

COBIS Safeguarding Statement

Introduction

COBIS believes that children, young people and vulnerable adults should never experience abuse of any kind. We have an unfaltering commitment to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults to keep them safe. COBIS is committed to reducing risk connected to all safeguarding and child protection matters.

COBIS recognises that the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount in the work we do and in the decisions we take, and that all children, young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment/identity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.

COBIS Membership

COBIS is committed to promoting and encouraging the highest standards of safeguarding and child protection in member schools and supporting associates as a requirement of continuing membership.

All candidates applying to work in COBIS schools must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers. COBIS requires all prospective and member schools to complete mandatory regular training in both Safer Recruitment and Child Protection. COBIS expects member schools to review their Safeguarding Policies annually. Student welfare is a core element of the COBIS Patron's Accreditation and Compliance standards, for which schools need to provide robust evidence of good practice.

COBIS member schools must demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding their staff as well as safeguarding pupils. Safeguarding is a whole-school issue. Appropriate training and ongoing CPD should be provided for staff members.

COBIS member schools must hold up to date and secure records: specifically, a Single Central Record of Appointments, constructed in line with COBIS guidelines and reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and Designated Safeguarding Governor.

COBIS supporting associates are expected to adhere to the COBIS Code of Conduct, which includes a commitment to safer recruitment practices, and transparent organisational safeguarding policies and procedures.

If COBIS is made aware that a member school or supporting associate has not been adhering to these safeguarding and child protection standards, their membership will be reviewed in accordance with the COBIS Complaints Procedure.

COBIS' Organisational Commitment

COBIS also demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding, child protection and safer recruitment through the provision of a number of services including:

- Signposting schools to the International Child Protection Certificate and DBS checks
- Performing Prohibition checks
- Providing policy guidance and updates
- Participation on the International Taskforce for Child Protection
- A range of safeguarding and child protection training, both online and face to face

With regards to its own recruitment processes, all candidates for prospective roles within COBIS must be willing to undertake Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS). As appropriate to the role, a DBS check will be requested if an applicant is offered a contract of employment. All COBIS staff and Board members are required to undertake safeguarding and child protection training.

In addition, before any school visit, all COBIS Lead Improvement Partners, Peer Accreditors and Consultants are required to have undergone appropriate child protection screening (DBS or ICPC).

If COBIS is made aware that a staff member, LIP, volunteer or consultant is not adhering to these safeguarding standards, this matter will be reviewed in line with COBIS' employment or volunteer policies and may result in dismissal.

COBIS Governance

COBIS ongoing strategic governance includes a Safeguarding Committee, composed of COBIS Board members and Directors. The responsibilities of this Committee include:

- To monitor and advise upon how COBIS can encourage best practice and raise the profile of safeguarding and safer recruitment among its member schools; and to ensure that COBIS' standards and expectations in this area are explicit and clear
- To supervise the provision of safeguarding and safer recruitment training by COBIS or its chosen agencies, and to maintain links with suitable organisations that provide relevant training and advice
- To keep up to date on best British and international practice in safeguarding and safer recruitment, and to advise the Board and Executive Team

For any questions about COBIS' Safeguarding Statement, please contact operations@cobis.org.uk.