

basilpaterson
school



Parent and Student Handbook

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WELCOME TO BASIL PATERSON SECONDARY

Basil Paterson is a small independent school for young people in S3 – S6 (ages 14 – 18) situated in the heart of Edinburgh’s historic New Town. Basil Paterson College was established in 1929 and our independent school opened in 2012. We offer a small, supportive environment designed to help students achieve their best.

We believe that when pupils are content with who they are and where they are learning, then great things can be achieved. We recognise that all pupils are different and that people are suited to different learning environments. We offer a small, friendly learning context where we accommodate the needs of each of our pupils, regardless of academic ability or academic background.

The Board of Governors:

Till Gins (Chair)

Till Gins is the owner of Basil Paterson, the OISE group and other independent language schools.

Phil Dexter MBE

Phil Dexter is a former senior consultant at the British Council for teacher development and inclusive education. Accredited equality, diversity and inclusion facilitator and advocate for neurodiversity in education and the workplace. Phil was awarded an MBE for services to special educational needs and equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Basil Paterson School Management Team:

Claire Samuel:

Head of Basil Paterson Secondary.
Overall responsibility for the Middle School & College

Beverley Brown:

Deputy Head.
Responsible for all aspects of the Learning & Teaching and Pupil Support for both the Middle School and College

Enrique Santos-Albarran:

Director of Examinations.
Responsible for all aspects of examination administration.

Stuart McDonald

Responsible for UCAS

Why Basil Paterson?

Small class sizes

Maintaining small class sizes is at the heart of our teaching and learning approach. Allowing pupils to spend more time with their teacher and building meaningful relationships, impacts positively on our learners both in terms of their academic achievement and development as effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Individualised teaching

As a result of small class sizes our teachers are able to offer personalised learning programmes which are tailored specifically to the needs and strengths of our learners. Each lesson is planned at the level of individual pupils, accommodating their learning styles, strengths and interests.

Rigorous but modern curriculum

Our courses are both traditional and modern, allowing learners to experience a broad secondary education, equipping them with both academic knowledge and key core skills. This allows them to successfully make the next steps into further/higher education or the world of work.

Community centred

A key and valued benefit of our small size is our close-knit school community. Managers and teachers know our pupils well, ensuring greater control over support for academic progression and personal development.

Integrated guidance structure

Rather than having a separate guidance structure and procedures we believe that all our teachers and staff should be responsible for the well being of our learners. Every teacher your child works with is able to offer guidance and support as a key role in your child's education.

Our Vision

We want to positively transform the lives of young people and help them reach their potential by providing a nurturing academic environment, a flexible personalised teaching approach, a modern curriculum and small class sizes.

Our Values

As a school we share the following values:

Positivity

We treat all our pupils well, forming positive and supportive relationships. We are committed to engendering positive values in all learners which they can take with them into wider society.

Potential

We believe that all young people have the ability to achieve great things. Whatever the starting point of a learner we encourage everyone to strive for success and push the limits of their learning to fulfil their potential.

Ambition

We challenge learners to achieve success through clear goal setting and encourage pupils to work outside their comfort zone to reach these goals.

Respect

We have a culture of achievement and respect in which pupils are supported to overcome barriers, problem solve and help others.

Integrity

In all our interactions with parents and pupils we are honest. We act with integrity and transparency.

Flexibility

We offer an approach to learning which is adaptable and can be moulded around the learners' abilities, needs and personal circumstances.

SECTION TWO – SCHOOL LIFE

Timetable

Times	Monday - Friday
08.40 -9.00	Registration
09.00-10.00	Class 1
10.00-11.00	Class 2
11.00-11.15	Break
11.15-12.15	Class 3
12.15-13.15	Class 4
13.15-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.00	Class 5
15.00-16.00	Class 6

Curriculum

The school offers a range of subjects from National 4 to Advanced Highers across S3-S6. Each timetable is carefully planned to provide a curriculum that is suited to the needs and ambitions of the individual pupil.

Core non-exam programmes in S3 & S4

Core courses cover the following themes: enterprise, conservation, health and relationships, effective learning, careers, alcohol/drugs awareness, online safety and managing change. Pupils in S3 and S4 will have the opportunity to engage in work experience as part of this programme.

The PE programme is delivered for 2 hours per week. It has been devised around the principles of keeping fit and healthy and teaching young people how to make the most of the leisure facilities and activities on offer to them in the City of Edinburgh. Activities in the previous academic year included badminton, dance, tennis, climbing, trampolining & gym activities. All activities are included in the school fees.

Electives (S3 - S6)

Students can choose activities to do on Friday afternoons such as Radio Broadcasting or Art.

S5 & S6 Timetables

The timetable will vary depending on the number of subjects chosen. In addition to taught classes, all students are expected to carry out self-study in the college. Self-study periods should be included in a student's weekly timetable. Self-study tasks are issued by teachers and are closely related to targets and feedback given from assessments. There are a

range of mandatory classes timetabled throughout the year to support students such as CV writing, study & organisation skills & personal statement writing.

Homework Policy

Pupils are regularly given homework to support their learning and to encourage them to become more organised and independent in their studies. The frequency and type/form of homework will vary depending on each subject area. The amount of time spent doing homework activities each week will also vary depending on year group, subjects studied and current class work being covered.

Pupils in S3 should expect to receive one substantial piece of homework per subject, per week. This will increase around assessment periods. For pupils studying National 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers the amount will vary depending on the level; however pupils should expect to supplement learning with homework as the teacher deems appropriate. Students should expect to receive 1.5 hours of homework per subject, per week minimum. This will necessarily increase as examinations approach. Students are also required to do a minimum of 2 hours self study per subject, per week in addition to this.

Provision for additional learning support needs

The small classes at Basil Paterson allow us a high degree of individualisation which makes it possible to address the specific educational needs of every pupil. Each pupil is closely monitored for the first few weeks of term and any issues that they may be facing are fed back to the learning support team. If necessary, a Pupil Support Plan (PSP) will be created. These plans highlight the specific needs a pupil has and offers techniques and strategies that teachers can incorporate into their teaching. These are monitored and regularly updated as necessary.

Pastoral care is an integral part of our school and we pride ourselves on truly understanding our pupils. There is always a member of staff available to discuss any problems the pupils may have and can offer guidance and advice. We are open, friendly and promote an atmosphere of mutual and self-respect throughout the school.

We have a strong English Language support department providing crucial language support to pupils where English is their second language.

Attendance

Excellent attendance is a vital component to ensuring success in school. As such we expect full attendance for all classes. In cases where attendance drops below 80% over a period of one month, attendance management procedures will be put in place. If attendance does not improve this could lead to withdrawal from courses and/or expulsion. Please note there will be no refund of fees for expulsion on the grounds of attendance, behaviour or conduct.

Extended holidays outside school holidays are only permitted in special circumstances. If you need to take your child away from school for any length of time please give the school

plenty of notice. It may be appropriate for them to take away some work to do whilst absent from school.

Appointments where possible should be made outside of school time, however, if your child needs to leave school during the school day e.g. a dentist's appointment then written permission is required.

Outside Visits

As a school we believe that learning does not only take place in the classroom and that the outside world is an excellent resource for teaching. We are particularly lucky to be based in Edinburgh where there is a wealth of opportunities for learners to extend their knowledge. Every year we will include regular, but short, outside visits to allow our learners to widen their learning opportunities.

Careers Education Programme

Through our Careers Programme, our students will learn how to make choices that will benefit them now and in the future. Students are supported to make informed choices about which subjects to study, potential career pathways, which university course to apply to and to identify the skills needed.

Our Careers Education is delivered through:

- Health & Wellbeing Programme (S3/S4)
- Careers Interviews (S3-S6)
- Progression Meetings each academic year (All year groups - Term 3)
- Subject Choice Guidance Meetings (All year groups - Term 3)
- UCAS & Careers Workshops and 1:1 meetings
- Work Experience Workshops
- Employability Skills Workshops
- Career Pathway Workshops

In S3 pupils start to look at potential careers, subject choices and pathways. This is explored through focussed core classes, presentations and visits to career events.

Our S4 careers programme starts with a 1:1 meeting with an independent careers advisor. Together they look at career pathways and courses that may be of interest. A variety of career-related events are organised throughout the year such as workshops, visits and guest speakers.

All S4 pupils at Basil Paterson are offered the opportunity to undertake a one week work experience placement with an employer. This experience is invaluable in allowing young people the opportunity to gain an insight into potential careers pathways and experience of the world of work. These placements are often used to support applications to college, university, apprenticeships or employment.

We do not have a dedicated week of work experience and we appreciate that not all students may undertake work experience. To allow for more flexibility for pupils, parents and employers, pupils can choose a week that suits them best during the course of the year. The expectation is that students would be on placement within school hours Monday to Friday. Pupils should discuss a potential placement and suggested dates with the school beforehand.

All work experience requests must be submitted no less than 6 weeks in advance of the placement. We take the health, safety and well-being of our pupils very seriously, and this still applies when they are on their work experience placement. ***Basil Paterson School will always carry out a risk assessment.***

Ideally, we request that pupils initially seek a *self-found* placement as this can mean a confirmed opportunity. This is normally done through family and friends.

For students who have organised their own work experience the work experience self-found form can be requested from Beverley Brown so that it can be completed by the employer. A parental consent form for work experience also needs to be completed and handed into the school office. For pupils who are unable to secure their own placement support will be provided by the school.

This Request Form is a legal requirement in order to assess health and safety for the proposed placement. The school will inform the pupil when the placement has been authorised. Students cannot begin any placements until this has happened.

At the Senior College students continue to explore career options, identify areas of interest and build their CVs. Students who have not done so will be encouraged to do work experience. Senior students are offered mock interviews and receive feedback on their CVs and interview skills. Students start working on their personal statements, UCAS and college applications. Students can also attend presentations on taking a gap year, studying abroad, apprenticeships and career pathways.

SECTION THREE – GENERAL

Term dates and holidays 2025 / 2026

Term	Start	End
Autumn Term	Wednesday 13 th August: S3, S4 and National 5 Courses Monday 18 th August: Higher and Advanced Higher Courses	Friday 12 th December
October Break	13 th October - 17 th October	
Parents' Evenings	Tuesday 2 nd December (in person) & Wednesday 3 rd December (online)	
Spring Term	Monday 5 th January	Thursday 2 nd April
February Break	Monday 9 th February - Friday 13 th February	
Prelim Week S4-S6	Monday 16 th February - Friday 20 th February	
Parents' Evenings	Tuesday 17 th March online only	
Easter Break	Friday 3 rd April - Friday 17 th April	
Bank Holidays	Monday 4 th May	
Summer Term	Monday 20 th April	Friday 19 th June: S3, S4 & National 5 Classes Friday 1 st May: Highers & Advanced Highers
2025 Exam Diet & Exam Leave*	To be confirmed once SQA release exam dates for 2025	

*Please note, there is no exam leave for National 4, Higher and Advanced Higher classes. The above dates are also shown on our website [Basil Paterson Secondary Website](#)

Dress code

We have a gender neutral, relaxed dress code at Basil Paterson. It is equal for all pupils across all year groups S3-S6 and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

Dress code:

- Smart casual clothes in solid colours. No distressed or ripped items.
- Clothing should not have large logos or slogans.
- No baseball caps. Hooded sweatshirts are permitted.
- PE students can wear any appropriate clothing on the day suitable for activity.
- All clothing must be modest.
- No low cut tops, crop tops, short tops or vest tops. Underwear and stomachs should not be exposed.
- No crocs, flip flops, sliders or slippers.

Unsuitable clothing for School and College

- Clothing with words or pictures on them which could offend others
- Scarves or tops representing sports teams
- Tight, short or revealing clothing
- Clothing advertising the use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

Lateness and absence

All absences must be reported by phoning the school office as soon as possible. The number is **0131 225 6070**. The phones are staffed from 8.00am Monday – Friday.
Email is not an acceptable means of notifying the school of lateness of absence.

Please be aware that all student lateness and absence will be reported in learner reports.

If students have a vomiting illness or diarrhoea, they must stay at home until they have been symptom free for 48 hours.

ICT and mobile device policy

The use of mobile devices and laptops (MDs) is acceptable within the school during break and lunch times.

MDs can only be used in the classroom with the permission of the teacher and must be turned off and in bags during class at all other times. MDs must be used responsibly at all times.

Full guidelines are available and can be requested from the office.

It is the responsibility of the learner to follow these guidelines.

Learners are responsible for the appropriate care and security of their MDs.

Online learning with Glow & MS Teams

All students will be given access to our online learning platform. Teachers post homework & other resources for students using MS Teams. This platform can also be used to catch up on work due to student absence.

Valuables

It is unwise for pupils to come to school with valuables or more money than they need. For obvious reasons money and valuables should not be left unattended. Lockers are available for students studying four or more subjects at College.

Breakages

In cases where a breakage is directly attributable to a pupil's misconduct the parent(s) of that pupil will be asked to cover the costs of any repairs / replacement that will be needed.

Complaints Procedure

The maintenance of a good working relationship between children, teachers and parents is a vital ingredient of successful education. In the unlikely event of a dispute arising a copy of our Complaints Procedure policy can be downloaded from the website.

Food & Drink

There are no on-site catering facilities and pupils may either bring a packed lunch or go to one of the nearby shops and cafés. Lunch and snacks may be consumed in the common room. Water is available throughout the building.

Allergy awareness and nut bans

Basil Paterson School supports the approach advocated by Anaphylaxis UK towards nut bans/nut free schools. They would not necessarily support a blanket ban on any particular allergen in any establishment, including in schools. This is because nuts are only one of many allergens that could affect pupils, and no school could guarantee a truly allergen free environment for a child living with food allergy. They advocate instead for schools to adopt a culture of allergy awareness and education.

A 'whole school awareness of allergies' is a much better approach, as it ensures teachers, pupils and all other staff are aware of what allergies are, the importance of avoiding the pupils' allergens, the signs & symptoms, how to deal with allergic reactions and to ensure policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk. We ask that pupils avoid bringing in the following items: nuts or food explicitly containing nuts.

SECTION FOUR – WELFARE

Who takes care of my child if they are unwell or in an accident?

Several staff are trained First Aiders and are qualified to deal with sickness or emergencies. Parents of all pupils are required to complete a medical form as part of the enrolment process. Parents with children requiring medication at school must give written instructions to the school.

Any medicines that have to be brought into school should be sealed in an envelope and handed in to the Head or Deputy Head. The child's name and details of dosage should be clearly written on the envelope. Inhalers for asthma may be kept for children's own use.

Communication via home and school/college

Pupils are issued with a school report in all subjects in terms 1 & 2. S3 students receive an additional report at the end of term 3.

There are two Parents' Evenings per year (December and March).

Transition conversations are held with students at school in term 3.

The school office is open from 8am-4:30pm. Tel: 0131 225 6070

Email: parentmail@basilpatersonschool.co.uk

Please note, absences should be reported by calling the school office on the number above.

Child Protection

At Basil Paterson we have a duty of care to all students and are committed to the safety and happiness of our young people. All staff are members of the Disclosure Scotland/Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG). Appropriate checks are carried out for all newly recruited staff and contractors must comply with Basil Paterson's Safeguarding procedures. All staff are trained annually. There are two designated members for safeguarding and child protection:

Claire Samuel (Head/Child Protection Coordinator)
claire.samuel@basilpaterson.co.uk

Beverley Brown (Deputy Head/Deputy Child Protection Coordinator)
beverley.brown@basilpaterson.co.uk
Telephone: 0131 225 6070 (Office Hours)

If you have concerns about the safety of a young person at the school or you are a young person with a concern, please speak to one of the staff members above.

If you want advice or support and cannot contact the school, organisations you may wish to contact for support or help are listed below:

In an emergency call 999.

If you want advice and cannot contact the school, call the NSPCC on 0800 800 500 or Childline on 0800 1111

Social Care Direct (Edinburgh)
0131 200 2324 (during office hours)
socialcaredirect@edinburgh.gov.uk
Evening/weekends or public holidays: Emergency Social Work on 0800 731 6969

The Police
Call 999 in an emergency.
101 if it is not urgent.

NHS
For Mental Health crisis support.
If someone is in immediate danger call 999.
If the crisis is not life threatening, call NHS 24 on their 24-hour phone line 111.

Support/Advice
NSPCC 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
ChildLine 0800 1111 (24-hour service) www.childline.org.uk
Samaritans 116 123 (free 24-hour) www.samaritans.org

BASIL PATERSON CODE OF CONDUCT

All students have the right to feel safe and secure at Basil Paterson and to be protected from harm. Mutual cooperation, respect for property, respect for our environment and above all, each other, are essential to our happiness and success. The school code of conduct is applicable to all.

School Values:

Positivity – Potential – Ambition – Respect – Integrity – Flexibility

Code of Conduct:

- Basil Paterson does not condone bullying of any kind and under any circumstances. Any incident of bullying will be taken seriously.
- Students must behave respectfully towards their peers and all staff at the school.
- Students and staff have the right to feel safe, take part in classes free from interruptions or judgement. Inappropriate behaviour of any kind will not be tolerated; including teasing, swearing, fighting, stealing and vandalism.
- Mobile devices must only be used in class with the express permission of the teacher. Mobile devices must be used responsibly in school and all students must follow the E Safety Guidelines and Learner Agreement.
- Alcohol, illegal substances, smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited.
- Chewing gum is not allowed on school grounds.
- Dress code must be followed.
- Students must be punctual for all lessons, events and meetings. Morning classes start at 9am and students should be in class for 08:40.
- Homework must be completed, handed in on time and be of an acceptable standard.
- Eating and drinking is only permitted in designated common areas. Energy drinks such as Red Bull and Prime are not allowed.

All students will be asked to state that they have understood and agree to follow the Basil Paterson Code of Conduct.