



# BALFOUR

## JUNIOR SCHOOL

# School Handbook



**Balfour Junior school, Balfour Road, Chatham, Kent. ME4 6QX**

**01634 843833**

**[www.balfourjuniorschool.org.uk](http://www.balfourjuniorschool.org.uk)**

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# Welcome to Balfour Junior School!

We are driven by our core values and offer the best possible education to improve life chances. Everyone can develop a lifelong passion for learning in a safe and supportive community, whilst celebrating individuality and diversity.

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are hoping that this prospectus will provide you with some useful facts about the school, its aims, organisation and hopes for the future. Your child's time in school is very precious and we are pleased to share this with you. Not everything can be written down and parents are always welcome in school. If you have any queries or worries, please do not hesitate to come and see us.

With very best wishes

*Zoe Mayston*  
Head Teacher

## Contact Details

Our Chair of Governors and Head Teacher can be contacted via the school office.

Tel:01634 843833

Email:[office@balfourjuniors.org.uk](mailto:office@balfourjuniors.org.uk)

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## Home – School Agreement 2023

### At Balfour Junior School we will:

- Provide a broad range of educational experiences for every child, valuing and respecting them as individuals.
- Promote positive values, attitudes and behaviour and ensure that bullying, racist or any discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated.
- Keep you fully informed of your child’s progress and contact you if there are any problems.
- Keep you regularly updated on school events and the curriculum designed for each year group.
- Encourage a culture of mutual respect and care for those around us and our surroundings.
- Celebrate our diverse backgrounds, cultures and achievements.

### Our Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Support all school policies
- Ensure regular and punctual attendance, providing a note of explanation when absences occur.
- Come to Parents’ consultation meetings and other events designed to assist you with supporting your child’s education.
- Take an interest in and be an active part of your child’s life at school.
- Ensure your child completes homework tasks

### Our Children agree to:

- Follow the school rules and values at all times
- Take care of equipment and the school buildings and property
- Move around school sensibly at all times.
- Listen well and contribute to their own learning.
- Be kind and thoughtful and always respect others.
- Complete all work set within the given timescale

**Head Teacher’s signature**

*Z Mayston*

**Parent’s or Carer’s signature**

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**Child’s signature**

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# About our school

## Our School

Balfour Junior School joined Beyond Schools Trust in January 2017.

Balfour staff are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share in our commitment.

Balfour Junior School is a community junior co-educational school catering for 480 pupils of 7-11 years of age. The school values its place as an integral part of the multicultural community offering the pupils a friendly, supportive and inclusive atmosphere to work in.

The school is housed in a one-storey building, close to the town centre, train station and bus station. The site also has the benefit of extensive outdoor spaces, which we use to enhance learning as much as possible.

## Admissions

Pupils transferring from Infant schools in September have the opportunity to visit in the Summer Term to become familiar with their new surroundings.

Children joining at other times are invited, with their parents, for a guided tour of the school with the Head Teacher.

All applications for admissions should be made via the School Office on 01634 843833 or Admissions Department at Medway Council.

## Security

During school hours it is only possible to enter by the front door. Please report to the office as soon as you enter the building.

## The School Day

Pupils may arrive on the site and wait in the playground with their parents from	<b>8.30 am</b>
The whistle is blown and children are led in to class at	<b>8.40 am</b>
the register is taken at	<b>8.50 am</b>
Break time	<b>10.45-11.00 am</b>
Lunch time	<b>12.20–1.20 pm</b>
School finishes at	<b>3.30 pm</b>

At the end of the day children are collected from the playground, observing the one-way system, entering the gates to the left of the main school building and leaving through the gates to the right.



# About our school

## Parking

We highly recommend walking to and from school whenever possible. The school entrance can get heavily congested at the beginning and end of the school day and parking is very limited on the local residential streets. We have no parking facilities on-site for parents.

Parking on zigzag lines outside the school is not permitted during the times specified on the road signs. If you do bring your child to school by car please find a safe place to park.



## Bicycles and Scooters

Bicycles and scooters can be ridden to and from school and can be left in the racks available. Please ensure they are locked and not ridden when on the school grounds.

## Animals

Dogs and other animals are not permitted on the site at any time.

## School Meals

Meals are provided to pupils by Independent Catering, a catering company who operate the kitchen within the school. A varied menu is provided and can be found on the school website. Please visit [www.independentcatering.co.uk/](http://www.independentcatering.co.uk/) for more details.

Meals are paid for via the ParentPay app, our cashless payment system. Please note that we do not accept cash payments for school meals. We are happy to help you to set up ParentPay and give support with how to make payments.

Some children are entitled to free school meals. Parents/Carers must apply online via Medway Council's website. Please speak to the school office for further details.

## Packed Lunches

Children may bring a packed lunch. Please pack it in a strong container clearly marked with your child's name and class.

Fizzy drinks, energy drinks, chocolate and sweets are not permitted.

## Morning Snack

Children are allowed to bring a healthy snack for morning break time. The following snacks are permitted:

- Fruit (fresh or dried)
- Vegetables (e.g. carrot sticks)
- Plain crackers or breadsticks

Other foods are not permitted for break time snacks.

## Drinks

Children should bring a named water bottle with them every day; these can be refilled in school.

No squash or flavoured water please. However, children may bring squash or a still drink to have with their packed lunch.

# The School Community

## Parents and the school

The school encourages the partnership between home and school and an agreement for you to sign and return is included in your welcome pack.

We are always happy to discuss any problems or concerns. Class teachers may be *briefly* contacted before or after school, but it would be helpful if a prior appointment for a longer discussion could be made by letter or telephone to avoid any interruption to lessons. Class teachers are not available after 8.50 am.

The Headteacher is available to discuss queries or problems and can be contacted at [zmayston@balfourjuniors.org.uk](mailto:zmayston@balfourjuniors.org.uk)

Consultation meetings to discuss children's progress are held twice per year, with written reports at least once per year.

Newsletters are sent weekly via ParentPay to keep families informed of what is going on in school. We also post reminders and share news on our Instagram account: [balfour\\_junior\\_school](https://www.instagram.com/balfour_junior_school)



## Pastoral Care

The school is a caring community and we have an excellent pastoral team. The class teacher will deal with all routine matters affecting your child's welfare. Phase Leaders maintain the oversight of the welfare of all pupils in their year groups. They can be contacted directly in matters of a serious concern.

The school also employs a Family Liaison Officer and ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants), who help children and parents who need additional support.

## Language Support

The school employs members of staff whose roles are to support those pupils with English as an additional language. They will also offer support to the whole family and help with home-school communication.

## School Nurse Service

A school nurse may conduct vision, hearing, weight and height tests for children during their time at this school, with parental consent. Parents and carers are informed if there is any cause for concern.

All pupils will be offered the flu vaccine in school, parental consent letters will be sent home at the appropriate time.

Routine checks for head lice are no longer carried out. Advice and treatment may be obtained from your own doctor or pharmacy. Parents are requested to inform the school office, in confidence, if they become aware of an infestation within the family.

Parents are advised to make regular appointments for their child to visit a dentist and optician.

# The School Community

## Friends of Balfour (FOB)

The Parent Association (PA) is a fund-raising committee run by parents of children in the school. It organises a range of social events for the benefit of everyone in the school community.

FOB actively supports the school through its fund-raising efforts and it raises money for all those extras that enhance the children's lives in school.

The success of FOB depends entirely on the support of all parents. We greatly appreciate any assistance. This can be anything from a little time helping out, to coming along to support the functions with family and friends.

## Attendance Advisory Practitioner

The Attendance Advisory Practitioner is employed by Medway Council and visits the school regularly to check on children's attendance and lateness. Contact will be made with the child's family to discuss reasons should a pattern of lateness or non-attendance develop. Please see our attendance policy for further information.

## Child Protection

If a child makes a disclosure, has injuries that cannot be explained or the school is concerned about aspects of a child's behaviour, our Child Protection procedures will be followed. The school's safeguarding team is made up of Mrs Mayston (Headteacher) Mr Kirk (Deputy Head) Mrs Dennis (SENCo/Assistant Head), Mrs Denny (Family Liaison officer) and Mr Tutt (ELSA). The school's full Child Protection and Safeguarding policy is available on the school website.

## School Parliament

At Balfour Juniors, we teach pupils about responsibility early on in their education. Our school council is made up of representatives across the school and they meet regularly. The school council contribute towards giving our children a voice in the decisions we make in school. They organise and promote events and charity work and discuss ways in which the school can improve the school as well as the local community.

## Red Caps



Pupils in Year 6 are chosen to hold the responsibility of being a Red Cap. Red Cap pupils wear their red caps and ties with pride and undertake various roles around school, helping others and being role models of exemplary attitudes and behaviour.

## School Houses

All pupils are members of one of the school's four houses. They are able to earn house-points for working hard and showing good behaviours and attitudes. At the end of each term, the children from the house with the most house-points enjoy a special reward. The four houses are Earth, Air, Fire and Water and we aim to place siblings in the same house.





# The Curriculum

## The Curriculum

In order to achieve the school's aims children are taught a broad and balanced curriculum, covering all areas of the National Curriculum. All our curriculum maps and policies are available for parents to view on our school website.

**Religious Education:** This is a statutory requirement for all pupils (except where parents request otherwise) and is taught according to the Medway Agreed Syllabus. Parents who do not wish their child to be taught the Agreed Syllabus or take part in acts of worship on the grounds of personal belief should contact the Head Teacher.

**Physical education** or sports activities are undertaken every week. All children are required to wear their P.E. kit to school on the days their class has a P.E. lesson (see P.E. Kit). All children will participate in all activities unless there is a medical reason and written advice is received from the parent.



## Home Learning

The school follows the suggestions from Ofsted that children may benefit from a follow up or extension of classroom work.

All children are expected to read for at least 20 minutes every night, learn spellings and practise times tables (which can be done through playing Times Table Rockstars). As children progress through the school, they may be asked to carry out research for projects.

## Educational Visits

These are an essential part of the children's learning in order for them to learn by practical first-hand experience. Parents are asked to make a non-refundable voluntary contribution to cover the costs of these activities. Visits may have to be cancelled if there is a lack of contributions. Parents having financial difficulty may contact the school office to speak to our Family Liaison officer for advice

## School Values

We teach and reinforce the school's values through lessons, assemblies, special events and awards. The following values are the focus in each term:



## Assemblies

Our daily assemblies are an extremely important part of our school day. This gives us an opportunity to meet together, share experiences and ideas and show how we value the individuals in our school community and to develop an awareness and appreciation of other people and their cultures. The pattern of assemblies during the week is varied to present a diverse range of experiences.

## Teachers' PPA Time

All teachers are required to have non-teaching time equivalent to 10% of the timetable to allow them to plan, prepare and assess. This time will be covered by members of the school staff team as far as possible.

# The Curriculum

## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The school has a positive approach towards supporting children with additional needs. Children experiencing learning difficulties are given learning programmes to help meet their individual needs.

Parents who are concerned about their child's progress should, in the first instance, contact the class teacher. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is also available to discuss concerns. If the school has any concerns about a pupil's progress parents will be informed.

In line with the Disability Discrimination Act we make every reasonable effort to include all children in our school regardless of disability.

The school has an Accessibility Plan in place to allow for the inclusion of all children.

Copies of the relevant policies are available on the school website

## Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

The relationships and sex education programme is in line with government guidance and is approved by the school's governing body. Age appropriate lessons focusing on building and maintaining healthy relationships are taught in every year group. The key building blocks of healthy, respectful relationships, focusing on family and friendships sit alongside the essential understanding of how to be healthy.

Parents are always informed in writing before the lessons relating to puberty and sex education are delivered and are given the opportunity to discuss any questions with the year group staff. While lessons which teach about health and relationships are statutory, parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education, which is taught in Year 6.

## Organisation of classes

Each class is made up of a single age group and within each class there will be a range of abilities. Pupils within one class will progress at different rates. The teachers are aware of this and work is adapted to the needs of individual pupils.

The teachers in each year group meet regularly to plan and evaluate to ensure continuity and consistency of the quality of education.

## Extra-Curricular Activities

All pupils are offered the opportunity to join a variety of clubs and activities which take place either during lunch time or after school. These activities are organised voluntarily by school staff in addition to their normal commitments and are usually free of charge.

Some after-school clubs are run by external providers and may incur a charge.

Pupils taking part in these activities will bring home a form which will need to be signed and returned to school. The form will give information about the day and time of the club.

If after school clubs need to be cancelled, pupils will be informed in school and parents will be advised via ParentPay.

## Sports Competitions

As part of the extra curricular activities, the school enters teams in the local leagues and the Medway Mini Youth Games. The children wear their PE kits but are also loaned a school kit. Parental support is always welcome at these matches.

# General Information

## School Uniform

There is a school uniform which all pupils are expected to wear. The wearing of uniform encourages the children to take a pride in the school. All items except the school tie and sweatshirt (obtainable from School Time) can be purchased in most children's clothes stores.

- Grey or black skirt or trousers (tailored shorts in summer, if required)
- White shirt with collar
- School tie
- White polo shirt (summer wear only)
- Blue and white gingham dress (summer wear only)
- Royal blue V-neck sweatshirt or cardigan
- Fleece (optional) – outdoor wear only, not to be worn in class
- Flat black shoes - **NOT TRAINERS or BOOTS**

Winter uniform is required in terms 2, 3, and 4, while summer uniform can be worn in terms 1, 5 and 6.

Pupils are encouraged to wear a hat when outdoors during the summer term.

All pupils with long hair should have it tied back. Extreme hairstyles or colours are not acceptable.

Any clothing that is required for religious purposes should be in Balfour Junior School colours.

## Jewellery

The wearing of jewellery is not permitted (with cultural exception) for the reasons of safety. If watches are worn to school, they will be removed for PE lessons.

One small pair of stud earrings is allowed, but we do ask parents to ensure they are removed on days when their child has swimming or PE.

## PE / Sports Kit

- Plain white T-shirt
- Blue shorts
- Plimsolls for indoor use
- Trainers for outdoor / field use
- Tracksuit or suitable clothing for winter

***All clothing, including coats and bags, should be clearly labelled with your child's name and class.***

Pupils in year 5 will have swimming lessons; these incur a minimal charge.



## Money

Except for specific reasons such as fundraising days or special events, children should not bring money into school. All money should be in a labelled envelope.

Trips and swimming lessons can be paid via ParentPay, our online payment and communication system.

## Personal Property

Marking clothes and other property with your child's name and class is of the greatest importance and parents should ensure that all property brought into school is clearly labelled with their child's name and class.

We do our best to ensure that all items which are handed in are returned to their owner.

Pupils should not bring belongings such as pencil cases, toys or trading cards into school. We cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to personal property of pupils.

# General Information

## Absences

Please see our Attendance Policy. We believe that children have the right to attend school regularly and it is the parent's responsibility to ensure they do so.

All schools have to account for every pupil's absence. The government's regulations concerning absence are explicit and parents should make themselves aware of their responsibilities. The school is not able to authorise holidays during term-time.

Medical evidence will be required to authorise absences if your child's attendance falls below 93%.

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued via the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA) for persistent unauthorised absence or lateness.

### Absence from school:

Please use Studybugs, our absence reporting app, to report your child's absence. The app is free and easy to use; it transfers absence information directly to our registers and is therefore the quickest and most secure way to report absence:

<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>



### Medical / dental appointments:

Please avoid these during the school day. For appointments during school time copies of appointment cards/letters will be requested in advance.

## Emergency Contact

Reliable telephone contact numbers must be provided for each child for emergencies. Please update the information via the school office if you change address, or there are changes to names or phone numbers of contacts.

## First Aid

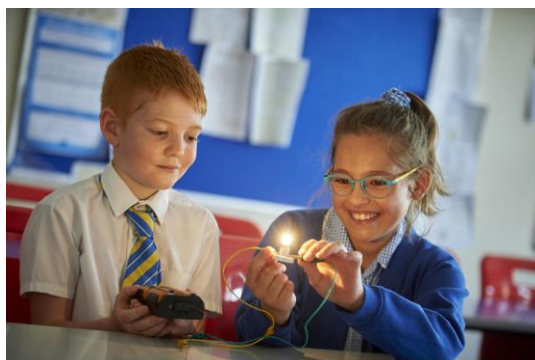
Minor injuries, e.g. cuts and grazes, are dealt with by qualified first aiders. If a serious injury occurs, we will contact parents and we may seek medical advice or treatment.

## Medication

Occasionally children need short-term medication whilst at school. The school is unable to administer medication such as antibiotics or paracetamol so parents will need to make arrangements to come into school to administer the dosage.

The only exception is if your child requires long-term daily medication (such as insulin). In this instance a Healthcare Plan will be agreed between school and parents.

It is parents/carers responsibility to ensure that all medication is in date and provided to the school. i.e. asthma inhalers, EpiPens, Piriton etc.



# General Information

## Behaviour

In any community it is necessary to have rules. Our school rules are based on our school's values and ethos and are for the general well-being of the children. The school follows its own positive behaviour policy which is available on our website.

If a child's behaviour is not acceptable over a period of time, a senior member of staff may request to see the parents/carers in order to discuss the matter further with them.

Good manners and respect for others are considered to be an essential basis of all relationships within the school and are regularly taught and reminded through the school's values.

## Transfer to Secondary School

Applications for secondary school must be made online via Medway Council's website.

Towards the end of year 5, we will host an information evening for parents/carers to advise them of the procedure and deadlines for transferring to secondary school. Information will be distributed to year 5 pupils, usually in term 6, informing parents about the meetings.

Pupils in their final year are eligible to be assessed for grammar school under Medway's Selection Procedure (The Medway Test); applications for the test must be made online via Medway Council's website. Full information is provided when applicable.

We liaise closely with secondary schools to encourage a smooth transition procedure.

**If you have any queries, please contact  
the school office on 01634 843833**



