

Engaging Potential (EP)

Attendance Policy

Engaging Potential (EP) is dedicated to providing a supportive, safe, and nurturing environment for all students, where they are respected, valued, and encouraged to achieve academically and socially. Attendance is a critical factor in student success, and non-attendance is treated as a serious issue that must be addressed immediately, in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance on school attendance and the latest statutory legislation.

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

Legislative Framework

In adherence to the DfE's guidance "[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)" (August 2024), EP ensures a proactive and inclusive approach to attendance management, supporting students and families to overcome barriers to regular attendance and meet their statutory obligations under the new guidelines.

The updated legislation emphasises a shared responsibility between schools, families, and local authorities, reinforcing the importance of working in partnership to ensure that all children have access to a suitable education.

Roles & Responsibilities

The aim of this policy is to promote the most effective education for students at EP through regular attendance. EP acknowledges that consistent attendance is a collective responsibility. The school, parents/carers, and local authorities must work together to improve attendance and resolve any barriers to learning.

- **School Responsibility:** EP is committed to monitoring attendance closely, engaging with parents*, and intervening early to address attendance concerns in line with the August 2024 guidance. EP will provide regular communication to parents and carers regarding attendance expectations and collaborate with external agencies to offer appropriate support where necessary.
 - 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)
- **Parental/Carer Responsibility:** Under the new legislation, parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. They are expected to notify EP of any absences in advance and work with the school to resolve attendance issues.
 - 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.
 - 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.

* Parent - includes any person who has parental responsibility for a child, as well as any adult who has day-to-day care of a child

Absence Classifications

EP will determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised based on clear and consistent criteria aligned with the 2024 guidance.

- **Authorised Absences:** These include legitimate medical appointments, illness (with appropriate documentation), or exceptional circumstances.
- **Unauthorised Absences:** These include, but are not limited to, term-time holidays without prior approval, absences without parental explanation, and non-essential absences such as shopping or leisure activities.

Term-Time Leave & Exceptional Circumstances

EP strictly adheres to the statutory expectations outlined in the August 2024 legislation, which restricts term-time leave unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- **Exceptional Circumstances Include:**
 - A close family member's serious illness or death
 - Parent/carer serving in the Armed Forces

Parents/carers must submit a request for term-time leave in writing at least one month before the planned absence. EP will assess the request in light of the student's attendance record and the potential impact on their education. Unauthorised leave will be recorded as an absence and could result in a Penalty Notice (PN).

Proactive Support Measures

In line with the 2024 legislation, EP will:

1. **Early Identification of Attendance Concerns:**
Regular attendance reviews will identify any emerging patterns of absenteeism. Early interventions will be initiated through communication with the family, signposting them to appropriate support services when necessary.
2. **Tailored Support:**
Where attendance falls below 90%, EP will work with students, parents/carers, and, where appropriate, external agencies to develop a personalised attendance action plan. This may include mentoring, family support, or referrals to external services such as West Berkshire's Education Welfare Service.
3. **Multi-Agency Working:**
EP will work closely with the local authority and other partners to tackle persistent absenteeism, ensuring that a coordinated approach is taken. This includes regular communication with families and offering assistance in resolving issues affecting school attendance.
4. **Escalation Procedures:**
When attendance does not improve despite intervention, EP is legally required to refer the matter to the local authority's Education Welfare and Safeguarding Service (EWSS). The service may issue fines or pursue legal action as per the 2024 guidelines.

First-Day Absence Procedure

In compliance with the latest guidance, EP ensures that same-day contact is made with the parent/carer on the first day of a student's absence.

- If contact is not made by the third day of absence, EP will escalate the matter, including conducting a "Safe and Well" visit or involving the police, if necessary. These actions are part of the updated "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" requirements aimed at safeguarding children.

Extended Visits Overseas

Occasional extended overseas visits for family reasons may be considered, but EP emphasises the educational impact of missing school. Clear discussions with the family will be required to ensure any extended leave is necessary and how learning can continue during the absence.

EP will continue to stress that absences for extended overseas trips must be pre-approved and that failure to comply could result in a Penalty Notice in accordance with the West Berkshire Code of Conduct.

Legal Implications of Non-Compliance

As per the August 2024 guidance, unauthorised absences, including term-time holidays without approval, will be subject to legal penalties. This may result in Penalty Notices (PN), which are imposed on a per-parent, per-child basis. Persistent unauthorised absence can result in court proceedings.

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Attendance Plans

If a student's attendance falls below 90% of timetabled sessions EP will follow the structured approach outlined in the 2024 guidance, which includes early intervention, personalised attendance plans, and multi-agency collaboration to support the student and family in improving attendance.

Step 1		
Engaging Potential will set a two week for improvement and a review date		
Step 2 (one or all parts)		
EP will invite parents/carers to a meeting	If this meeting does not go ahead, we will organise a second meeting	EP will organise a meeting in the home
Step 3		
EP will organise a My Family Plan (MFP) and set SMART Targets		
Step 4		
EP will refer concerns to Education Welfare and Safeguarding Service (EWSS) using the EWS Referral Form		

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	
7	29/07/2024	Updated to include new DfE Guidance	TW
8	07/11/2024	Streamlined Attendance Plan Steps	TW