



CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

BASKERVILLE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date created: January 2018
Next Review: January 2019

BASKERVILLE SCHOOL, FELLOWS LANE, HARBORNE, BIRMINGHAM, B17 9TS

TELEPHONE : 0121 427 3191
FAX : 0121 428 2204

VISION STATEMENT

We will ensure the entitlement of each student to access a variety of opportunities to promote academic, social, emotional and physical development.

We will use autistic specific, empathetic approaches and an autistic sympathetic learning environment to promote student learning and personal development.

We will provide choices and challenges in order to maximize potential and build upon strengths and interests.

All the members of the school community are valued equally and work in partnership with parents, carers and the wider community.

We will work within a supportive school framework to promote and celebrate individual success, integration into the wider community and prepare students for life after school.

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

All of our students have autistic spectrum disorders; they have greater difficulty than other students with social understanding and communication. Therefore, it is essential that this policy is implemented consistently to support all students and maintain physical, social and emotional development and ensure a safe environment.

This policy should be read in conjunction with: School attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – DfE,

The Governing body of Baskerville School places a high priority on achieving standards and believes that excellent student attendance is essential. In order for children to achieve their potential, students must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school. Regular attendance will establish good habits that will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a minimum of 95% attendance throughout the school.

Baskerville School will:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90% attendance)
- Ensure every student has access to full-time education, to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address poor patterns of attendance.

PROCEDURES

Parents will:

- Ensure that their child will attend school regularly.
- Notify school on the first day of absence before 8.30am by phone or via a message from the transport guide and every other subsequent day.
- Provide the school with medical evidence after 5 days of absence due to illness or when requested by the school if the child's attendance is being monitored.
- Provide a written letter of explanation upon their child returning to school after an absence.
- Meet with the Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher – Pastoral to discuss their Child's attendance when necessary.
- Parents to request absence to the Head Teacher in term time for exceptional circumstances.

Medical evidence includes:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered.
- Letter from a professional.
- Medication prescribed by a GP.
- Copy of prescription.
- Print screen of medical notes.
- Letters concerning hospital appointments.
- Slip with date, students name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist.

Medical evidence should not be obtained by a GP note.

Class teachers will:

- Complete a register at the start of each session (morning and afternoon).
- Monitor daily patterns of attendance and report any concerns that arise to the Assistant Head Teacher – Pastoral.
- Promote good attendance.

Office staff will:

- Input attendance data onto SIMS system.
- Complete the absence record book.
- Monitor with the Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher – Pastoral, patterns of attendance.
- Call parents on each day of absence if no letter/call is received.
- Assist with Fast Track to Attendance procedures with parents of children whose attendance is of a concern.

Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher (Pastoral) will:

- Monitor attendance at the end of each month noting concern for students under 95% attendance and draw up attendance plans for students under 90%.
- Meet, where there are concerns over medical reasons, with parents for students with attendance under 90%
- Inform Governors of attendance records.
- Carry out Fast Track to Attendance procedures with parents of children whose attendance is of concern.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

A 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, means that the Head Teacher may no longer authorise leave during term time except under exceptional circumstances. If a parent/carer wishes to take their child out of school during term time for any reason, then that request must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least six weeks or half a term in advance where possible. The request does not, in itself, guarantee that the request will be authorised. The Head Teacher will inform the parent/carer within 7 school days of receipt of the application regarding the request.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body are within their rights to turn applications down and refuse permission for parents/carers to take their children out of school during term time. Such a decision will have been made in the best interests of the student's educational progress and attainment with due regard to their previous attendance record. In such a case, any subsequent absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'. Parents taking their children out of school during term time without the Head Teacher's authorisation not only damage their children's educational opportunities but also risk being issued with a penalty notice, prosecuted in court and losing the child's place at the school.

The Head Teacher will record the number and frequency of absences taken during term time throughout each student's school career.

Exceptional Circumstances:

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in exceptional circumstances such as:

- Death of a parent/carer or sibling of the student.
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the student.
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required).
- Leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time.
- Leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within the last six months and supported by documentation from the previous school).

STRATEGIES FOR MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE

- Individual certificates will be presented termly to students who have achieved 100% attendance that term and at awards evening for those achieving 100% during the whole academic year.
- Attendance will be promoted daily in class, through assemblies and on the electronic display board in the school's reception area.
- Each term the tutor will speak to student's about their individual attendance and to parents at Parents' Evening to encourage the students to take ownership of their own attendance.
- If the child's attendance level drops below 95% the Head Teacher will write to parents and continue to monitor.
- If it continues to drop and falls below 90%, the Head Teacher will contact parents and an action plan will be put in place where there are reasons other than medical difficulties.
- Regular poor attendees will be targeted under the Fast Track to Attendance Procedures. Parents will be made aware of this process in writing where attendance is a concern.
- Attendance will be reported to parents in Annual Reviews and end of year reports.

EARLY HELP

Before any Fast Track to Attendance procedures are undertaken it is an expectation of the Local Authority that schools will adhere to Early Help to ensure that families are given opportunities to address any difficulties they may have to ensure their child attends school on a daily basis.

DELETION OF STUDENT FROM SCHOOL ROLL

A student is deleted from the school roll if s/he is registered as a student of another school or college. The school will NOT remove a student from roll where there is no known destination.

CHILDREN 'LEFT SCHOOL NO TRACE' (FORMERLY 'CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION')

If the school believes a child has left Baskerville School but there is no record of them being taken on roll at another school, then the school will refer to the LSNT team for advice and support. The school will then follow the LSNT current guidelines and procedures.

Appendix A – Attendance Letters



School logo
(delete if preferred)

School Attendance

A very important message for all Parents/Carers

Insert Date

Dear Parent/Carer,

..... Academy/School is working in partnership with parents and the Local Authority to improve school attendance. **We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work?

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006. **Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.**

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children

with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

Legal action that may be taken includes:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern, the school will offer advice and support to improve attendance. After this, any unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.

Yours sincerely,



Lead Attendance Officer

(delete if preferred)

Head teacher

Education Legal Intervention Team
Alternative Provision, Attendance,
and Independent Education Service
Birmingham City Council

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»
«AddressLine1»
«AddressLine2»
«City»

Appendix B – Helpful Letter

«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB» Yr «YearGroup»

I'm writing to you to express concern about «ChildFirstName» attendance in school. As you may be aware, it is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure children attend school regularly.

We work with parents to improve school attendance. Good attendance will mean that your child is able to achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- miss out on social events
- are more likely to become involved in crime

If you feel that your child has ongoing or unresolved medical issues you are advised to approach your doctor urgently.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or your child's attendance please contact the school. If you call and there is no one available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

«Name»

Head teacher

Appendix C: Helpful Medical Letter

Ref:

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»
«AddressLine1»
«AddressLine2»
«City»
«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB» Yr «YearGroup»

Your child's poor attendance at school this year is causing serious concern as *he/she* has been absent for **number** of sessions out of a possible **number** of sessions and this will make it much harder for your child to achieve good results in their school work. **Most/ All** of the absence has been due to illness or for medical reasons.

It has been decided that due to the high level of your child's absence, **the Head Teacher will no longer authorise any absence for medical reasons unless supported by medical evidence.**

I have to advise you that we monitor all pupils with poor school attendance and will take action when absence is unauthorised; this may lead to prosecution.

Therefore should **Pupil's name** have any further sessions of absence because of illness or medical reasons you are strongly advised to provide one of the following which may enable the Head Teacher to authorise your child's absence:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- Letter from a professional such as a hospital Consultant or Psychologist
- Evidence of a consultation with NHS 111
- Medication prescribed by a GP
- Copy of prescription
- Print screen of medical notes
- Letters concerning hospital appointments
- Slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by Receptionist

Doctors or GP 'sick' notes are not required. Please do not request these from your GP.

Please be aware that telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent/carer are **not** acceptable as medical evidence when attendance is of serious concern.

I have to advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Education Act 1996 Section 444).

We work with parents to improve school attendance. Good attendance will mean that your child is able to achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- miss out on social events
- are more likely to become involved in crime

If you feel that your child has ongoing or unresolved medical issues you are advised to approach your doctor urgently.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this letter or your child's attendance please contact me. If you call and I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

«School Representative»
Job Title

Appendix D: Helpful SARM Letter

Ref:

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»
«AddressLine1»
«AddressLine2»
«City»
«PostCode»

FAST-track to Attendance Invitation to a School Attendance Review Meeting

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

**Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB»
Yr «YearGroup» at «SchoolName»**

There have been continuing difficulties concerning the attendance of your child «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» at «SchoolName».

You have been offered advice and support to improve «ChildFirstName»'s attendance and prevent the need for legal action.

In an attempt to resolve issues regarding attendance, a School Attendance Review Meeting has been arranged at «**SchoolName**» on «**AppointDate**» at «**AppointTime**».

«ChildFirstName» should be in school and can join us for the meeting. If «ChildFirstName» is not in school please bring «ChildFirstName» with you.

It is very important that you attend. Your co-operation is essential.

This meeting is an opportunity for you to discuss any matters of concern.

Failure to attend this meeting and further unauthorised absence could result in you being prosecuted in court and/or a penalty notice being issued.

I have to advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Section 444, Education Act 1996).

Please contact me urgently on the telephone number provided if you are unable to attend. If I am not available, please leave a message and contact telephone number.

Yours sincerely

«School_Representative»

Job Title

Appendix E: Helpful Punctuality Letter

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»
«AddressLine1»
«AddressLine2»
«City»
«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName»

Your child, «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» has been identified as having poor punctuality at «School_name» School.

As you may be aware, the law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if late arrival is not resolved.

I have to advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs the child may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. (Education Act 1996)

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equals days worth of teaching lost in a year
5 mins	3.4 days
10 mins	6.9 days
15 mins	10.3 days
20 mins	13.8 days
30 mins	20.7 days

Poor punctuality can lead to your child...

- *Feeling embarrassed in front of their friends*
- *Missing the beginning of vital lessons*
- *Missing important instructions for the rest of the school day*
- *Learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future*

If your child is having any difficulties that you wish to discuss, contact me immediately. Your child's punctuality must now improve or the school may have no option but to take further action against you.

If you call and I am not available please leave a message and telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

«School_Representative»
Job Title

Appendix F: LD1 – Refuse of Leave

LD1

Ref:

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»
«AddressLine1»
«AddressLine2»
«City»
«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

**Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB»
Yr «YearGroup» at «SchoolName»**

Thank you for your recent leave of absence request form.

On this occasion I am not able to authorise your child's leave of absence.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence'.

If you decide to take the leave, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued or legal action being taken.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendship with peers and support from staff can provide children with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

It is essential for your child to be in school regularly to benefit fully from their educational opportunities. Good attendance will ensure that your child can reach their full potential. To achieve this, your child needs to attend school every day.

We are sure you would not wish to jeopardise your child's academic progress by taking them away at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Enclosure: copy of 'Leave of Absence Request Form'

Appendix G: Leave in Term Time Taken

LD2

Ref:

Insert date

«ParentTitle» «ParentFirstName» «ParentLastName»
«AddressLine1»
«AddressLine2»
«City»
«PostCode»

Dear «ParentTitle» «ParentLastName»

**Re: «ChildFirstName» «ChildLastName» - D.O.B. «ChildDOB»
Yr «YearGroup» at «SchoolName»**

It has come to my attention that your child has been absent from school due to unauthorised leave taken in term time. If this is not the case and your child was absent due to illness, can I request you provide medical evidence to the school to authorise the absence. This would include:

Medical appointment card with one appointment entered, stamped by a doctors surgery;
Letter from a qualified medical professional;
Medical/doctors note;
Medication prescribed by a GP;
Copy of prescription;
Print screen of medical notes;
Letters concerning hospital appointments;
Slip with date, pupils name and surgery stamp, signed by GP Receptionist.

As you may be aware I am not able to authorise your child's absence due to term time leave. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 do not allow Headteachers to retrospectively authorise leave.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence'.

Unfortunately the absence will be marked as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued or legal action being taken. I would also advise that if your child is still currently absent from school, you return the child to school with immediate effect

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Appendix H: Term Time Leave Request

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES – PUPIL TERM TIME LEAVE REQUEST

Pupil's Name D.O.B Form

Pupil's Name D.O.B Form

I request permission for the above named pupil(s) to be granted leave during the school term.

Reason for request

.....
.....
.....

Dates of Absence

From To No of school days

I/We understand that if leave is agreed:

- if travelling abroad, I / we will supply a copy of the return travel documentation.
- I / we will supply the name and phone number of a contact person whilst abroad.
- if I / we do not return at the agreed time; I / we am / are aware that I / we may be issued with a penalty notice. If I do not pay the fine, I / we could then be required to attend Court; this could result in a fine of up to £1000 per child and having a criminal record.
- In exceptional circumstances penalty notices may not be issued and cases may be taken straight to Court.
- he/she may be removed from the school register in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Parent/Carer Name	Parent/Carer Name
DOB	DOB
Address	Address
Signature	Signature
Date	Date

Request **agreed / denied**

Signed Head Teacher Dated