deletions from the register:** School will seek to make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child, jointly with the local authority. The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made. School must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil’s name from the school admission register under any of the grounds set out in the CME 2016 guidance – see Appendix C. When removing a pupil’s name, the local authority must be notified of:

- a) The full name of the pupil
- b) The full name and address of the parent with whom the child normally resides
- c) At least one telephone number of the parent
- d) The pupil’s future address and destination school (if known)
- e) The reason(s) why the pupil name has been removed from the admission register.

Under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, Local Authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days following an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies where the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. (CME 2016).

**School Policy:** Following guidelines, School has a strict policy regarding absence when School has not been notified of absence and/or cannot contact parent/ guardian.

<u>Policy</u>	
Day 1	Phone call to main contact held on SIMS
Day 3/4	Home visit, carried out by member of SLT or pastoral team
Day 5	Referral to Early Help Team or Garrison Welfare as appropriate
Day 10	Request PSCO Welfare check

## 5. Home Educated Children

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full time education but this does not have to be at a school. On receipt of written notification to home educate, school will inform the pupil's local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. School will not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding, excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or local authority's agreement to educate their child at home. However, if parent/guardian fails/refuses to provide notification, a referral will be made to the Local Authority with immediate effect.

## 6. Child relocates

When a child moves, attempts will be made by School to contact local schools to provide a setting for the child where they will be educated. If no provision is available, support will be offered to complete a transfer request. The Local Authority will be notified to ensure suitable support can be offered to provide education. When a child transfers both into and out of School, parents must inform the school and Dorset Council admissions (Dorset for You website).

## 7. Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

School must arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed term exclusion (suspension). If a permanent exclusion has been put in place, the Local Authority will be notified with immediate effect.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

School believe that improved attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site

- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that routine systems are in place for promoting attendance – see appendix
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed bi-annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated
- Make home visits where there is unexplained and unauthorised absence.

Teachers, support staff and Learning Mentors will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.



### The Office Team will:

#### Daily Procedures –

- Checking class registers
- Updating marks & comments on SIMS (a central record)
- First day contact with parents
- Challenge lateness

#### Monitoring –

- Produce pupil attendance reports and identify patterns
- Produce and dispatch letters for persistent absentees and late concerns
- Referrals to outside agencies.

### We request that Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday, including requisite evidence from chain of command if term time absence is due to family members serving in the armed forces and the subsequent operational needs preventing holidays during school holidays.

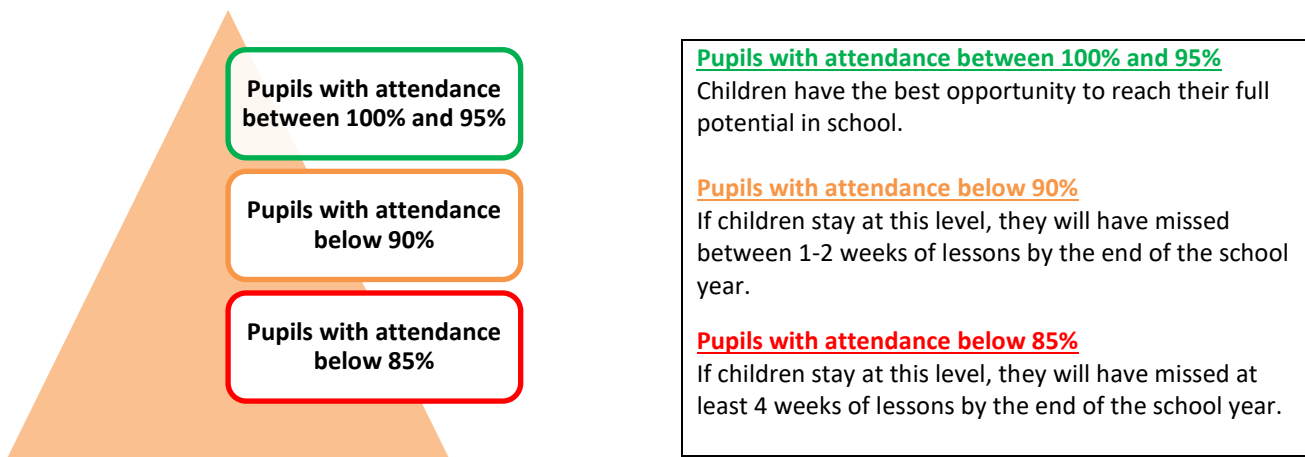
### ***Promoting Attendance and Support***

We believe that working together with parents is the best way to result in positive attendance outcomes for our children. We will use existing rewards systems in school to promote good attendance and punctuality with the children.

### **9. Using Attendance Data**

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every week the office team will add class attendance data to the briefing doc. This information will be shared via whole school assemblies and newsletters where appropriate. These are also shared with parents (for their child) at twice-yearly parents' evenings and with end of year reports.



This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix B). Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment. School will share attendance data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the local authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## 10. Support Systems

School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school; for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance letters to parents
- Supportive meetings with school leaders
- Attendance Action Plan
- ELSA
- Friendship interventions
- Reward systems
- Re-engagement services
- Inclusion panel referrals
- Support from DC Inclusion Lead
- Parenting contracts for attendance
- Referrals to other support agencies.

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

Pupils who have more than 4 broken weeks of illness during one term will be required to provide medical proof of illness before any further illness absence can be authorised. Medical proof can be in the form of a medical appointment card or a prescription in the child's name.

## **11. Attendance Rewards**

We celebrate attendance every Friday in our Gold Book Assembly, where the class with the best attendance wins a trophy. We will also reward children who improve their attendance at points during the year, using our Gold Award certificates. At the end of the year, pupils and classes will be rewarded for excellent and improved attendance.

## **12. Legal Sanctions**

Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school (A Holiday penalty notice can only be issued if 10 or more sessions marked as a G Code have been taken within a 12-week period. 10 sessions = 5 full school days)
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

A Fixed Penalty Notice can be requested by the school, referring to the £60 if paid within 28 days or £100 if paid within 42 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Dorset Council's Penalty Notice Protocol (Appendix K).

Please note that Downlands Community School is maintained by the Local Authority and so aligns with additional legal framework outlined in the Promoting Educational Attendance in Dorset guidance, available on the website.

## **13. Safeguarding**

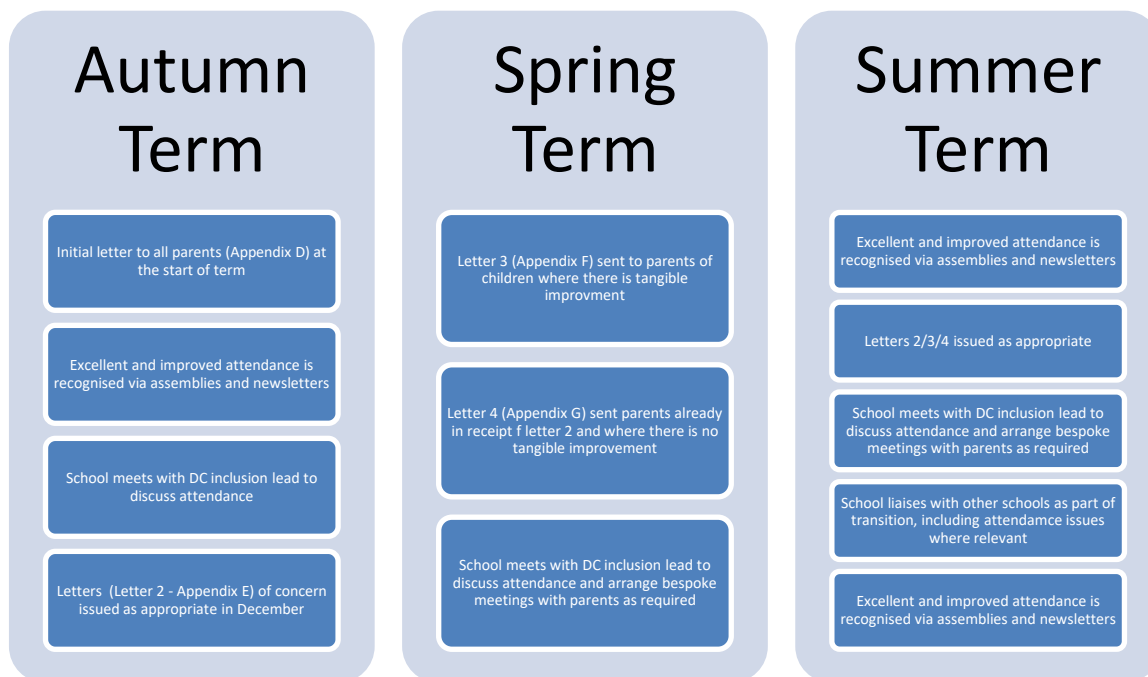
Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: -

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health & Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

## Appendix A: Calendar of actions linked to promoting good attendance



## Attendance Improvement Procedure Summary

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
<b>STAGE 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance is everyone's business</li> </ul>	All year
<b>STAGE 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School's curriculum, ethos, behaviour and inclusivity ensure pupils are able to achieve the best possible attendance</li> </ul>	All year
<b>STAGE 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robust transition processes in which schools deliver clear messages about the importance of attendance</li> </ul>	Prior to the start of the academic year
<b>STAGE 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the school attendance policy is up-to-date and clear to all pupils, parents and staff</li> <li>Send attendance letter 1</li> </ul>	Start of the academic year
<b>STAGE 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor attendance</li> </ul>	All year
<b>STAGE 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send attendance letter 2</li> <li>Listen to pupils and families to understand barriers to attendance</li> <li>Ensure appropriate support is in place</li> <li>Liaise with relevant agencies and partners</li> <li>Record and contact with pupils and parents</li> <li>Agree review period</li> </ul>	When attendance becomes a concern
<b>STAGE 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate support</li> </ul>	When attendance becomes a concern
<b>STAGE 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where there is an improvement in attendance, carefully manage and support the pupil</li> <li>Provide praise and encouragement</li> <li>Send attendance letter 3</li> </ul>	When there is an improvement in attendance
<b>STAGE 9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with pupil and family</li> <li>Send attendance letter 4 – Attendance meeting</li> <li>Support put in place</li> </ul>	Where following support, attendance has not improved

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider using a parenting contract or Education Supervision Order (ESO)</li> <li>• Discuss at termly/half-termly inclusion meeting with link Inclusion Lead</li> </ul>	
<b>STAGE 10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where there is an improvement in attendance, carefully manage and support the pupil</li> <li>• Provide praise and encouragement</li> <li>• Send attendance letter 3</li> </ul>	When there is an improvement in attendance
<b>STAGE 11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School arranges an Inclusion Panel meeting where there is no improvement using attendance letter 5 – Invite to Inclusion Panel</li> </ul>	Where following support, attendance has not improved
<b>LEGAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance legal intervention (parenting contract, Education Supervision Order, attendance prosecution, parenting orders, fixed penalty notices)</li> <li>• <a href="http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk">Penalty Notice Protocol 2016-17 (1) (dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)</a></li> </ul>	When all supportive avenues have been exhausted and legal intervention is likely to lead to a behavioural change that improves attendance

## Appendix C: Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register (CME 2016)

<b>1</b>	Where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
<b>2</b>	That the child has been registered as a pupil at another school - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school.
<b>3</b>	Where a pupil is registered at more than one school that he/she has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
<b>4</b>	Where the child has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
<b>5</b>	That child has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he/she is registered.
<b>6</b>	In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation that (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause - and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
<b>7</b>	Where the child is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
<b>8</b>	Where the child has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and, (i) at no time was his/her absence during that period authorised by the proprietor (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
<b>9</b>	That the child is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.
<b>10</b>	The pupil has died.
<b>11</b>	That the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets
<b>12</b>	That the child has been permanently excluded from the school.
<b>13</b>	Where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he/she has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher class at the school.

## **Appendix D: Letter 1 about Attendance sent to all parents at the start of the year**

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Information for parents and carers on the importance of attendance and the attendance process.**

Downlands Community School are committed to ensuring our pupils achieve the best possible outcomes and good school attendance is key to achieving this aim. We will work hard to provide a safe and welcoming environment for your child and will monitor attendance closely.

Good school attendance improves your child's chances of success in life. There is clear evidence of the link between good attendance at school and high levels of achievement. Children with no absence at key stage 4 are almost 2 times more likely to achieve 5 or more GCSEs than children who missed 10-15 percent of lessons. If your child has an attendance level of 90%, they will have missed one day a fortnight in school. Over a school year this will represent four weeks of absence. If this level of absence were maintained for a five-year period it would mean half a school year would have been missed.

We would really appreciate your help in ensuring that your child has good school attendance. If there is a concern, we will write to you and talk with you so that we can work together to identify any barriers that may be preventing your child from attending school and ensure support is put in place. We may also contact the Inclusion Team at Dorset Council for advice and support or other organisations that may be able to help. It is hoped that this will be successful in improving attendance.

Where support has failed to address attendance issues, we will contact you again to invite you to a meeting where we can identify the reasons why attendance has not improved and change or adjust the intervention where appropriate.

Here at Downlands, we are determined to ensure that all our students have the opportunity to achieve success and have an excellent record of attendance. If following additional support attendance does not improve sufficiently, you will be invited to meet with the school and an Inclusion Lead from Dorset Council at an Inclusion Panel. Other professionals may also be invited where appropriate. This meeting is an opportunity to meet and discuss why your child has a high absence rate and seek solutions to any problems.

The Inclusion Panel can recommend several outcomes, which can include a further period of close monitoring with specified targets for attendance; issuing a £60 Penalty Notice, a Parenting Order or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine of up to £2,500.

It is hoped that such measures will not be needed and that your child will have a good record of attendance, is happy and achieves the best possible outcomes.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher's signature  
Downlands Community School



**Appendix E: Letter 2 about initial attendance concerns sent to all parents of children with <90% attendance after 10 weeks of school**

Date

**Absences Matter and You Can Help**

Dear parent/carer's name,

Pupil name has missed more school than their classmates.

Pupil name was absent number days so far this school year.

Pupils fall behind when they miss school – whether students are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

You can have a big effect on pupil name's absences this term, and we appreciate your help.

Pupil name has had number of absences which means their attendance is percentage %. The average number of absences in Year group is number which means the average attendance is percentage %.

What does the attendance percentage really mean?		
Attendance %	Days Lost	Lessons Missed
100%	0 Days	0 lessons
97%	1 Week	Number lessons
94%	2 Weeks	Number lessons
90%	4 weeks	Number lessons
85%	6 Weeks	Number lessons
80%	8 Weeks	Number lessons

Yours sincerely,  
Headteacher's signature

Name

School

**Appendix F: Letter 3 about attendance improvement sent to parents receiving letter 2, after a further 6 weeks of school where there is tangible improvement.**

**Date:**

Dear **parent/carer's Name**

**Thank you**

We are pleased to say that **child's name**'s attendance has improved and is currently **percentage %**.

Thank you so much for your support in this. We really do appreciate your help as there is clear evidence that good school attendance improves a child's chance of success in life.

Please do contact me if you would like to discuss anything further. **E-mail address and telephone number**

Yours sincerely

**Headteacher's signature**

**Name**

**School**

Appendix G: Letter 4 about continuing attendance concerns and sent to parents who have already received letter 2, after a further 6 weeks of school where there is no tangible improvement.

## Letter 4 - Invitation to Attendance Meeting

Date:

### Absences Matter and You Can Help

Dear parent/carer's name

School name are committed to ensuring our pupils achieve the best possible outcomes and good school attendance is key to achieving this aim.

Unfortunately, following our letter/meeting/discussion child's name attendance has not sufficiently improved. They have number absences and so their attendance is currently %.

We would really appreciate your help in improving this and are therefore inviting you to an attendance meeting in school on date, time and venue. This meeting will be attended by insert details. It is really important that you attend this meeting so that any issues or concerns which may be contributing to child's name non-attendance can be discussed and support put in place. You are welcome to bring someone along with you.

Please e-mail us or telephone to confirm receipt of this letter and your intention to attend the meeting by contacting insert name, e-mail address and telephone number.

Please be aware that Dorset Council's Inclusion Team may be informed of child's name current attendance.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher's signature

Name

School

**Appendix H: Letter 5 is issued after letter 4 and where further support from Dorset Council inclusion lead is requested.**

## **Letter 5 - Invitation to Inclusion Panel**

**Date:**

### **Absences Matter and You Can Help**

Dear **Parent/carer's name**

**School name** are committed to ensuring our pupils achieve the best possible outcomes and good school attendance is key to achieving this aim.

Unfortunately, following our **meeting child's name** attendance has not sufficiently improved. They have **number** absences and so their attendance is currently **%**.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is receiving an education and attends regularly at the school at which **he/she** is registered. You also have a responsibility to contact the school each day should the child be unable to attend for any reason.

You are therefore required to attend an Inclusion Panel on **date, time and venue**. You are welcome to bring someone along to support you.

This meeting will also be attended by **insert name** from the school and **insert name**, Inclusion Lead, Dorset Council. **Name of school** values the working partnership we have with parents, and it is important that you attend this meeting so that any issues or concerns which may be contributing to **child's name's** non-attendance can be discussed. If you do not attend the meeting, we will discuss **child's name's** school attendance and a decision will be made, in your absence, on the appropriate action.

**PLEASE NOTE:** All further absences may be marked as unauthorised and sickness absences should be supported with evidence such as a GP's appointment card or prescription, or hospital letter.

Please telephone or email to confirm receipt of this letter, and your intention to attend the meeting by contacting **name and phone number/email**. Dorset Council has already been made aware of **child's name's** current attendance.

Yours sincerely

**Headteacher's signature**

**Name**

**School**

Appendix I: Letter 6 is issued following a failure to attend the meeting with the Dorset Council inclusion lead.

## Letter 6 - Failure to attend Inclusion Panel Meeting

Date:

Dear Parent/carer's name

### Failure to Attend – Name of Child – DOB

Following the Inclusion Panel on Date which you did not attend, please find enclosed the minutes of the meeting which include the actions and decisions of the panel.

Insert Minutes Inclusion Panel outlining the agreed actions.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is receiving an education and attends regularly at the school at which he/she is registered. Parents/carers may be liable to prosecution under (s) 444 Education Act 1996 (as amended) if they fail to ensure that a child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school at which the child is registered. You also have a responsibility to contact the school each day should the child be unable to attend for any reason.

**PLEASE NOTE:** All further absences may be marked as unauthorised and sickness absences should be supported with evidence such as a GP's appointment card or prescription, or hospital letter.

We will continue to monitor child's name's school attendance closely, including arriving on time for school.

At name of school, we are determined to ensure that all our pupils have the opportunity to achieve their best and we want all our pupils to have an excellent record of regular punctual attendance. We value the working partnership we have with parents. If you would like to discuss the Inclusion Panel minutes, please contact name of person and contact details.

We hope to see a significant improvement in school attendance. It is only through excellent attendance that your child will achieve all that they are capable of achieving and have the best opportunity for a rewarding and prosperous adult life.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher's signature

Name

School

Appendix J: Letter 7 is issued following a failure to attend the meeting with the Dorset Council inclusion lead.

## Letter 7 - Lateness Letter

### Lateness Matters and You Can Help

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer's name

At name of school, we are determined to ensure that name of pupil has the opportunity to achieve their best and we want him/her to have an excellent record of regular punctual attendance.

Pupil name has been late on number days so far this school year.

You can have a big effect on pupil name's punctuality this term, and we appreciate your help.

We are sure that you are aware of the importance of punctual school attendance for pupil's name.

- When they are on time, Pupil's name will be part of all the important learning and hear all the instructions on how to complete a piece of work
- Social interaction with peers before school is important if pupil's name is to form friendship groups
- Arriving on time may be less embarrassing for pupil's name
- When pupil's name arrives on time they can settle more easily, this more likely to maintain a calm learning environment for them and their classmates

The school site is open for pupils to arrive from time and the children are expected to be in class ready to begin the school day by time.

We value the working partnership we have with parents. If you would like to discuss any aspect of your child's attendance or punctuality with us please contact the school office to arrange a meeting with the attendance officer/your child's class teacher.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher's signature

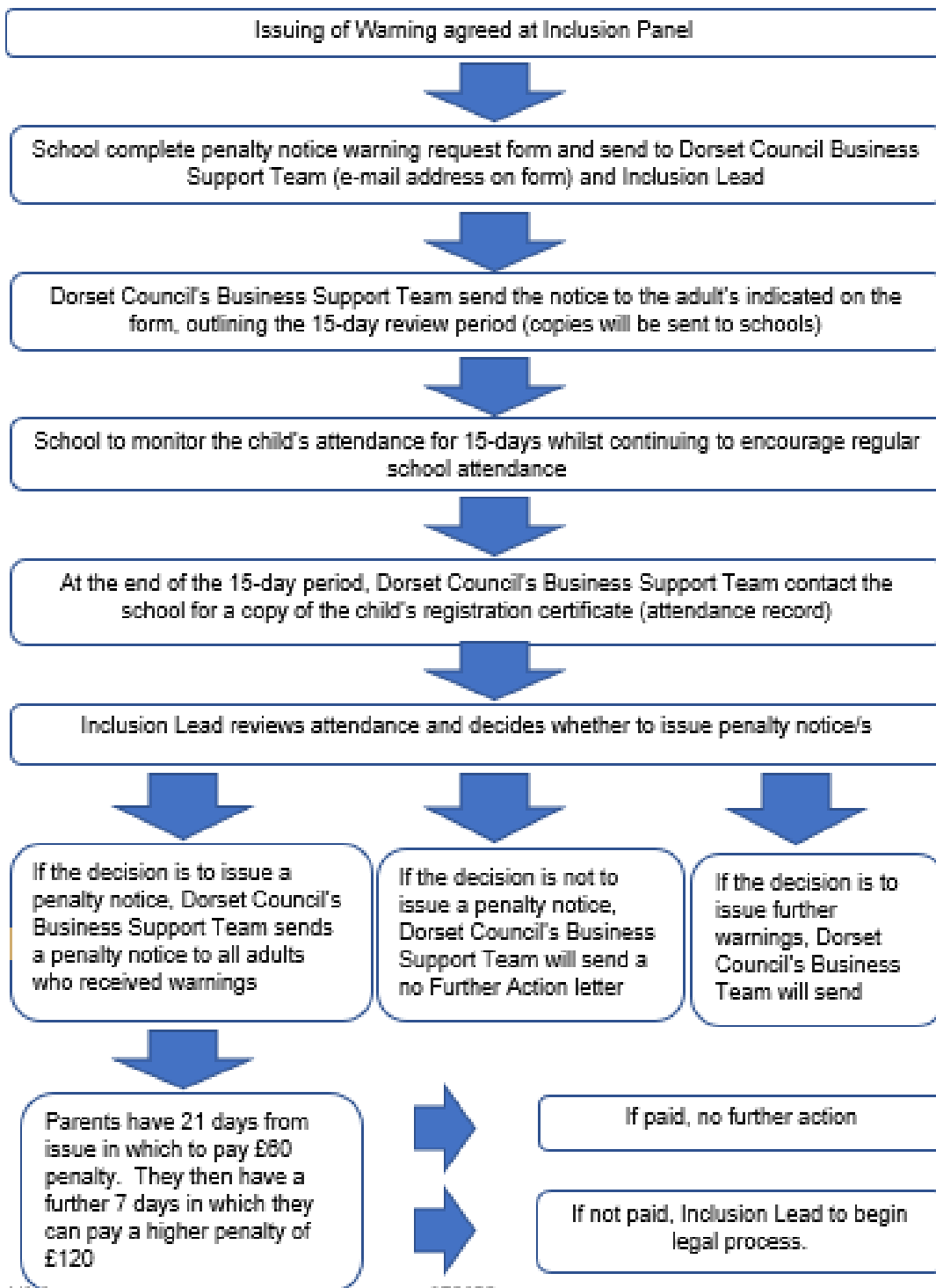
Name

School



### Flow Chart for Issuing Penalty Notices

All Penalty Notices must be issued in accordance with this procedure



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