

BELONGING BRIEF

OCTOBER 2026

BUILDING A SCHOOL WHERE EVERY CHILD BELONGS AND MATTERS.

Welcome to Issue 1 of *The Belonging Brief*.

Welcome to the Term 1 edition of The Belonging Brief, highlighting Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge's steadfast commitment to cultivating an inclusive, nurturing environment where every pupil is recognised, valued, and encouraged to thrive. Fulfilling this foundational mandate requires a shared dedication to daily attendance and active presence across all aspects of school life.

Our Attendance Strategy: Belonging & Mattering

To ensure every young person flourishes, the school's attendance framework has evolved from a focus on basic "Belonging" to the deeper, actionable principle of "Mattering." While both concepts are vital to personal development and well-being, the distinction between them shapes daily pastoral practice:

- **Belonging:** The feeling of 'I fit in.'
- **Mattering:** The deeper knowledge that 'I am missed when I am gone'.
'Form Tutors play a pivotal role in operationalising this philosophy. Serving as active "collectors of presence," tutors build meaningful connection points each morning, ensuring that every pupil's absence is noticed and that their return is genuinely welcomed. This active validation fosters a culture where attendance is directly linked to personal significance and mutual respect. This internal sense of purpose directly aligns with observable classroom routines and wider school culture.

School Culture Focus: Warm Welcomes & Positive Partings

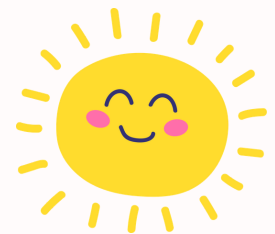
THIS HALF TERM'S CULTURE FOCUS

Warm Welcomes & Positive Partings across the entire Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge community, staff and pupils are expected to intentionally practice **Warm Welcomes & Positive Partings** at the start and conclusion of every single lesson. Establishing consistent greeting and dismissal routines ensures that transitions are calm, structured, and positive. This clear expectation applies equally to staff and pupils, reinforcing an environment of mutual respect throughout the school day.



Home Support Tip for Families: Families can powerfully mirror this practice at home by creating intentional reflection moments at the end of the day. Replacing standard questions like "How was school?" with structured, open-ended prompts encourages richer dialogue and reinforces a sense of accomplishment:

- "Tell me something you learned today."
- "What was the highlight of your day?"



Establishing positive daily routines at home and school creates the stability needed to maintain high attendance standards and meet statutory educational expectations.



Attendance Update, Data & Statutory Policy Escalation

Consistent presence in school is directly linked to academic attainment, social development, and overall well-being. Below is the current term attendance breakdown across all year groups compared to the Trust target:

Whole School | 93.8% (Trust Target: 96.0%)
Year 7 | 97.5% (Exceeding Target)
Year 8 | 95.1% (Approaching Target)
Year 9 | 87.8% (Primary Focus Area)
Year 10 | 93.5% (Near School Average)
Year 11 | 94.5% (Approaching Target)

The Educational Impact of Absence

Lost learning hours have a cumulative effect on academic success. Quantifiable data shows that 1.5 days missed equals 7.5 hours of direct teaching time lost. Over time, these gaps significantly undermine progress, examination readiness, and classroom confidence.

Positive Reinforcement & Reward Initiatives

To encourage and celebrate regular attendance, the school utilises a range of supportive initiatives:

- **Attendance Improvement Challenge:** Tailored support plans and recognition for pupils who were at or below 90% attendance during the previous academic year.
- **Weekly 100% Draws:** Interactive spinning wheel draws celebrating pupils who maintain full attendance each week.
- **Individual Progress Recognition:** Ongoing praise and awards celebrating personal attendance gains and positive trends.

Statutory Framework & Policy Escalation

Under Department for Education (DfE) and Local Authority statutory guidance, the school maintains a structured duty of care to address persistent absence. When attendance falls below acceptable thresholds or unexcused absences occur, the formal policy escalation pathway includes:

1. **Written Alerts:** Official correspondence notifying parents of emerging attendance concerns.
2. **Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP) Meetings:** Formal collaborative meetings to establish binding target plans.
3. **Local Authority Referrals:** Formal submission of persistent absence records to local education welfare officers.
4. **Penalty Fines:** Statutory financial penalties issued in accordance with legal regulations.

Empathetic Pastoral Reassurance: While statutory duties are strictly observed, Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge prioritises working as a supportive team alongside families. The primary goal is always to identify, understand, and overcome individual barriers to attendance on a personal level long before formal statutory thresholds are reached. Building regular attendance habits provides the essential foundation for pupils to fully engage with the school's personal development curriculum.



Attendance Matters

Every student. Every day.



Personal Development: PSHE (Jigsaw Curriculum)

This autumn term, all year groups are engaging with the foundational Jigsaw PSHE unit, 'Being Me in My World'. This unit guides pupils through crucial self-reflection, personal responsibility, and digital citizenship. To help parents engage in meaningful learning conversations at home, the central "Big Question" for each year group is detailed below:

Year Group & Curriculum Level | Year-Group Big Question

Year 7 (11+ Module) "How do I fit into the world I live in?"

Year 8 (12+ Module) "Can I choose how I fit into the world?"

Year 9 (13+ Module) "To what extent does the world I live in affect my identity?"

Year 10 (14+ Module) "Is managing my online and offline world within my control?"

Year 11 (15+ Module) "Are we in the adult world at 16?"

In addition to classroom-based PSHE lessons, wider parental workshops extend support into the broader home environment.



Parent Workshops & BRIYM Updates

Building Resilience in Young Minds (BRIYM) is an established workshop series designed to provide parents with actionable tools to support adolescent mental health and personal growth. Launched last year at Maiden Erlegh School with exceptional success, access to these specialised talks has now been expanded to include all MECE families across the Trust.

[Read the full BRIYM Parent Workshop Letter & Booking Details](#)

Workshop Schedule & Portal Access

The 2026-27 event schedule commences on Tuesday 1st December . Parents are encouraged to routinely log into the Sched app or web browser portal, where the hosting team frequently uploads new upcoming sessions, resource guides, and booking slots. Proactive resilience training works hand-in-hand with robust home digital safety practices to protect young people in an evolving online landscape.



Safeguarding Spotlight

Online Threats & Digital Safety

THREAT FOCUS 1: The '764' Collective & Gamified Extortion Groups

School safeguarding leads highlight an emerging online risk involving criminal networks known generically as the '764' collective or gamified extortion groups:

- **Mechanism:** Perpetrators groom young people on social media and gaming platforms using gamified 'dare and level' challenges.
- **Tactics:** Tasks rapidly escalate from innocent dares to coercion, self-harm requests, and blackmail involving financial or image extortion.
- **Red Flags:** Extreme secretiveness regarding device use, sudden mood drops, withdrawal from family, or unexplainable anxiety surrounding messaging notifications.
- **Action:** Immediate reporting should be submitted through the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) command or the police.



THREAT FOCUS 2: Hidden Calculator Vault Apps

Covert "calculator vault" software represents a growing method used by adolescents to hide restricted content, photos, or messaging channels.

1. **Mechanism:** These applications appear on a device screen with a standard calculator icon and fully functional math interface. However, entering a secret passcode unlocks a hidden, encrypted storage vault.
2. **Physical Verification Method:** Parents cannot rely solely on home screen icons to monitor device safety. To inspect true application usage, navigate physically through device settings:
 - Open phone **Settings**.
 - Select **Storage** or **Data Usage**.
 - Inspect the comprehensive app list to reveal hidden software classifications, actual storage footprints, and true battery consumption.

Maintaining proactive digital safeguarding enables open communication between home and school, supported by dedicated feedback channels and external specialist services.



We Want To Hear From You...



Continuous dialogue between families and the school strengthens the entire educational community. Parents and carers are invited to submit suggestions, or reflections regarding Attendance, Safeguarding and Personal Development, at any time using the official **MECE Parent Feedback Form**.

[Parent Feedback Form - Fill in Form](#)

External Support & Safeguarding Directory

NSPCC (Child Protection & Safety), 0808 800 5000 / nspcc.org.uk

Childline (24/7 Support), 0800 1111 / childline.org.uk

CEOP (Online Exploitation Reporting), ceop.police.uk

Internet Matters (Digital Safety Guides), internetmatters.org

YoungMinds (Youth Mental Health), youngminds.org.uk

Action for Children (Family Well-being), actionforchildren.org.uk

No5 Reading (Local Youth Counseling), no5.org.uk

Thank you for your ongoing support and for working in partnership with us to ensure every child feels safe, valued, and excited to learn. Together, we build a school community where every student truly belongs and matters.



Aim High



Be Inclusive



Work Together

