



CITY OF BIRMINGHAM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

BASKERVILLE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date created: December 2016
Next Review: December 2017

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.

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, November 2016.

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.
- Write a letter to the Head Teacher to request absence in term time for exceptional circumstances.

Medical evidence includes:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered.
- Letter from a professional.
- Medical note.
- 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.

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 CMIS 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 Spotlight on 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 with parents for students with attendance under 90%
- Inform Governors of attendance records.
- Carry out Spotlight on 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.
- Regular poor attendees will be targeted under the 'Spotlight on Attendance' campaign. 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.

Deletion of student from school role:

- 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

Letter 1 – Spotlight on Attendance

October 2015

Dear Parent/Carer,

Baskerville School are working in partnership with parents to improve school attendance. **We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

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.

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 their potential progress
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more vulnerable to dangers
- miss out on opportunities for continuing education post 19

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006.

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. Leave in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Legal action that may be taken include:

- **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.

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
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

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 you will receive another letter advising you about improving attendance. After this, any further unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

We will improve attendance by making it clear within the school and local community that unauthorised absence is not acceptable. You will be informed of the number of penalty notices issued, prosecutions and the level of fines.

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

Rosemary Adams
Head Teacher

.....
.....

Letter 2

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your child's poor attendance at school this year is causing serious concern as **s/he** 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 advice.**

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

Therefore, should **student'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.
- Medical note.
- 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.

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 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 attainment for their ability and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. Absence disrupts the education of the of the individual child and the whole class.

Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve their potential.
- find it difficult to maintain friendships.
- miss out on social events.
- are more vulnerable to dangers.

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.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Adams
Head Teacher

.....
.....

Letter 3 – Letter to Parent who attended School Attendance Review Meeting

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for coming to the School Attendance Review Meeting regarding the poor attendance of your child.

We were very pleased that you came to the meeting and hopefully your child's attendance will now improve.

As explained, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's regular school attendance.

I will continue to monitor their attendance. If there is further unauthorised absence; we will be submitting the paperwork to Court Section, Education Welfare Service and this may result in you being prosecuted at court and/or a penalty notice being issued.

Please contact me if your child is experiencing any difficulty preventing their attendance.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Adams
Head Teacher