

Engaging Potential Attendance Policy

Engaging Potential (EP) is committed to providing all students with an appropriate and effective education in a safe and happy environment.

Each student is welcomed, valued and respected and encouraged to respect themselves and others. We aim to empower all students to gain the essential skills both academic and social that will equip them for life. Non-attendance for any reason is an important issue that must be treated promptly and seriously. In all cases of non-attendance, it is essential that early action is taken.

EP adheres to the DfE Guidance on School Attendance: (School Attendance - Guidance for Schools (Department for Education - updated August 2020) and apply the recommendations relating to using student registers and attendance codes.

Please cross reference our Absconding, Behaviour Management and Anti Bullying Policy's and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as appropriate.

Roles & Responsibility

The aim of the policy is to promote the most effective education for students at EP. To achieve this, it is vital that students attend consistently and punctually. In order that students and parents/carers co-operate with this policy and students gain their full entitlement to education, parents/carers will be informed of the requirement on attendance.

Parental / Carer Responsibility

Adults have a primary role in ensuring the attendance of students. Good examples of attendance and timekeeping by staff and parents/carers provide role models for students. Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring regular attendance and notifying absences to school.

Parents / carers must notify us if their child is going to be absent before their session is due to start, for students due in the morning this should be by 8:30am, for students due in the afternoon, this should be by 11am. Calls can be made to the office on 01635 524113 / texts to any staff member. In the event this does not happen, EP staff will call or text parents / carers to establish why a student is absent.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

It is for the school, not the parent / carer, to decide whether to authorise any absences. EP will not authorise absences in the following circumstances

- Where no parental explanation is given
- For extended visits overseas where no approval has been given
- For holidays in the term time (unless there are exceptional circumstances)
- For shopping trips and days out
- Where it is believed the parent / carer is condoning an unnecessary absence
- In other cases where it is deemed there is not reasonable explanation

Taking Time off during Term Time

In particular, parents / carers should avoid taking their children out of school during term-time in order to go on holiday. EP will discourage you from doing this and may not agree to give your child leave. Parents / Carers do not have any right or entitlement to expect term-time leave to be granted. As a general rule, leave for planned leave of absence during term-time will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

What the law says

"The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into effect on 1st September 2013 removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted".

What are exceptional circumstances?

Examples of exceptional circumstance are:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill
- There may have been a significant trauma in the family recently and the Head/Student Welfare and Office Manager might consider that an immediate holiday might enable the child to better deal with the situation
- Parent / carer is serving in the Armed Forces and due to be deployed or just returned from deployment.

When permission is likely to be refused

- If the child has already had some absence in the current or preceding term

- It is near or during exam or test times
- It coincides with the start or end of the school year
- The reason given is that the holiday is cheaper in term-time
- The reason given relates to poor weather experienced during school holiday periods
- EP believes that it may have a harmful effect on the child's education.

Issues parents/carers need to be aware of

Should EP not agree to grant leave and the parents take their child on holiday regardless then this will be counted as unauthorised absence - this is the same as 'truancy'. Should leave be granted but the child remains absent for longer than agreed then this extra time will also be recorded as unauthorised absence. Unauthorised holiday absence may result in a fixed penalty fine, which will be issued per parent/carer per child.

Extended visits overseas

Occasionally holidays of more than 10 days to visit family overseas may be unavoidable. In such circumstance's EP will recognise the importance and significance such visits often have and will wish to ensure that a positive discussion with the parents takes place beforehand.

EP will stress to parents the likely educational impact upon their child if extended leave is taken during term-time. EP will also seek to explain what work the child will miss, how this may be addressed on return and how the parents can help the child. EP may also consider giving the child work to do while he or she is away.

How to request planned leave of absence during term time

If you feel your reasons for taking a holiday in term time amount to exceptional circumstances, please complete the request form at least one month before the proposed holiday.

You are advised not to make any booking before ascertaining if the proposed holiday can be authorised.

Taking Leave without permission

If leave of absence is taken in term time and has not been authorised by the school, the parents/carers will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice within the terms of the West Berkshire Code of Conduct.

Change of Address & Other Contact Details

Parents/Carers must inform us immediately if they, or the named emergency contacts, have a change of address, phone number or email address. In case of emergency we must be able to contact the parent/Carer or a second named person. Parent/Carer must provide this information when they first register their child and keep all information up to date.

EP Procedures

Due to the way we work, students have different start and finish times. Individual timetables are sent out on a weekly basis, usually Friday, by email or post. Each timetable contains details about start and finish time as well as each session and with whom. Some sessions may take place off site so additional travel, pick up and drop off information will also be detailed.

Students should be present from the start of each session – if they are not, it is the responsibility of the staff member leading the session to inform the office immediately where upon a discussion will be had to agree

- Who calls the responsible person
- Who shares with the team
- Who will record the information on the school management information system (MIS)

First day absence calls are made as soon as the absence is registered. The register is amended to show the reason for the absence. If we are unable to speak to the parent / carer a message will be left confirming they have not arrived and requesting a call back.

If no contact is made with the parent / carer by the third day a "Safe and Well" visit will be made. If no one is at home every attempt will be made to find further information i.e. from neighbours and Emergency Contacts.

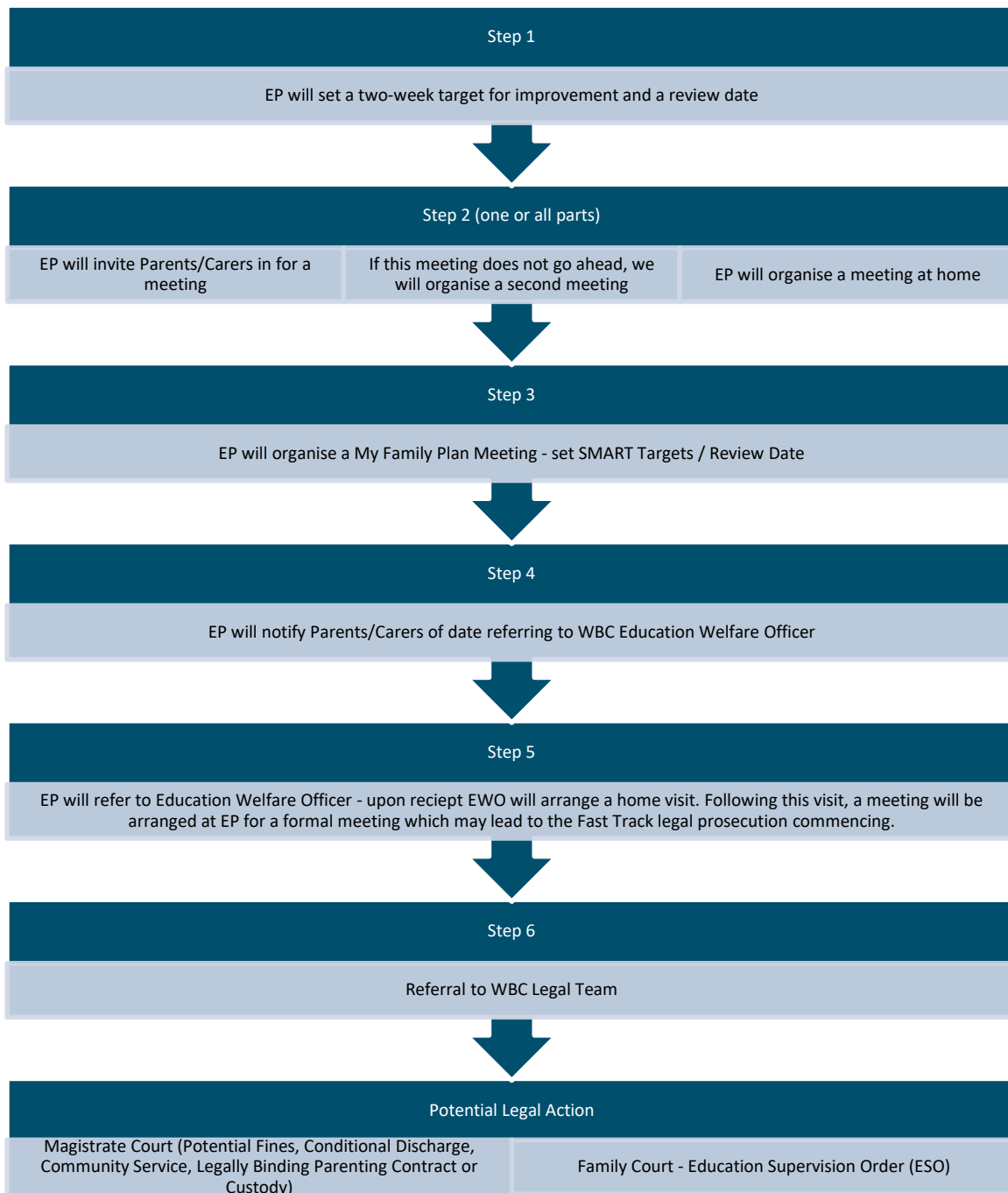
If no progress is made we will contact 101 and request a Police Welfare Check as well as contact West Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Board via Contact, Advice and Assessment Service (CAAS). This will all be recorded on our MIS System.

Child Protection Concerns

If there are any Child Protection concerns these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps.

Attendance Plans

Where a student's attendance falls below 90% of timetabled sessions EP will use the steps below as a guide. EP is keen to work with students and parents / carers to avoid these steps but has a legal duty to inform The Local Authority's Education Welfare Service of any continued unauthorised absences.



Version	Date	Description	Initials
1	02/10/19	New Policy	TW
2	10/02/20	Review	PB/TW
3	20/05/21	Review	PB/TW
4	05/10/21	Review	PB/TW
5	01/03/23	Updated Absence reporting	HH
6	01/03/2024	Updated STEPs/Safe and Well	TW

REQUEST FOR TAKING LEAVE DURING TERM TIME

To be completed at least one month prior to leave period

Name of child:	Year:
Purpose of absence:	
Reason for absence during term time:	
Proposed start date:	Date of return to EP:
Reason why it is not possible to take holiday other than in term time:	
What study arrangements will be made for the child whilst they are absent from EP?	
Are there siblings at another West Berkshire School? YES / NO	
If so, which school?	

Signed:.....(Parent/Carer)

Date:.....

For EP use only

No. of days absence requested:	
Percentage attendance:	
Has term time holiday been requested before and if so, when and how many days:	
Term Time Holiday leave is:	APPROVED / NOT APPROVED
Reason:	
Date parent/carer informed of decision:	
Date 01a / O1b Sent:	
Date O2 Sent: (including Agency Enquiry & Leaflet)	
Date O3 (if appropriate) Sent:	
Date O4 Sent: (Include Leaflet)	
Date FPN Application Completed and Sent:	

Signed.....(Head/Centre Manager)

Date:.....