

MICHAEL DOWLING
COMMUNITY SCHOOL
26-27 STUDENT HANDBOOK



3900 West River Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55406

612.668.4410

Dowling Contact Information

Main Office Hours: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Academic School Day: 9:25 am – 4:05 pm

Drop Off Time: 9:20 am

Pick up Time: 4:05 pm

Main Office and Attendance Line	612-668-4410
Fax	612-668-4420
Nurse – Roxanne Truen	612-668-4415
Social Worker –Kamara Bauman	612-668-4414
Associate Educator-Catherine McDonnell-Forney	612-668-4432
Food Service Coordinator– Nicole Harris	612-668-4429
Community Education	612-668-4444
Minneapolis Kids	612-668-4430
School Website	http://dowling.mpls.k12.mn.us
School Facebook Page	www.facebook.com/MPS.Dowling
Teachers and Staff	Your student's teacher will share their contact information with you each fall.
Transportation- Catherine McDonnell-Forney	612-668-4432
Transportation (District) –General Education	612-668-2300

District Contact Information

District Offices Address: 1250 West Broadway, Minneapolis MN 55411

District Office Main: 612-668-0000

Fax: 612-668-1841

Minneapolis Public School Website: <https://www.mpschools.org/>



Welcome!

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Dowling Community School! We are so excited that your family is a part of the Dowling community. This handbook will familiarize yourself with Dowling policies, and the policies of the Minneapolis Public School district.

Dowling Community School's **MISSION** is to:

- Foster student engagement and empowerment in an equitable, inclusive, and supportive setting.
- Promote academic excellence, confidence, creativity, and environmental stewardship. Everything we do is with the foundation of creating strong relationships. We hope you have a fantastic school year!

Kari Page

Principal

612-668-4410 or kari.page@mpls.k12.mn.us

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ABOUT US

The MISSION of Dowling Community is to:

- Foster student engagement and empowerment in an equitable, inclusive, and supportive setting.
- Promote academic excellence, confidence, creativity, and environmental stewardship.

The VISION of Dowling Community is to create compassionate and educated members of the community that work together to solve problems and *live joyfully together on a healthy planet*. Families will be asked for input on their Hopes and Dreams for Dowling at our Open House event.

Everything we do is with the foundation of creating strong relationships. We hope you have a fantastic school year!

Dowling is a K-5 school that integrates and applies urban environmental themes with science, reading, social studies, writing, and the arts, and relates them to real-world settings. Helping students achieve growth in reading, writing, science, and mathematics are at the core of our mission as we remember we are preparing students for middle and high school, college, and/or post-secondary educational experiences. We create a supportive, respectful atmosphere in which individual strengths are developed to encourage deep understanding, independence, resilience, and environmental stewardship.

Dowling is unique in many ways. Our roots go back to 1924 when the school was founded to provide education exclusively to children with disabilities in Minneapolis. Today we serve all children. The educational atmosphere at Dowling School provides social and academic interaction and cooperative learning among students of all abilities.

Located across the parkway from the Mississippi River, the campus sits on 21 acres of forested and cultivated land. On June 12, 2012, Minneapolis Public Schools' Board of Education approved unanimously that Michael Dowling School would be designated as a DNR School Forest Program. The Dowling site includes an indoor therapeutic pool, a playground accessible to all students, and access out classroom doors to spectacular grounds unlike any urban public school. Historic victory gardens, several outdoor classrooms, a functioning greenhouse, an enclosed nature acre, oak trees, fruit tree orchards, prairie grass and grassy play areas surrounded by a wide variety of towering trees makes this an idyllic setting for an elementary school.

We offer Environmental Education, Visual Arts and Music, Phy Ed, Swimming, Special Education Services, English Learner Support, Minneapolis Kids before and after school care, Community Education after school programming, and Parent-involved leadership through our Dowling Site Council and Parent Teacher Organization.

ATTENDANCE

Daily attendance is critical to academic achievement for our students. It is our goal to work with students and families to support regular school attendance and improve academic achievement. The district has adopted a policy that emphasizes 95% attendance by all students which means 8 or fewer absences per school year. You can find the District Attendance Policy in the Policies [here](#).

Parents will need to communicate with the school the morning of each day your child is absent. If a call or [email](#) is not made to the school, you will receive an automated call letting you know your child is unaccounted for. In the case of multiple absences related to illness, the school may require a note from your child's physician in order to excuse the absences.

If we have not heard from you after 3 unexcused absences, a letter will be sent home. Students who reach 6 days of unexcused absences may be referred by school staff to the Hennepin County Attorney's Office "Be @School Program," which is designed to improve student attendance. Please see [Dowling Attendance Policy](#).

Excused Absences include:

Health Care Appointments – please try to schedule outside of school hours. An absence will only be marked excused if the office receives a written note from the health care provider.

Illness – Students are allowed up to 8 excused absences a year (3 used in a row) due to illness. Additional absences may be excused if you have developed a plan with the school nurse or you provide a written note from a health care provider.

***Current Covid protocols may extend these absence dates.**

Funeral – Students may be excused up to 4 days a year for funerals. If your family needs more than 4 days you must get pre-approval for additional time from the social worker or principal.

Family Emergencies – Students may be excused up to 3 days a year for family emergencies. If your family needs more than 3 days you must get pre-approval from the social worker or principal.

Family Activities – Students may be excused up to 5 days a year for family activities. Please request pre-approval from the office at least 10 days before leaving for the activity by completing a Family Activity Form (available on-line and in front office). Work with your teacher to get your child's homework, and please try to ensure you are not leaving during mandatory state testing times.

Bus Problems – if your child is late or misses school due to bus no shows, you must report this to the school that morning.

Religious holidays/Cultural observances – Please notify the office in advance of your child being absent.

For all absences, call 612-668-4410, press one for the attendance line, and leave your child's first and last name, their room number, and the reason for your absence.

Tardiness (arriving after 9:35 am)

Any student arriving after 9:35 am must be signed in at the office by a caregiver and given a late pass.

Going straight to the classroom may result in an unexcused absence which will trigger an automated attendance call.

Release of students during the school day

We understand that emergencies do arise, but whenever possible, please notify the teacher stating the requested day and time of release beforehand. **If you are unable to send a message to the teacher, you must call the front office with your change BEFORE 12:00 pm.** It can be very difficult to locate students for pick up near the end of the day. You must sign your student out in the main office, you may not pick your student up directly from the classroom.

Students will only be released to individuals who are listed on the emergency card. If any person other than the custodial parent or guardian, and the persons listed on the emergency card is to pick up the child, the school must have a written statement from the custodial parent specifying the necessary information. The front office staff will require identification.

Students will not be released early after 3:00pm. This is due to the fact that the office is preparing for regular dismissal and cannot assist in finding your child in the final hour of school.

School Closings and Winter Weather

At times it is necessary for school to be closed due to bad weather or emergencies. Parents will be notified of weather-related closings by 6 pm the day before, or 5:30 am the day of the cancellation by phone, texts, MPS website, Facebook, Twitter, Radio and TV. Information about the criteria used for closing schools can be found [here](#). **Please do not call** our school office to ask about closings. It may cause our phones to be overloaded at a time when they may be most needed.

GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Arrival and Dismissal

School begins at 9:25 am in the morning and ends at 4:05 pm in the afternoon. **As there is no staff to supervise, students may not arrive at school before 9:20 am.** Students who arrive earlier than 9:20 am will be asked to remain outside until 9:20 am. The school will not be liable or responsible for unsupervised students.

Bus riders

The transportation department will assign your child to a bus with set pick up and drop off times. If you have questions or concerns about your bus, please contact both the Dowling transportation coordinator **and** the MPS transportation department. [MyRide K12](#) is an app that gives parents access to GPS tracking on their students' yellow bus, busing assignments, and more



If your child does not use their bus stop for 10 school days in a row, and there are no other students at your stop, you may need to call transportation to set up your bus stop again.

District Transportation Dept: 612-668-2300

Dowling Transportation: 612-668-4432

Same day changes to student's way home

If circumstances arise where your student will be getting home other than what is typical, you must call and inform the front office before noon that day, or message your student's teacher. For example, if you will need to pick up your student, rather than having them take the bus, we must have ample time to inform staff. Unless it is an emergency, without advance notice, we may not be able to accommodate your request.

Bus Pass – Riding a bus and/or issuing a stop other than the one assigned to student *

Bus passes are not issued for playdates, families will need to coordinate parent pick up. (See details under “Playdates.”) A bus pass will be issued if a student is transitioning to a new stop, or different bus route. Until the student is officially added to the route, a bus pass is required. A bus notification and/or new bus tag will be sent home once a student is assigned to the route.

If your student needs temporary transportation to an alternate destination, call the Dowling transportation coordinator. There must already be an existing stop assigned to that address. A significant amount of time and effort are required to verify this information, so please contact the school ASAP, or by noon the day of the change, at the latest. Please provide the following information:

- Address of student’s destination
- First and last name of adult receiving student
- Phone number of adult/household receiving the student

Metal water bottles have caused unintentional injuries on the bus. Please send an alternative to a metal water bottle.

Bicycles

Students who ride a bicycle to school are expected to lock it to a bike rack when they arrive. Student bicycles may not be brought into the school. Dowling is not responsible for lost or stolen bikes. Bicycle riders must observe safety practices including not riding in bus lanes or on sidewalks when other students are present. Bike racks are located by the north entrance under the awning and in the front lawn near Door #1.

Walkers

Students not provided with transportation receive a card from the transportation department that assigns them as a walker. Students who elect to walk must have written parental permission, on file in the main office, to walk home unaccompanied. Walkers should follow the directions of the School Safety Patrol crossing guards.

Parent Drop Off and Pick Up

AM Drop Off - BUS- If you are planning on your child riding the bus, we hope that you have requested a space for your child to ride. The district Transportation Department typically sends bus confirmations the third week in August. If your students’ busing information is incorrect, please call the main office.

All buses will drop off students on Lena Smith Blvd., north of the main entrance (Door #1), in the designated Bus Drop-Off zone. **No cars should interfere with bus drop off.**

CAR- All cars should **pull ahead, south of the main entrance (Door #1)** to the designated Parent Drop Off zone. The whole length of the sidewalk should be utilized for drop off. The kids have lots of energy and can walk the length of the block to come into the school building :) Please note that we ask that you **do not leave your car unattended** in the drop off zone. If you want to walk your child closer to the building, use the parking lot and walk around the building or park on a side street.

WALK/BIKE- Please drop off your child at Door #1 on Lena Smith Blvd. We encourage everyone to use the sidewalks to safely walk into the building. Similar to last year, we are asking that you say goodbye and give hugs to your child on the front sidewalk if you are dropping them off. If your child is in need of an accommodation with separating from you at drop off,

please talk to Kamara Bauman, Social Worker 612.668.4414. We want all students to feel comfortable with a new transition and school year.

NORTHEAST ENTRANCE (under the awning)- This entrance is reserved for students with special needs. If your child does not have special needs, you may park in the parking lot but please walk them around to the front of the building, Door #1, near the flagpole.

PARKING LOT- Cars may enter and exit in the Northwest parking lot entrance. Cars will no longer be driving through the area designated for special education bus drop off.

PM Pick Up - Families have 4 choices at 4:05 dismissal.

1. Students may ride the **bus** home. An option for those who reserved their space on the bus.
2. **Parent Pick Up:** All parents will park in the large parking lot or Dowling Street and walk in to sign their child out of the auditorium. **All students must be picked up by 4:15pm.**
3. Parents may sign students up for **Key Chain Club (key chain is put on backpacks to signal staff)** and walk out the Auditorium door on the NE corner of the property (near the brick half wall) to greet their families. Grades 2-5 only unless special arrangement with a sibling has been made and approved by office. [Print permission form here](#). You may print and return to your student's teacher or request a paper form from the front office.
4. Students may be allowed to **walk/bike** home. Best for older students. [Print permission form here](#) You may print and return to your student's teacher or request a paper form from the front office.

Play Dates

Occasionally, families will want to arrange for play dates between children that start at the end of a school day. For safety reasons, **each** parent whose child will be involved with the play date, will need to write a note indicating permission for the following:

1. Date of the play date
2. Family that is hosting
3. Adult who will be accompanying the children from school and their phone number

The parent picking up students will be required to sign them out in the auditorium.

Access to the building

ALL visitors/parents must report to the office when entering Dowling School. Parents/visitors must sign in, provide a valid Driver's License, and will be asked to wear a visitor sticker or volunteer badge identifying that they have checked in at the office. This policy is necessary for the safety of all students and staff at Dowling, please help us by following this request. When leaving Dowling School, parents/visitors are asked to sign out and return their badge. For more information about volunteering see the Parental Involvement section of the handbook.

During school hours, all doors are locked. All visitors are asked to come to the building at Door 1 off of Lena Smith Blvd. There is a call box for you to signal the office.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL & FAMILIES

Please also see the "Family Involvement" section of this handbook for additional information about communication

- **To contact your student during the day:** Should it become necessary for a parent to contact a child during school hours, this must be done through the main office. The office phone number is (612) 668-4410.
- **To contact a teacher or staff member:** Staff members have voice mail or email, each listed on the Dowling school website. If you anticipate regular contact with a staff member, please check with that person for their preferred way of communication. Please do not send emails to teachers regarding change in transportation. Always contact the main office.

Automated Calls through School Messenger

Periodically, both MPS district officials and Dowling staff will use recorded messages to communicate with our families regarding upcoming events or in case of emergencies. We realize that pre-recorded messages are not always desirable and therefore will strive to use them respectfully.

Wednesday Take Home Folders

Wednesday is designated as take-home-information day for Dowling School. Any notices, flyers, newsletter, etc., which students are to take home to parents, will be sent on Wednesday. Please help us to impress upon your child the importance of you receiving every message we send home and also the prompt return of messages to school. Look for this folder with important information each week. In addition, teachers may send homework, letters or calendars with special events highlighted.

Dowling School Website

Important events and information is always available on our website: dowling.mpschools.org

Report Cards

Parents have many opportunities during the school year to learn of their child's progress through conferences and report cards. Report cards are posted on the [Infinite Campus Parent Portal](#) quarterly, but can be printed and sent home upon request.

Weekly Emails

Weekly emails are sent every other Friday with information about upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and school release days, etc. It is very important that the school has a current email address for you on file. Please inform the front office of any additions/changes as soon as possible.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Conduct Agreement

Our school has [Behavior Standards and Codes of Conduct](#) everyone is expected to follow. At the beginning of the year, each student will sign and return to school a Citywide Discipline Policy form that states they agreed to follow these

expectations. When we all follow the rules, everyone can feel safe and respected and we can all learn. Here are some of the behaviors that will help you be successful at school:

- Come to school every day, on time, ready
- Talk to your family about what is happening at school
- Help others understand your culture and learn about the culture of others
- Dress in an appropriate manner
- Follow directions
- Follow school, classroom and bus rules
- Take responsibility for your own behavior
- Treat yourself and others with respect
- Work to achieve at your highest level
- Do all assigned work
- Follow all school rules at school, on the bus and on field trips.

There are some behaviors no one is allowed to do while at school. These behaviors will result in consequences, up to suspension:

- Attacking or assaulting another person
- Fighting
- Having alcohol, tobacco or other drugs
- Making a threat to bring a bomb or other terroristic threats.
- Make threats or be physically aggressive
- Have medicine in your possession
- Trespass
- Pull a false fire alarm
- Be defiant, verbally abuse others or show disrespect
- Harass other people
- Steal, have stolen property in your possession, use school property without permission or do vandalism
- Bully another person or do hazing. Dowling is a Bully Free Zone.
- Weapons – You may not bring any weapon to school or on the bus, even if it is a toy.
- Have personal electronic devices (cell phones, Ipads) without an agreement between your principal and parent or guardian.

Note: If you find a weapon – report it to a staff person or other adult as soon as possible. Telling the adult shows that you are being responsible and you are helping to keep everyone safe. You will not get in trouble for telling about a weapon you found.

Student Behavioral Support

Each classroom has a behavior plan that is part of the overall building plan. These plans support behavior to provide each student with a safe environment that encourages academic learning. When a classroom teacher uses their behavior plan with a student and there is no change in disruptive or unsafe behavior, the teacher will submit a referral form to the principal. One of two actions will take place:

1. A discussion followed by a resolution to the problem behavior will take place in the classroom/hallway and the student will return to classroom, or
2. The student will be escorted to an administration office to provide a quiet, calm place to discuss behavior and possible solutions

If unresolved, students referred to the principal will be managed in one or more of the following manners:

- Parent contact
- Behavior modification plan will be developed with parent

All attempts will be made to return the student to the classroom as quickly as possible. Please note that anytime a student is removed from the classroom, parents will be notified. Behaviors referred to the principal will be those identified by the district citywide behavior plan. These guidelines follow the City Wide Discipline policy which can be found at the back of this handbook in the Policies section.

Balloons

We ask that both helium and latex balloons NOT be brought to school for any celebration. Balloons have resulted in allergic reactions, distractions for students, and they limit viewing at events and assemblies.

Electronics/Valuables at School

Students are not to bring cell phones, smart watches, other electronics, toys or valuables to school. Families must understand that the school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items.

If a family chooses to send a communication device (phone or watch) with a student, these items will need to be kept in the student's backpack inside their locker. Please be aware that lockers are not locked or secured throughout the day.

Bus Behavior Rules

The Minneapolis Public Schools District School Board developed a set of rules and behavior expectations to help ensure safe transportation. Every year, families receive an agreement with these rules and expectations to read and sign. As you read these expectations and rules, please keep in mind that our intent is to make bus riding a pleasant and safe experience for all. We also must remind you that per MN Statute 123.7991 "riding a bus is a privilege, not a right." Refer to the Policies section for more information on the bus standard of conduct.

Bus Discipline Policy

Students who have the opportunity to ride the district school buses may do so as long as they demonstrate behavior that is reasonable and safe. Students who display unacceptable behavior will receive disciplinary consequences that could ultimately result in temporary or permanent loss of bus privileges. (Please note that a bus suspension also applies to field trip buses—students who have lost their bus privileges will not be allowed to ride a bus to a field trip destination. Parents will have the option of transporting their student, or the student will be placed in an alternate classroom for the duration of the field trip.) The bus driver as well as an adult aide (when present), are responsible for the safety of students on the bus. The building principal and school behavior support personnel are responsible for providing assistance to the driver as well as administering consequences for behavior incidents. Consequences will be administered according to district and policies. Consequences are determined based on the following: type of offense, the number of times the student has received documented reprimands, and the severity of the incident.

** The bus is an extension of the school day. Bus consequences may be superseded by MPS district policy. The bus driver has the authority to assign seats. The sexual/racial/religious harassment policy and the weapons policy of our district will be strictly enforced on the bus as well as at school. Please note that these rules, expectations and consequences apply to all buses within the jurisdiction of the Minneapolis Public Schools. Refer to the Policies section for more information.

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to dress appropriately for school. All students go outside for recess and environmental education class, all year long. Please make sure your child is dressed warmly during the cold and wet months. The layers recommended include:

- a warm coat
- snow pants
- snow boots
- hat
- scarf
- mittens or gloves
- Rain pants, rain jacket and boots for wet days



Dowling school has a limited supply of winter gear to loan to our students in the event they are not equipped to go outdoors. If you find you need assistance in purchasing, affording or knowing where to get the correct clothing for your child, please contact Social Worker, Marisa Gustafson.

If the temperature drops below zero degrees, or the wind chill factor below -10 degrees or it is pouring rain, recess and EE class may be held indoors.

Outerwear must be placed in the student's locker or cubby area upon entering the school and kept there for the school day.

If a student's clothing presents an obvious safety hazard, or if their clothing detracts from the learning environment or is offensive (messages meant for adults), the student will be asked to remove/change/add something to the item.

Help us reunite your child with their outerwear – make sure every piece you send has their name in it! The Lost & Found is located in the foyer. Parents are encouraged to look through the Lost and Found at Dismissal.

LOST AND FOUND PROCEDURES

Caregivers should label all outerwear and sweatshirts. This increases the opportunity that if your child loses an item of clothing it will be returned.

Lost and Found is located in the foyer near the auditorium.

On the first day of each month, lost and found items will be collected. Waterproof items will be washed and used for Environmental Education and Recess shared items. All other items will be washed and donated.

Anyone wishing to volunteer to help with the monthly process should contact the office.

HEALTH, WELLNESS & SAFETY

Health Office

Due to the medical needs of many of our students, Dowling has both a registered nurse and a licensed practical nurse in the building five days a week. Standard health office services are offered. This includes treatment of minor injuries,

notification of parents in case of illness, vision screening in grades K, 1, 3, and 5, hearing screening in grade 1, verification and notification of infectious conditions (i.e. chicken pox, lice, strep throat).

Medications

According to the Minneapolis Public Schools policy, medication will only be administered at school with written consent from the health care provider and parent/guardian. Updated medication consent needs to be provided every school year. Medication must be sent to school in the original prescription (or over the counter) bottle/container indicating the student's name and correct instructions for medication administration. In order to be least disruptive to the student's time in the classroom, families are encouraged to space medication doses outside of the school day whenever possible. Short-term medications such as antibiotics can usually be taken before and after school. Medication consent forms are available from the health office.

Asthma Medications

Students with asthma are encouraged to keep asthma reliever medication at school so that it is available if asthma concerns arise and/or if asthma medication is required prior to exercise (the above noted medication policy applies to asthma medication as well). There is a nebulizer machine available in the health office. Students requiring nebulized medication need to provide asthma medication and a set of nebulizer tubing. If your health provider has given you an "Asthma Action Plan", please send a copy of this to school. Asthma Action Plans that are less than a year old and signed by the health care provider and parent are considered written consent for administering asthma medication at school.

Immunizations

Minnesota laws require [proof of immunizations](#) for all school children. Parents are asked to provide immunization records upon school registration. If you have questions regarding immunization requirements, contact your health care provider or school health office staff.

Food Allergies

Food allergies are quite prevalent these days. If your child has sensitivities to specific foods, please include this on their health form, notify the teacher, and make sure your child is aware of which foods they need to avoid.

Food Service

Breakfast and lunch (including a salad bar) are available at no charge at Dowling and are cooked on site. **All MPS students can receive breakfast, and should go directly to the cafeteria upon arrival to school.**

Menus for each month are online – [Food Service](#)

Click on the option that says **K-8 Onsite Facility** and note there is an ink saver option. MPS has a strong and active Nutrition and Wellness program you can learn more about on this same website.

Application for Educational Benefits

Free breakfast and lunch is provided to all students. We strongly encourage all families to complete the application, regardless of eligibility. [Application for Educational Benefits.](#)

Lunches from Home

Although we provide lunches for all of our students, we understand that families may choose to send their children with lunch from home. In addition to keeping in mind our students with food allergies, please remember our policy regarding

snack foods and beverages. When packing your child's lunch please keep servings of chips and other snack foods to "just enough" for your child. These foods present sanitary issues when children share their lunch items with classmates. You can also help support our efforts to promote healthier eating habits by providing beverages other than carbonated and caffeinated drinks like soda or energy drinks. Students bringing soda or energy drinks to school will be asked to take those items home and not bring them to school again.

Homemade Food, Snacks and Treats

Because of the significant number of students with life threatening food allergies, and also in support of the District Wellness Policy, we encourage families who would like to celebrate their child's birthday to send in non-food items (such as stickers, pencils, etc.) to share with classmates instead of food.

We have many students at Dowling with food allergies that are potentially life threatening (such as allergies to nuts, soy, wheat, dairy, honey, red food coloring etc.). While some food labels are clearly marked, many potential allergens are difficult to detect in the ingredient list. Therefore if food items are brought to school, the student who brought the food item will be instructed to bring it home. While we understand that this may be disappointing, the risk is simply too high. Refer to [district policy here](#) for more information.

Security

Doors are locked during the school day. All visitors are instructed to come to Door 1 off of Lena Smith Blvd. to buzz the office. All visitors are to report to the front office to sign in. In order to identify everyone in the building, visitors are required to provide a valid Driver's License, and are asked to wear a Visitor Sticker or a Volunteer Badge.

Classroom Visits

Please make arrangements in advance with your child's teacher.

Fire, Lock-down/Lock-out, and Severe Weather Drills

We will have five required fire drills throughout the course of the year. Teachers will have a copy of the directions for exiting the building using the nearest door posted by the door in each classroom. There will also be five lock-down/lock-out drills. Lock-down/lock-out drills ensure the safety of your child in the event of an intruder or other potential threat. A severe weather drill will be held during Tornado Awareness Week in April and will follow the state drill schedule. Dowling staff will show students where they need to go in the hallways, staying clear of large open spaces, windows or doors with glass or objects that might fall off of the wall during a storm.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

We inform families about state standards, curriculum, assessments and district business/plans through:

1. Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Meetings - review of state standards, district and state testing
2. Individual Parent Conferences
3. MPS Curriculum Guide K-5
4. Dowling Handbook

Our families and community learn about family involvement opportunities by:

1. School Newsletter
2. Teacher Newsletters
3. Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) fliers and emails
4. Weekly Emails

5. PTO-sponsored events
6. School website
7. Teacher websites
8. Automated Phone Calls

We communicate to families about the progress of their children by:

1. Individual Teacher/Parent Conferences
2. Report Cards
3. School-wide/Group data provided to PTO, Site Council

We provide materials and training to help families help their children with schoolwork by:

1. Individual Teacher/Parent Conferences
2. PTO-sponsored events
3. Fall Open House
4. Links to access math programs from home

Families may request a meeting to provide input about the education of their own child or school improvement. If a family wants a meeting they may contact one or more of the following staff: classroom teacher, collaborative teacher, school social worker, special education resource teacher, secretary or Principal. Requests to meet with a teacher must be set up in advance.

Dowling Site Council

The Site Council consists of staff, caregivers, and community members and functions much like a board of an organization. This group is open to anyone that wishes to participate in the policies, budget and programming priorities of the school. If a vote is needed, voting members are determined in the final spring meeting prior to the next school year. There are subcommittees of the Council that focus on topics including but not limited to Environmental Education, Communication, and school wide events. Meetings will be held monthly. Child care may be available if staffing is secured. Contact information and Minutes from each monthly meeting are available on the Dowling website. For more information about participating as a Council member or just as a committee contributor, contact the office.

Parent & Teacher Organization (PTO)

The mission of the Dowling Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is to support the students, parents & guardians and staff of Dowling School by:

- enhancing communication
- creating and facilitating fundraising events
- advancing educational opportunities for students
- providing a forum for speakers to present information about emerging issues,
- fostering community awareness of and involvement in Dowling School.

For more information visit the [PTO page on the Dowling website](#).

Volunteers

If you wish to volunteer in your child's classroom and/or chaperone on field trips, please complete the appropriate forms available in the office. Forms must be completed before the day you wish to volunteer. In addition, chaperones for field

trips are required to complete an online background check, located on the Volunteer MPS web page: <https://volmps.mpls.k12.mn.us/>. Please allow up to 4 weeks for the background check to be completed. Background check results are good for two years.

MEDIA CENTER INFORMATION:

In the Library Media Center, students look for and checkout books and ebooks, learn about literature, technology, research, and information literacy. Students also learn to evaluate websites, determine what's a fact and what's fake, and use different platforms for presenting information. All students will come at least once a week for book checkout, and will also visit for project-based instruction and access. The MPS Library Media curriculum is based on AASL (American Association of School Librarians) ITEM (Information and Technology Educators of Minnesota/Minnesota Library Association) and ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) Standards.

Book Checkout from the Dowling School Media Center

Because reading is such a crucial skill, and because improvement comes with practice, the Dowling Media Center provides a wide variety of books for students to borrow for reading practice, information, and enjoyment. For book selection, I guide and students decide. Students will have the opportunity to check out books each week. Students are responsible for handling library books with care, since they are for everyone to share. Please keep books away from pets, food, and all liquids. Any book damage should be reported to the library as soon as possible so we can attempt repairs. Library books may be kept for one week.

Book Checkout Limits

K—1st grade 1* book at a time

Please help your student(s) to return their media books so that others can check them out. They are learning a new routine and can use guidance.

*Students will be able to check out more when they demonstrate the ability to return books each week

2nd—5th grade Up to 5 books per week can be checked out

If a book is lost, a replacement book or payment toward a replacement will be requested to maintain our collection. If this is a hardship, alternative arrangements can be made, such as reading down a fine. If your family plans to move from Dowling School, please return all books before moving. Please contact me with specific questions or concerns about your child. I look forward to helping your child find joy in reading!

MPS DISTRICT POLICIES AND HEALTH & SAFETY NOTIFICATIONS

[MPS District Policies and Regulations](#)

[2026-27 Environmental Health & Safety Notifications](#)

Please visit this link for important notices regarding the following:

- Lead in Water Testing Notice
- Minnesota Parent Right to Know Act
- Pesticide/Herbicide Application Schedule
- Radio Frequency Notice
- Radon Testing Notice
- Asbestos Notice