

COBIS Development Plan 2022-2025





An introductory note to Members

Dear Members,

The COBIS Development Plan 2022-25 builds on the COBIS Development Plan 2019-22. It contains a clear statement of our purpose and our expectations of membership. It also sets out the services and activities offered on behalf of our members and associates, that will be led by the Executive and overseen by the elected Board. As a listening organisation, the Development Plan is based on feedback from our members, gathered through the 'COBIS Voice' – a formal annual member consultation process – as well as continual informal feedback, market analysis and a range of research projects. As we look ahead, we are committed to enhancing the COBIS membership experience and providing value for money. The Development Plan will be implemented through more detailed operational plans, which will be reviewed regularly. Importantly, like all good plans, it will be periodically reviewed and refreshed – and provides a confident road map, with flexibility to respond to new opportunities or adapt to changed circumstances.

Colin Bell, CEO, COBIS



What we are

COBIS is the premier association for international British schools overseas. It is a high-calibre, school-centred service organisation supporting member schools – an effective, innovative and active global organisation for international British schools overseas.

VISION

COBIS will continue to grow, and to maintain its position as the highest quality network of British international schools worldwide.

MISSION STATEMENT

COBIS operates with a deep commitment to school improvement, to help schools and students thrive. COBIS exists to serve, support and represent member schools – their leaders, governors, staff and students – and to influence and promote the export and growth of world class British education worldwide. Membership is open globally to high-quality British international schools.



We understand these terms to mean the following:

British

Schools recognised by COBIS are – regardless of their name, size or location – distinctively British. They offer a curriculum (learning programmes and assessments) wholly or substantially similar to those current in the United Kingdom; and they express a philosophy of education with those enriching features for which British education is renowned worldwide (including, for example, teaching that develops knowledge and also the skills of lifelong learning, encouragement of self-discipline, care for the development of the whole individual, and opportunities to develop talents in co-curricular activities). Importantly, they offer outstanding safeguarding and pastoral care, which reflects the best practice found in the United Kingdom and in the international education sector. School leaders, teachers and support staff in our schools are trained or work in the British tradition and are expected to uphold British values, such as the rule of law and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and educational ethos.

International

Schools in membership not only educate children of many different nationalities and operate in all parts of the world, but are also proud to actively promote their common values and international understanding.



Schools

COBIS Schools offer full-time education to children between the ages of 2-18 years. They may vary in their age range (including the early, primary and secondary years), and in their ownership (from not-for-profit foundations to private enterprises). Whatever the case, they are expected to satisfy our defined compliance standards and published standards of ethical conduct and good governance.

High Quality

COBIS admits into membership only schools which meet the rigorous compliance standards defined by us and assured through internationally proven systems for school improvement: these include the COBIS Patron's Accreditation scheme, BSO inspection, CIS or NEASC Accreditation. Full details of membership requirements can be found on our website.



How we consult with members and beyond

We are committed to representing the views of our members and delivering services and support that accurately reflect their needs. As such, COBIS regularly consults with our member network and the wider British international school sector to identify current priorities.

We do this in a range of ways. Formally, through the annual member consultation process (the 'Voice' survey and interviews), and informally through ongoing dialogue with the network as part of webinars, forums, virtual and face-to-face networking (including ConnectED) and member school representation on COBIS Committees and Board structures.

Importantly, COBIS also looks beyond the member network to connect with the wider British international and international school community, to identify trends and emerging issues. We do this through our own independent research initiatives and engagement with research partners.

COBIS is represented on a wide range of cross-sector special interest groups, and has well-established connections with key U.K. government bodies and local Ministries of Education.

The Development Plan, and associated operational actions, are influenced and shaped by this continual feedback and input.



What Members Value

Based on consultation with members and the sector more broadly, we know that COBIS is seen as:

- A valuable network, connecting the sector
- A stamp of quality and a trusted kitemark
- A provider of support and best practice

And through this consultation, COBIS members have indicated what they most value and want from the network:

- Varied and high-quality CPD programmes, both online and face-to-face
- Quality assurance that supports long-term school improvement
- Access to supportive, experienced and welcoming professional networks and opportunities for information exchange both regionally and globally
- Engaging and diverse student events and competitions
- Guidance and support with safeguarding, safer recruitment and promoting student and staff mental health and wellbeing
- Lobbying efforts both with U.K. government and local Ministries of Education; ensuring better understanding of the value of British international schools worldwide

We shall continue to deliver and further develop these important services and support, whilst also responding to new member priorities as required.



Medium and Long-Term Objectives 2022-2025 and Beyond

The following are our overall aims during this three-year period. They will be periodically reviewed and refreshed to meet changing circumstances. Each is important, and the list does not express order of priority.

- 1. Quality and Membership:** To maintain the high standard of membership, through quality assurance that supports school improvement. To review and adapt routes to membership, as appropriate, and continue with ambitious growth to welcome high-calibre schools into the membership.
- 2. Representation:** To develop further our strong contacts with governments both in the United Kingdom and abroad – to represent the interests of our members and of British school education overseas and work to increase formal recognition of British international schools worldwide and rigorous quality assurance routes. To secure external quality assurance of the COBIS Patron’s Accreditation and Compliance scheme.
- 3. Teacher Supply:** To research, advocate, encourage and inform scalable routes to meet the ongoing need for teachers and leaders in British international schools in a growing educational economy. To contribute to new initiatives for growing the global teacher workforce (including International Qualified Teacher Status (iQTS)), and to continue to develop work with COBIS Training Schools and ITT partners.



- 4. Safeguarding:** To promote and encourage the highest standards of safeguarding, safer recruitment and child protection in member schools, as a requirement of continuing membership.
- 5. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** To demonstrate our commitment to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion both within our own organisation and amongst our network. To support our schools in their efforts to develop inclusive cultures and better representation in which diversity can flourish.
- 6. Professional Development:** To provide high-quality professional learning opportunities, both virtually and face-to-face, that support the full range of school staff and governors, and which are accessible to our global membership.
- 7. Students:** To maintain and develop the range of inter-school educational activities of high quality – both virtual and face-to-face – that encourage international understanding and enriches personal development. Scope and research opportunities to establish global partnerships to provide university and careers guidance. Support the diverse interests of students, and their access to trusted high-quality career networks and virtual/face-to-face events.
- 8. Harnessing Technology:** Review, optimise and invest in technology to ensure we continue to deliver an excellent, dynamic membership experience, to be efficient and effective in all business operations, and to provide best value to our members.



- 9. Connectivity and Engagement:** To facilitate impactful professional networking between schools (virtual and face-to-face), including regional and special interest networks, and provide opportunities for sharing and profiling best practice.
- 10. Environmental:** To scope and promote opportunities for COBIS and our wider network to tackle issues connected to the global climate crisis.
- 11. Wellbeing and CSR:** To support and promote the importance of wellbeing for schools, staff (including school leaders), and pupils through professional development and sharing best practice, and demonstrate our commitment to being socially accountable and conscious of the impact our organisation and network has on all aspects of society, including economic, social, and environmental.

We shall continue to grow and develop, representing our members' interests and advocating for high-quality British-style education around the world.