Common Alterations and Reminders for Notes on the Bassoon

All notes are written in progression from lowest to highest in range

Note	Embouchure/Reed	Fingering	Special Notes
BBb (Bb_1)	Tip of reed for best sound	No alterations	
BB	Tip of reed	No alterations	Typically bright sound can be rounded by voicing
C	Tip of reed; tends to be sharp	No alterations	
C#	Tip of reed; tends to be sharp	No alterations	
D	Tip of reed; can be unstable and sharp	Add low BBb key to center the pitch	
Eb	Very stable compared with D just below		
E	Tends to be sharp	Add low C# key	Adding C# key will darken overtones and lower pitch
F	Stable		
F#		Use back F# as default fingering	Bright sound can be muted: play simultaneously both F# keys and low E pancake
G	Stable; embouchure position can move to middle of reed blade		
G#/Ab	Can be flat		
A	Can be bright/sharp		
Bb	Can be sharp		Voice like A, will lower the pitch
B	Stable		
c	Stable		
c#	Test pitch: Can go flat with a weak reed	Add low D key as regular part of fingering	
d	Stable		
eb/d#		Regular fingering should not include right hand except to stabilize pitch	Use right hand additions only in situations where extra stability is required

e	Test pitch: Can be flat with weak air or reed	Regular fingering should NOT be altered	Younger students should learn to use this note to tune with their air speed
f	Stable		Only mute with low D if your air is insufficiently trained
f#	Tends to be sharp	Right pinky f# tends to be lower on some makes of bassoon; voicing of "Ah" vowel can lower the pitch	Muted f#: add low D and Eb to mute. Half-hole note requires the whisper key
g	Tends to be slightly sharp	Add the low Eb key always to stabilize	Voice down with "Ah" vowel. Half-hole note requires whisper key
g#/ab	Stable	Half-hole size can be smaller than f# or g	Half-hole note requires whisper key
a		Flick with high a key	Can also vent a tiny crack for better sustaining
bb	Stable, can be sharp	Flick with high b/c key	Airstream needs to speed up at this point in the register to prevent growling
b		Flick with high b/c key	b/c#' trill: play b and lift LH3
c'		Flick with high b/c key	
c#'		Two distinctly different and valuable fingerings: "simple" and "full"	Full fingering should be used for trills
d'	Can be unstable; embouchure can begin to move forward of reed blade		If pitch is wobbly, measure the heart of the reed: too heavy a heart will make this d' wobble in pitch
eb'		Lift RH1 for most slurs	
e'		Add low Eb key for this and every note above it (except as noted)	Lift RH1 for some slurs; e'-f#' trill finger e', lift RH23

f’	Airstream critical for proper voicing; a multiphonic signals insufficient air speed/pressure	Add low Eb	
f#’		Two distinct base fingerings, which can be altered: 2-3-Eb,1-2-Bb OR 2-3-Eb, 1-2-F	Can remove low Eb key in some situations. Can use only left hand 2 in some situations. Use one or the other in slurs, choosing the fingering that is least similar to the slurred-to note. f#’-g’ trill finger f#’ lift RH2
g’		Half-hole pitch requires whisper key	
g#’/ab’	Tends to be sharp	Half-hole pitch requires whisper key; regular fingering uses only RH3, can use RH2, 3, RThumb Bb to lower pitch	Downslur fingering: keep LH1,2,3, whisper, Eb, make RH only Bb and F. Slurs well to eb and other lower pitches
a’			
bb’			
b’			Can remove low Eb key to lower pitch
c’’		Use either high b/c key, high d key, or both depending on the instrument	Can add the LH2 at the bottom of the second tone hole to mute an attack
c#’’		Use high d key, double forked fingering	
d’’			
d#’’		Two fingerings: long and keyed	Embouchure placement and pressure are critical: at the collar, lots of downward pressure of teeth covered by upper lip (stopping all low vibrations)

e’’ (E_5)		Two fingerings: long and keyed	Embouchure placement and pressure are critical: at the collar, lots of downward pressure of teeth covered by upper lip (stopping all low vibrations). Very small cracked opening in LH1 can be used as well.