



# BASTON HOUSE SCHOOL

Addressing the triad of specific features - social interaction, social communication and social imagination - to reduce the effect that the Autism Spectrum has on children's learning



P R O S P E C T U S

2011/2012



**BASTON HOUSE SCHOOL**

## Baston House School

Baston House School is an independent special school for children aged between five and sixteen years, whose Statement of Special Educational Needs describes their Primary need as being on the Autism Spectrum and of a high-functioning nature.

Our goal is to break down the barriers to learning that our students encounter and to help them to equip themselves for as independent a life as possible outside of school.

Our approach is based on an eclectic fusion of child-centred and autism-specific strategies and techniques, with a clear focus on improving communication and interaction skills through positive interventions.

### **Our Mission Statement**

Baston House School will strive to provide effective specialist education and support to pupils on the Autism Spectrum and to their families, enabling pupils to achieve their full potential in education and in life outside school.

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## Primary Education

At the Primary Phase, Baston House School will offer a specialist education that includes the National Curriculum to pupils aged from five to eleven years.

The main focus will be to address the barriers to learning that pupils on the Autism Spectrum encounter, namely communication & interaction difficulties and problems with flexibility of thought and action.



A strongly visual learning style is characteristic of the Autism Spectrum and our curriculum will therefore be delivered through a visually biased range of strategies, including highly structured work-systems and learning environments.

Our Speech & Language team, along with other specialists, will support the development of our pupils' communication and interaction skills as they experience a broad curriculum.

Positive reinforcement will include individually meaningful reward systems that motivate our pupils to participate in activities and to begin to take responsibility for their own learning.

Close liaison and co-operation with parents/carers is seen as essential in providing continuity and consistency of approach for our pupils.

### School Sessions

School Starts/Registration 9.00am

Lessons Commence 9.05am

Break 10.30am - 10.45am

Lunch 12.00 noon – 1.00pm

School Ends 3.20pm



## Secondary Education

Baston House School will offer a wide range of opportunities for Key Stage 3 students who encounter barriers to their learning through their difficulties on the Autism Spectrum. Specialist subject Teachers will lead and support the teaching and learning at this stage. Experience of specialist subject areas, resources and equipment will be an increasing part of each school day.



In Key Stage 4 courses that provide pathways to nationally recognised accreditation, including GCSE, may be followed. We will steadily increase the range of practical and vocational curriculum areas available to our students. In all cases, students will be supported in reaching their full potential and in acquiring skills that will enable them to live as independently as possible.



Work experience will also become an important aspect of a holistic approach to education at this stage. Specialist teams will continue their involvement in the planning of students' individual programmes, ensuring that their strengths are maximised and difficulties addressed through a fully integrated curriculum that meets their learning and special needs.

### School Sessions

School Starts/Registration 9.00am  
Lessons Commence 9.15am  
Break 10.45am – 11.00am  
Lunch 12.45pm – 1.30pm  
School Ends 3.30pm



### Specialist Teams

Working alongside our Teaching staff, there will be others who are vital in ensuring that our pupils/students are appropriately supported through every day and every learning experience.

Small class groups will be supported by Teaching Assistants, who will work under the direction of the Teachers. Teaching Assistants may support individual pupils or small groups, dependent on need.



They may also be integral in the delivery of specialist interventions formulated by Speech & Language Therapists or by other specialists. Therapists will also directly support pupils within classes, varying their focus between improving communication & interaction skills and emotional development (including anxiety and anger management).

Our plan is to steadily increase our provision of a range of specialist interventions. These may include Occupational Therapy, Music Therapy, Drama Therapy and counselling.

Baston House School will optimise contacts within the local community and further afield, giving our pupils/students the opportunity to engage in a wide range of spheres of activity. These will include -

- Life Skills programmes
- Work-related learning
- Sex, relationship and drug related education
- Mainstream participation
- Citizenship (including School Council)
- Healthy eating
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme



### Philosophy

Baston House School is committed to providing a specialised environment in which all pupils/students are treated with respect and that their holistic needs are met. This ensures the maintenance of an emotionally healthy school community and in turn promotes the development of emotional intelligence. This foundation provides an environment where optimum learning can take place.

Active and effective involvement in the teaching and learning processes within the school is further encouraged through the use of specifically designed behaviour support plans. Being a person with Autism means that, to varying degrees it is difficult to understand what is expected by other human beings and by society in general. Firm, fair and consistent rules, boundaries and expectations as well as clarity of language used to describe these essential processes, provide a framework for security and understanding and enhance personal and social development in a manner which improves the pupils' ability to relate effectively with others.

Using a solution-based approach to difficulties, as opposed to language associated with 'blame' and 'right' or 'wrong' supports the maintenance of a low anxiety learning environment and facilitates understanding and learning. Ultimately this ensures appropriate access to individual learning programmes within the context of a supportive and effective school community.

### Aims

We aim to do this by providing a curriculum of connective education which will give opportunities for pupils to make connections and gather meaning that will allow them to progress throughout the curriculum and in the world outside the school.

We promote the use of a consistent communication-focused environment which will address the anxieties that come with the social and communication difficulties of Autism. Staff work to provide an environment where the emotional, social and physical needs of the pupils will be met in such a way that the pupils will learn to be responsible for and manage their own thoughts, feelings and actions and their learning.



## Policies

The school bases its policies and ethos on equality and places strong emphasis on equal opportunities with respect to race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief and disability.

### **Pastoral Care**

The school's Behaviour Policy will provide very clear aims and guidance about how pupils' emotional well being and pastoral care will be supported by all staff. Each Teacher and Tutor will take responsibility for the behaviour support plans and Individual Educational Plans for their group and ensure that all staff work together and with the pupils' parents. These plans will help pupils to work towards decreasing behaviours which inhibit learning, independence and acceptable action.

### **Behaviour**

As stated above, behaviour is supported very clearly, consistently and constructively through The school's Behaviour Policy, the support plans for each pupil, staff and parent training /information and home/school support.

The school will maintain a calm, low anxiety environment that supports the pupils in understanding and keeping the school rules and boundaries.

Staff will be trained in techniques to use in times of high anxiety and emotional charge, enabling them to help pupils to develop their own calming strategies. This will give pupils autonomy and control in a way that works for them and for others.

There may be occasions when the emotional charge is so high that a pupil may become a danger to their own and others health and safety. When this occurs staff may deem it necessary to use physical intervention as set out in the school's Physical Intervention Policy. Staff have been trained in the use of ethical and legal physical intervention as approved by the British Institute of Learning Disability.

All major behavioural incidents will be recorded and discussed with parents.



### Remissions Policy Statement

In line with the company's contract, an individual contract may be terminated by the school or LA with not less than nine weeks written notice.

Where the provider can justify exceptional extenuating circumstances for instance related to a specific teacher's contract this period may be extended by 12 weeks by mutual agreement between the Provider and the Authority.

The Principal is entitled to exclude a pupil/student from school if there is a foreseeable risk of harm to the pupil/student endangering him/herself or other pupils/staff and in some cases property. Twelve hours notice will be given to the parents and the Local Authority.

If a pupil/student does not appear to be benefiting from attendance at the school, the school authorities will give a least nine weeks notice to the parents and the Local Education Authority that the pupil/student will have to be placed elsewhere.

Students leaving school at the end of their school careers will be supported by the appropriate agencies, e.g. Connexions Service. The Local Authority will write a transition plan after the Annual Review following the pupils fourteenth birthday. This will support the pupil/student as they prepare to leave school as an adult.

Services available for adults with autism:

Local Colleges, Autism Specific Adult Service, Supported Learning Schemes, Social Education Centres.

These vary from authority to authority.

# **BASTON HOUSE SCHOOL**



## **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

2011/2012



## Assessment and Admissions Policy

### Referrals

1. We accept referrals from Local Authorities (LA).
2. We are able to give parents information regarding our assessment and admission process. We encourage parents to engage in a dialogue with their local authority and make a joint application.

### Assessment Process

1. Once a referral has been received from a LA, the paperwork will be read by a senior manager and discussed at Referrals, Admissions and Assessment meetings. If the pupil does not meet the admission criteria (Appendix 1) or there are no places available, a letter will be sent to the Local Authority to inform them that the referral is not going to be followed up.
2. If the referral is suitable for assessment, the parent/carer will be invited to visit the school, if they have not already done so.
3. School staff, usually a member of SMT and the Speech & Language Therapist, will arrange to visit the child at school (or elsewhere if not in school) to carry out an initial assessment.
4. The assessment will typically consist of:
  - a. Discussions with staff that have contact with/know the child.
  - b. Observations in class and/or the playground,
5. Once the initial assessment has been completed and all relevant information has been gathered, a brief initial assessment report will be compiled and a decision may be made, at this stage, as to whether Baston House School will be an appropriate placement for the child.
6. The next step will usually be that the child will be invited to attend the school for a brief visit with a parent/carer/member of staff from current school.



### Assessment and Admissions Policy

7. If the visit has been seen as successful, a further programme of visits, normally without external support, will be arranged. These will be evaluated and a final decision on suitability of placement made by the Principal.

The decision will be made in line with the Code of Practice:

- a) Special Educational Needs – can the school meet the child's needs?
  - b) Resources – would the placement be an inefficient use of resources?
  - c) Current pupils – would the placement be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children with whom the child will be educated?
8. Depending on the source of the referral, The LA and/or parent/carer will be notified in writing of the outcome of assessment within 10 working days of completion of the assessment process. NB. The process is deemed to be completed when all information has been gathered.
  9. If Baston House School is able to meet the child's special educational needs, an offer of a place, a start date and the proposed fee will be suggested to the LA. When the LA confirms that the offer of a place is going to be taken up, Baston House School will send a letter confirming this to the LA and to the parents.
  10. The LA is responsible for making transport arrangements with the parents and will inform the school accordingly.
  11. Transition plans will be made with the LA, the current school placement and the parent/carer. Transitions are often difficult for children who have autism. It will be essential to consider mechanisms/strategies that may make the process easier for the child. These may include Social Stories or a Transition Book.

Date of original policy: Autumn 2010

Reviewed: Summer 2011

Steve Vincent  
Principal



## Appendix I: Criteria for admission to Baston House School

For Consideration for Admission to School

- The child's needs should arise out of their autism spectrum diagnosis.
- The child will have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, issued by their Local Authority. The SEN will identify the child as being of potentially average to high-functioning ability.
- The Local Authority will accept financial responsibility for the pupil's education at Baston House School.
- The child will have the commitment and support of their parents/carers to the educational approaches used at Baston House School through parents agreeing to the home/school contract.
- The school is suitable for the child's age, ability and aptitude.
- The child's attendance at school would be compatible with the provision of efficient education for the children with whom the child would be educated.
- The attendance of the child at the school would be compatible with the efficient use of school resources.
- Admissions are made on the basis of availability of placements, taking into account the above factors, plus a child's level of functioning, learning difficulties and age.



### Appendix 2: Home-School Contract

This contract outlines school commitment and expectations for effective communication and teamwork between home and school. When you have read it, please sign the third page and return it to the School Administrator.

#### **Our Mission Statement:**

“Baston House School strives to provide effective specialist education and support to pupils on the autism spectrum and to their families, which will allow pupils to achieve their full potential in education and life.”

#### **In order to achieve this:**

- We will provide all pupils with opportunities to learn and achieve, by supporting them with a curriculum which makes explicit connections between areas of learning and concepts so that they can progress to their full potential.
- We will teach appropriately to the abilities of the pupils, using specialised strategies which are communication focussed.
- We will work with the students in an inclusive, equality based manner.
- We will concentrate on the positive.
- Our school will try to raise the self-esteem of all who attend.
- We will provide a safe environment and will make sure that all pupils know who to go to if they feel anxious or unsafe.
- We will work with our pupils towards improvements in their behaviour.
- We will provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- We promote positive and healthy relationships between all members of our community.
- We will keep you informed of your child's progress and the school activities.
- We will set homework in accordance with our school policy and in discussion with you about individual requirements.
- We will monitor and liaise with you about lateness and attendance.
- We will treat you with courtesy and work towards meeting shared ambitions for your child.

#### **In addition, you will receive: -**

- Home/School books daily
- Positive praise and good news items weekly.
- Annual Reviews
- Therapists' reports
- Telephone calls as necessary.
- Incident reports upon request



### Appendix 2: Home-School Contract

#### As a family will you?

- Give your child every possible support to achieve the highest standards.
- Work with the school towards meeting your ambitions for your child.
- Support the school's policies and guidelines for behaviour.
- If behaviour at home or at school is presenting challenges, then it is essential to work together by sharing information and agreeing strategies. Use the 'Home School Contact' book if necessary.
- Support and encourage your child to complete his/her homework and discuss any difficulties in this area with the teacher concerned.
- Ensure regular attendance and good punctuality, telephoning the school on a daily basis to explain any absence.
- Attend school consultations/Annual Reviews and take an active part in monitoring your child's progress by filling in parental contributions for the meetings.
- Communicate changes in home circumstances to the school.
- Provide up to date contact telephone numbers for yourselves and emergency contact.
- Follow the complaints procedure if you are not satisfied with any aspects of the school.
- Read and sign all forms and return them within the required time.
- Pay for specific activities promptly e.g. swimming, trips out, cooking, and snacks.
- Read and comment regularly on your child's home activities and behaviour, in the home/school book especially after weekend and long breaks.
- Agree regular medication administration requests with the Principal, prior to any medication
- Collect your child from school upon request if they have a temperature, stomach upset, injury causing concern or any contagious/infectious condition.
- Liaise directly with transport companies if there are any problems, issues or changes to arrangements.
- Monitor computer and video games, TV and video programmes and magazines which may confuse your child's interpretation of reality.
- Up to age 14 ensure all pupils come to school in school uniform, which is clearly labelled.
- Treat members of the school community with courtesy.

If you have any difficulties in fulfilling this agreement, please do not hesitate to contact the school and have a discussion with the class teacher/form tutor, or make an appointment with a member of staff.



**BASTON HOUSE SCHOOL**

## Baston House School

I have read and agree to the Home/School Contract

Signed: .....  
(Parent signature)

Date: .....

Name: .....  
(Print name)

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