COBIS | Council of British International Schools

COBIS Accreditation and Compliance Standards

Revised Autumn 2026





To be read in conjunction with the current *Guide to COBIS Accreditation and Compliance.*

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Introduction

Welcome to our newly updated COBIS Accreditation and Compliance Standards, Autumn 2026.

Following its launch in April 2017, over 300 British international schools worldwide have engaged with the COBIS Accreditation and COBIS Compliance scheme, a key route to COBIS membership.

Our standards are fully aligned with the COBIS vision "to reach and connect all British international school communities in order to support them in developing students who will have a positive impact on society." This quality assurance process is based on our guiding principles of collaboration and inclusion with each school and rooted in school improvement. The process was established after extensive research and consultation to be a supportive, non-judgmental process that celebrates and draws upon the best British and international practices. The process is also inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The COBIS Accreditation and Compliance programme has been independently endorsed through a comprehensive review by the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The review in May 2023 recognised the distinctive strength of combining rigorous evaluation against high standards with the development of trusting, supportive professional relationships. This balance of accountability and collaboration remains central to the COBIS Accreditation and Compliance scheme. In April 2026 the UK QAA confirmed the continued development and strength of the COBIS quality assurance framework in its mid-cycle review, describing it as a "rigorous, improvement-focused and contextually sensitive" model (see Appendix A). Alongside this, we are proud to be recognised by a growing number of ministries of education and regulators worldwide.

Our Standards are clear and intentionally high, yet our approach is differentiated and tailored to the context and stage of development of each school we visit. The process begins with preparatory discussions with the COBIS Accreditation Team, leading to extensive, supportive dialogue with a COBIS-trained lead improvement partner (LIP) for an average of six months in advance of a validation visit. This approach furthers our mission to support and empower all British international schools in their provision of high-quality education.

The school visit itself provides an opportunity to assess not only how effectively the COBIS Standards are met, but also how closely observed daily practice aligns with the school's own core aims and values. A detailed written report is produced with priority next steps, commendations and other recommendations informing further school development. Regular check-ins with COBIS take place across the five-year quality assurance cycle.

Feedback from our schools reflects strong appreciation for our collaborative approach to meet rigorous standards and demonstrates that COBIS Quality Assurance has had a profoundly positive impact on their ongoing development. There are some recent case studies on the impact of Accreditation and Compliance on our website (see Appendix A).

Key updates for 2026–27

The COBIS Accreditation and Compliance process is reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains rigorous, relevant, developmental and responsive to the changing educational landscape. Each year, the COBIS Accreditation Team considers feedback from schools, LIPs, specialist organisations and partners, alongside their own experience working closely with schools.

The 2026–27 updates and considerations are relevant to new school applications from September 2026 typically applying to school visits **from January 2027** onwards, and should inform the preparation, conduct and follow-up of Compliance and Accreditation visits. LIPs and peer accreditors (PAs) will complete training on and be familiar with the revised Standards and any associated guidance before working with schools due to receive a visit from January 2027 onwards. Schools should ensure that their preparation reflects the revised expectations.

For processes already underway with visits taking place in **Term 1 of 2026–27**, the revisions to the Standards do not formally apply. However, it may still be helpful for LIPs to raise these developments in early conversations with schools, particularly if they are undergoing a Two-Part Accreditation process where the second visit will take place later in the academic year.



Since the previous COBIS Standards update in 2024, COBIS has played a key role, alongside partner associations within the British International Schools Safeguarding Coalition (BISSC), in developing the BISSC Safer Recruitment Code of Conduct. The Code establishes a consistent framework for high standards of safer recruitment across British international schools and applies to all COBIS member schools. (See Appendix A).

All COBIS member schools are required to adhere to the Code and ensure that their recruitment policies and practices comply fully with the legislation, regulations and statutory guidance of their host country. In applying the COBIS Accreditation and Compliance Standards and the Code, schools are expected to operate within their local legal context while meeting or exceeding the safeguarding standards set out within them. The Code is designed to reduce risk and protect children and young people through robust, fair, thorough and transparent safer recruitment practices across diverse international school contexts.





Reference to specific requirements relating to the Code are included in Standard 1A.

In addition to minor rewording of some individual statements or guidance to improve clarity within the Standards, the main changes are as follows:

1. This updated *COBIS Accreditation and Compliance Standards* combines the former Accreditation and Compliance Standards with all other standards-related information previously found in the school and LIP handbooks. Thus, all Standards-related information is now in one place.

2. The creation of a single *Guide to COBIS Accreditation and Compliance* that contains the key information needed to prepare schools and LIPs for a COBIS validation visit and which was formerly spread across the school and LIP handbooks.

3. A revision of Standard 4 - Governance, to better reflect the many effective governance models found in British international schools.

4. A consideration of AI as a thread across the Standards to reflect the rapid growth and increasing significance of AI across COBIS schools and education in general.

More information on these key revisions can be found below:

1. **The revised COBIS Accreditation and Compliance Standards**
   COBIS has previously produced a Standards booklet alongside two separate handbooks with additional guidance (one for schools and one for LIPs). For 2026–27, all Standards-related information, including evidence requirements and additional guidance, is now included in the revised COBIS Accreditation and Compliance Standards. This will make the process clearer and avoid the need for any cross-referencing which has sometimes resulted in important points being missed.



2. **The creation of a single Guide to COBIS Accreditation and Compliance**
   A new *Guide to COBIS Accreditation and Compliance* contains all information related to the organisation, timeline and logistics of the chosen COBIS process, including key information about visit team size, duration of visit, arranging flights, hotels and visas and so on. It is intended to be used by both schools and LIPs. Additional guidance for LIPs, for example around protocols for observing learning, will be shared in the LIP Team (MS Teams) and will be referred to in training provided by the COBIS Accreditation Team.

3. **A revision of Standard 4 – Governance**

Over the last few years, there has been growth in the different models of governance across COBIS schools. This has encouraged us to review what we mean by effective governance and tailor our existing Standard (divided into six sub-Standards) accordingly. At times we have felt that we were not always able to offer recognition to what was in fact an effective governance model because it did not quite fit our expectations. Additionally, we felt that we needed to focus on the key fundamentals of governance, such as purpose, the legal framework, structure and organisation, terms of reference and its relationship with, and to, the Head of School and their team. We believe that doing this will enable better conversations with schools on governance and enable us to provide a richer, more useful evaluation of strengths and areas to continue to develop.



We are grateful to have been able to consult throughout 2025-26 with representatives from COBIS member schools, school groups, LIPs, and with AGBIS International - the international arm of the Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools, before revising this Standard.

The intention is not to prescribe one model of governance across COBIS schools. COBIS is mindful that effective governance may look different across schools depending on a combination of regulatory, cultural, financial, strategic and stakeholder factors. Our philosophy of approach to effective governance models is that they:

- Align with the school's guiding statements, common ownership structure, legal environment and stage of development
- Are clearly structured and organised, with clarity of roles, responsibilities and professional expectations
- Are purposeful and impactful
- Focus on strategy, oversight and accountability
- Delegate day-to-day operations to the Head of School with whom a key relationship is developed
- Avoid micromanagement
- Establish clear reporting relationships
- Communicate effectively
- Evaluate their impact and effectiveness

4. **Bearing all of this in mind, Standard 4 has now been consolidated from six sub-Standards to three as follows:**

   - 4A focuses on board composition/ membership, safer recruitment, induction and ongoing training.
   - 4B focuses on the legal status of the board, its alignment with the school's vision and the interests of the students, its structure, purpose, terms of reference, functions and procedures.
   - 4C focuses on impactful strategic and reflective governance, decision-making processes and communications with the school community.

   To avoid any confusion in terminology around the different models of governance in COBIS schools, for example governors, board of directors, management board, executive board, management group and so on, we will always refer to the governance body as the board and to the people on it as board members.



5. **A consideration of AI as a thread across the Standards**

   To further understand the existing range of knowledge and experience in the sector and the likely direction of travel, COBIS has explored the use of digital technology, learning and AI, with a number of COBIS schools and partners, including our digital advisory partner, The EduTec Alliance. We have also drawn on the findings from the COBIS Annual Surveys completed since the last Standards review two years ago. The 2024 and 2025 surveys showed rapid and accelerating usage of AI across COBIS schools by teachers, administrative staff and students. The surveys also show an increased emphasis on the need for AI literacy education for students and staff, for example further learning around the safe, ethical and effective use of AI tools.

   We are aware that there is a wide range of adoption of AI across COBIS schools, from those that have been early advocates and are now extensive users, to other schools that have preferred to focus less on AI up to now. For 2026–27, COBIS has reflected the increased prominence of this area by threading reference to it throughout the Standards to further raise awareness and strengthen expectations, particularly around areas such as safeguarding and learning and teaching. By posing questions rather than imposing requirements for specific policies and practice at this point, we are encouraging schools to evaluate their current position and how the use of AI can benefit schools and learner outcomes while being aware of the challenges it poses.

COBIS also recognises that schools operate in a wide range of national, cultural, legal and political contexts. Schools must first comply with the national requirements and regulations of their host countries. There are now, for example, specific legislative requirements contained within the 2024 EU Artificial Intelligence Act (see Appendix A) that COBIS schools within the EU must be aware of and comply with. For COBIS schools elsewhere, the Act provides a useful international benchmark for responsible AI governance, particularly around AI literacy, safeguarding, transparency, human oversight and the use of AI in consequential decisions about students. We are grateful for the support of The Safeguarding Alliance in navigating the legal and safeguarding implications surrounding the implementation of AI in schools, as well as for their expert review of all aspects related to safeguarding across the COBIS Accreditation and Compliance Standards.

Conclusion

These updates are intended to strengthen the Accreditation and Compliance process while maintaining COBIS' commitment to professional partnership.

Schools are encouraged to use this revised COBIS Accreditation and Compliance Standards and the *Guide to COBIS Accreditation and Compliance* as part of their own development planning; LIPs will use them to support clear, constructive and evidence-based conversations before, during, and after visits.

Overall, the 2026–27 updates reinforce COBIS' aim to provide a process that combines high standards with collaboration, external validation and meaningful school improvement.





The Standards

Compliance

Standard 1. Safeguarding & Safer Recruitment

Standard 2. Student Welfare

Standard 3. Facilities

Standard 4. Governance

Standard 5. Ethos and Values

Standard 6. Boarding

Accreditation

Standard 7. Learning and Teaching

Standard 8. Leadership in the School

Standard 9. Communication

Standard 10. Extra-Curricular, Enrichment & Student Engagement

When considering evidence to include for each COBIS Standard, schools should refer carefully to all the information provided for that specific Standard (descriptor, evidence requirements and additional guidance). Where it is stated that there is evidence that schools 'must include' this is generally around key aspects such as health and safety. More often, schools will add evidence to the 'is likely to include section' as this enables them to share how they meet the Standard in their specific context. Schools are reminded that the additional guidance section provides further detail to support schools in meeting the Standards.



Part One: The Compliance Standards

Standard 1 – Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment and Equal Opportunities

The school places a high priority on the safeguarding of students and staff, including child protection, and the safe recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

1A

The school recruitment process is fair and transparent and ensures that appropriate staff and volunteers are appointed. This applies to all staff, teaching and non-teaching, and governors.

Examples of evidence to provide

Evidence in this section MUST include:

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- A commitment to adhere to the BISSC Safer Recruitment Code of Conduct
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Belonging (DEIJB) commitment statements in advertisements, application forms and reference request forms. These statements should be displayed on the school's website and recruitment materials.
- Application forms, which must include questions relating to any change of name, gaps in employment, safeguarding, conviction and disciplinary disclosures
- Advertisement examples
- Reference request form
- Examples of interview questions that are related to promoting DEIJB and safeguarding
- Interview notes
- Examples of appointment letters and contracts
- The single central record (SCR) covering all staff, temporary staff, volunteers and governors
- Staff files containing all required verification evidence for cross-reference with the SCR
- Proof that appropriate checks are carried out on any volunteers, temporary workers, or other personnel, including those externally employed where work is contracted out, e.g. cleaning, catering, security, extra-curricular provision, and recorded on the SCR
- Evidence of regular review of recruitment policies and practices to consider alignment with best practices in DEIJB

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- A DEIJB policy
- DEIJB training such as bias training, particularly for those on interview panels
- Link to relevant sections of a whistleblowing or complaints policy referring to safer recruitment
- A statement of any use of AI in the recruitment process with a prioritisation of potential safeguarding and safer recruitment concerns
- The school's stance on candidates using AI in applications
- How the school might use AI as a tool to support its application process (see Appendix A)

Additional Guidance (1A)

Much of Standard 1 centres around meeting a set of requirements that encompass all staff and adults on site or connected with the school – teaching and non-teaching, including governors (whether they physically visit the school site or not), bus drivers, security, cleaners, contractors, volunteers, coaches and extra-curricular providers.

Evidence for Standard 1A includes several required elements, notably a range of candidate checks, which should be included in the SCR and personnel files. Whilst we appreciate that a school's context can present challenges in acquiring documentation and carrying out checks, the school should pursue and secure the most comprehensive set of employment and background checks obtainable. Risk assessments should be carried out where the school has exhausted all possible avenues to obtain information.

We need to see that there is a strong and positive culture around the recruitment of staff, which is fair, transparent and rooted in safer recruitment best practice. A commitment to vigilance and attention to detail should be present in verifying the documentation and background of candidates prior to any appointment.

Given that the use of AI has become more significant, we would expect that schools consider where the use of AI might be beneficial and where it might present challenges and obstacles to safer recruitment and its usage in the areas below. If the school is already using AI for recruitment purposes, we would expect this to be included in the evidence provided.

Required elements and further guidance, including what to expect during the school visit, are explained in more detail below.

Policy requirements

- A **Safer Recruitment Policy** should provide a clear description of safer recruitment procedures and the principles underpinning them. The policy should be applied consistently across all staff and governors, and should incorporate recruitment, induction, early evaluation and probation.
- An **Equal Opportunities Policy** should include a section on recruitment, ensuring that all applications are considered according to the requirements of the job and avoiding discrimination or bias.
- Policies should take **DEIJB** into consideration, even if the term DEIJB is not used. An inclusive approach should be taken to the curriculum, enrichment activities, trips, additional educational needs (AEN)(as defined in Appendix B), English as an Additional Language (EAL), physical access, admissions, educational values and policies. Harassment, inequality and unfairness should be addressed as far as the laws and customs of the host nation allow.
- Clear policies and processes for **whistleblowing and disciplinary actions** for staff should be in place.

The recruitment processes

- A **statement about the school's commitment to safeguarding and equal opportunities** must be present in all recruitment communication, documentation and on the school's website. This includes internal and external **advertisements**.
- **Advertisements** should also include a link to the job and role description and outline the checks that will be carried out for all shortlisted candidates. Job and role descriptions should refer to safeguarding and the role's safeguarding responsibilities.
- **Application forms** should be completed in full by all candidates. Schools should not rely on CVs alone as it is the applicant who controls the information provided in a CV, rather than the school. Schools should pay particular attention to any employment gaps and gain sufficient explanation from the candidate for these. We also expect to see that application forms include a question about name change. This is because individuals with criminal convictions often change their identity to hide their past from potential employers. The application form should also include questions about disciplinary issues, safeguarding concerns or complaints. If schools have staff who applied by means other than an application form, they must complete one retrospectively.
- **Interview panels** should include one interviewer who has had safer recruitment training. At least two child protection/safeguarding questions should be asked. Questions should be consistent across a set of interviews. Interviewer notes should be retained.
- At least **two references must** always be sought. For teaching and related posts, such as teaching assistants, technicians and examinations officers, one reference should be from the **present, or most recent headteacher**, unless the applicant has been working outside education.
- Before any appointment, references must be checked and verified **verbally** by telephone or video call to verify the identity of the referee and to make a final check regarding the suitability of the candidate to work with children and young adults. The date and initials of the staff member carrying out the verbal check should be recorded in the SCR. Interim risk assessments would be recommended if references do not arrive before employment begins.
- Letters of appointment and contracts should be included in the staff member's personnel file.

Checks on candidates

- All candidates should provide **proof of identity,** which includes a birth certificate where possible, as well as a passport or an ID card. This is a safeguard against candidates who have changed their names to conceal a criminal or poor professional record.
- Proof of **degree and teaching qualifications** should be provided where appropriate, with photocopies of the original documents stored in the personnel file.
- **Police checks** must be obtained from all countries that candidates have worked and/or lived in for **at least the past five years.**
- Schools should carry out **regular host country police checks** for existing staff, ideally annually, or at least every two years. This often occurs as part of a regular visa or work permit renewal. Schools should share any difficulties in this area with the COBIS Accreditation Team to find the best solution.
- For candidates who have ever worked, lived or studied in the United Kingdom, we **mandate ICPC checks**, which can be obtained from the ACRO website (see Appendix A) and include the children's barred list check. DBS checks can no longer be obtained for overseas teachers as they apply only for candidates intending to work in the UK.

- COBIS recommends strongly that schools carry out **Prohibition Order Checks**, which are compulsory in England. COBIS can carry these out as a free service for member schools. For further details, please see the COBIS website (see Appendix A).
- COBIS also recommends that schools carry out **social media checks** on candidates prior to the confirmation of any appointment.
- Appropriate checks should be carried out on school-appointed supply teaching staff, coaching and extra-curricular staff, volunteers, temporary workers and contractors, such as cleaning, catering and security, in line with the checks carried out on other locally employed staff.
- COBIS requires schools to check that **agencies** they may use for services such as coaching and extra-curricular, catering, transport, security and cleaning conduct necessary background checks on all their employees.
- The school should have provision for appropriately checking any other adults on site who are **not employed directly by the school**, but who may encounter children. All must have police and identity checks. These may include temporary contractors, volunteers, individuals who are directly, or technically contracted by parents, or where they are involved in an activity on the school site organised by an external provider. Examples include teaching assistants, peripatetic music teachers, adults involved in sports and other extra-curricular activities, and activities organised either by the school, or an external provider that involve children who are not on the school's roll. Contractual and liability issues here also pertain.

The single central record (SCR)

- The SCR should contain details of all staff and governors in one document.
- COBIS provides schools with an online SCR health check with the COBIS Accreditation Team following onboarding. This gives schools clear guidance about any gaps in types of information recorded, or in individual records that need to be addressed. It also helps to reassure human resources (HR) staff and school leaders that the purpose is to support schools to strengthen practice. Follow-up health checks are provided by COBIS and/or the LIP before the visit as needed.
- The SCR will be examined carefully during the school visit.
- All entries should be dated and initialled by an approved HR representative and the SCR must be checked regularly by the Head, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the designated governor for safeguarding (DGS), at least once per term.

Staff files

- During the school visit, the LIP will review a minimum of **5% of staff (and governor) files** and cross-reference these with the information provided in the SCR.
- The files should meet the stipulations of **the host country data protection and retention laws**. We require evidence that all qualifications, certificates, ID cards, passports, plus police and prohibition order checks, ICPCs, the application form, CVs, references and attested birth certificates have been checked. This should include at least the date of each check, the name of the staff member who checked it, certificate reference number and check level. For reference, in the UK, certificates (including copies) should not ordinarily be kept beyond six months.

- We recommend that **existing staff be police checked** annually and at least every two years. This may be as part of a visa renewal process. Evidence of this should be present in the personnel file and SCR as above.
- Personnel files should include an annual **self-declaration form** signed by the staff member to show that they have read the safeguarding policy, code of conduct and to declare any criminal convictions or misconduct.
- Every effort should be made by the school to provide complete files before the visit as missing documentation may mean the school does not meet Standard 1A.
- Schools should follow data protection laws pertaining in their host country when retaining information in staff files after employment with the school has ended. They may require this information if requested by an employer or in the event of a safeguarding investigation.

Risk assessments

- Historically, a school may have gaps in its SCR from earlier recruitment practices. It may not, for example, have sought references, verified a referee's identity or carried out police and ID checks fully. In such cases, we would expect to see that the school has made every effort to check back and strengthen their records for all current staff and adults on the SCR.
- Where a gap has been identified and where a school is retrospectively updating its SCR, risk assessments should be carried out identifying the gap, outlining what has been done, assessing the level of risk posed and how risk is mitigated. This may include a HR review of appraisal records of existing staff, speaking to line managers and meeting with the staff member to gauge how current their knowledge of safeguarding and child protection is.
- The risk assessment should be noted on the SCR and included in the staff member's personnel file. The HR manager and Head of School should sign and date it when they are satisfied that it is complete.
- For all staff employed by the school within the last five years, COBIS expects that the school is actively seeking to remove any gaps in their documentation, e.g. a reference. The SCR can be used to demonstrate this, as can the risk assessment. Where the school has tried but is unable to complete a specific record but can demonstrate mitigation of risk, then this should be signed off by the Head of School and HR manager and shared with the LIP.
- COBIS would still expect the school to complete risk assessments for staff who have worked at the school for longer than five years where there are gaps on the SCR, but it can feel more confident in acting as the 'referee' for individuals where references may be missing.

Please feel free to contact the COBIS Accreditation Team at any time for support around all aspects of the maintenance of the SCR and staff records. COBIS partners with The Safeguarding Alliance for all matters relating to safeguarding and safer recruitment (see Appendix A).

1B

All staff within the school, including volunteers and supply staff, meet high standards of child protection and the safeguarding of students.

Examples of evidence to provide

Evidence in this section MUST include:

- Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy and procedures which provide comprehensive and appropriate expectations and protocols for all aspects of safeguarding and child protection which are contextualised to host-country law and COBIS expectations. This includes arrangements for all school-related activities, including those taking place outside normal school hours.
- The policy should also include mapping of host-country authorities, regulators, police/emergency routes and alternative escalation including international referral where local safeguarding infrastructure is limited.
- Clear methodology in place and known to the school community for reporting and handling concerns, allegations and disclosures, both for child-on-child abuse and where adults may be implicated, including staff, senior leaders and board members. This includes how whistleblowers are protected and supported.
- DSL and deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL) in post (not the proprietor, CEO or Principal) with clear job descriptions and appropriate professional support and time allocation to carry out their roles effectively
- Child protection records are maintained and backed up and stored securely by the DSL
- The DSL, DDSL and DGS are all known to the school community. See also Standard 4a.
- Certificates of high-level training for DSL / DDSL which enable them to deliver training for staff, governors, externally contracted staff and volunteers
- Certification of enhanced training for other staff, e.g. safer recruitment, appropriate to role (interviewers, senior leaders, pastoral leaders, DGS)
- Regular (termly) meetings between the DSL / DDSL and the DGS
- Programme of regular – annual at least – staff training on safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and training around the challenges raised by AI in this area, such as reporting of student and teacher deep fakes
- An induction schedule for all new staff, new governors and volunteers which includes safeguarding training as a compulsory element
- Staff Code of Conduct which supports safeguarding
- Where work is contracted out – catering, security, cleaning, transport, for example – staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, with the option for delivery in other languages to the same standard under the direction of the DSL
- Appropriate checks are carried out on external providers operating on, and away from, the school site who may come into contact with children, e.g. extra-curricular activities, any outside individual or group providing an activity, or on school trips
- Contractual and liability issues where people not employed by the school may come into contact with students, e.g. 1:1 student support paid for by parents/caregivers, peripatetic music staff
- Ensure that child protection and safeguarding policies explicitly address the needs of diverse student populations

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Mental health and wellbeing lead (or similar) in post with a clear role description
- Evidence of information sessions on safeguarding for students, and parents/caregivers, e.g. assemblies, PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education), tutorial programme, parent meetings. This should include the challenges associated with the use of AI, e.g. deepfakes or the uploading of sensitive information including images of students.
- Evidence of effective liaison with external agencies, where they exist, including documented local safeguarding referral and escalation map, including emergency and out-of-hours routes
- Some evidence of alternative support, or liaison where these agencies are not available

Additional Guidance (1B)

We are assessing the extent to which the school has established an effective safeguarding culture, that works in tandem with rigorous safeguarding systems and practice. All COBIS schools should maintain safeguarding arrangements that place the safety, welfare and best interests of children at the centre of decision-making. Schools must comply with the law and regulatory requirements of the host country and should be able to demonstrate how local safeguarding, child-protection, police, health, regulatory and emergency arrangements have been identified and incorporated into school procedures. UK benchmarks should inform recognised good safeguarding practice, and schools should understand where these benchmarks are not legally binding in their location.

Where local safeguarding infrastructure or statutory referral routes are limited, the school should maintain documented alternative escalation and protective arrangements so that concerns are not left without action.

Safeguarding should be understood as a whole-school responsibility extending beyond child-protection referrals to safer recruitment, adult conduct, child-on-child abuse, online safety, attendance and missing education, medical and mental-health risk, trips, boarding, transport, external providers, facilities, information sharing and the culture in which children and adults are able to speak up.

Schools should maintain clear operational safeguarding leadership through a DSL and appropriately trained deputies, executive accountability through school leadership, and independent strategic oversight through governance. Safeguarding systems should be regularly tested, reviewed and improved using evidence including case review, audit, staff and student knowledge, training, recruitment assurance, incident learning and safeguarding data.

Safeguarding roles

- A DSL and DDSL should be in post with role descriptions, including clear boundaries about the limits of their responsibilities. Neither position should be held by the proprietor, CEO, Principal or Head as they have a higher role in child protection cases evaluating evidence to decide on action to be taken. There should be suitable support in the school, including time allocation and professional learning, alongside support available from external agencies. Safeguarding works most effectively when there is constant dialogue within the safeguarding team and with related colleagues.
- The size and composition of the safeguarding team will depend on the size of the school. Often, separate teams exist in different phases of the school, including the DSL and/or at least one DDSL in each, but also including a small number of other staff members with a strong interest in this area.
- Board members have responsibility to oversee safeguarding in the school so need at least basic knowledge and require regular safeguarding training. A DGS should be in place with higher level training; they should meet with the DSL and inspect the SCR at regular intervals (see Standard 4). Safeguarding must be a standing item on each board agenda and boards must be updated appropriately (see Standard 4). The DSL, DDSL(s) and the DGS should be known to the school community.

- Members of the school community – especially students - should know who the safeguarding team are and how to contact them. We would expect to see age-appropriate posters placed prominently around the school with this information, including photographs.
- A confidential, secure record of all child protection, and other safeguarding issues, must be maintained centrally. The outcomes should be shared by the DSL with the DGS in regular, ideally termly meetings, to enable subsequent reports to the board.

Safeguarding policy and practice

- The school's Safeguarding Policy should be explicit about how the school manages all allegations, including child-on-child abuse, and in relation to staff/volunteers/contractors, low-level concerns or equivalent, safer working practice, whistleblowing and senior-leader/board escalation.
- Case management should specify chronology, decision rationale, actions/outcomes, review, secure sharing, transfer to new schools and retention. We would expect to understand from the school how they learn from incidents, complaints, allegations and near misses.

Training

- Safeguarding and child protection must feature prominently in the induction training provided for all staff members, including governors, as well as in the annual training for all permanent staff and governors.
- Enhanced training should be in place for all staff appropriate to their role (interviewers, senior leaders, pastoral leaders, DGS).
- There are a variety of opportunities for high-level training available. COBIS offers these courses regularly as do some of our COBIS Supporting Associates and trusted partners. Safeguarding is ever-changing so it is important that schools ensure that these key colleagues are as up to date in their knowledge and practice as possible.
- Training records must be maintained and dated, ideally on the SCR.

Other safeguarding checks

- In all cases, the school should be able to show that it has carried out due diligence in terms of duty of care, contracts and liabilities. This will also apply to activities offered by the school but organised by an external provider where responsibility and supervision may be uncertain, e.g. adventurous activities involving instructors or guides.
- We recommend that all staff read the annual Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance (KCSIE) produced by the UK Department for Education, which provides excellent advice to British schools internationally as well as key safeguarding updates. See also the UK Department for Education Working Together to Safeguard Children (see Appendix A).
- In terms of child protection, members of the school community need to know how to make a disclosure. During the school visit, we will look for staff awareness of this and of the signs they should look for to indicate a child protection concern.

Standard 2 – Student Welfare

The school provides a safe and supportive environment for all young people.

2A

The school provides a pastoral structure that meets the needs of all students and promotes their personal development.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Policies and practice underpinning and providing pastoral support for all aspects of student wellbeing including celebrating diversity, promoting cultural awareness and understanding, and addressing issues such as safety, identity, belonging, and inclusion
- Clarity of pastoral roles and responsibilities and their effectiveness in practice
- Pastoral structures that include effective crisis intervention and response protocols sensitive to the diverse needs of students experiencing personal crises or mental health challenges
- Appropriate continuous professional learning (CPL) and a whole-school commitment to pastoral support and development including trauma-informed care, suicide prevention/suicide safer and other relevant areas
- Effective leadership, communication and co-operation between all elements of student support and within pastoral teams, e.g. safeguarding team, counselling, provision and support for EAL and AEN, including disability, and medical staff
- Appropriate time and support for effective tutoring and mentoring of students
- Effective communication with staff, other professionals and outside agencies
- Measures for recognising and recording child protection, welfare and learning issues
- Examples of positive and effective intervention to support students and how parents/caregivers are involved
- Effective house and/or vertical pastoral system, where applicable
- The effectiveness of the induction process for new students joining throughout the school year

Additional Guidance (2A)

- The school should provide evidence of its pastoral structures, as well as the responsibilities, training and effectiveness of key roles.
- We want to see how effectively staff support and include all students pastorally and academically, and how well they communicate with each other, with parents and outside agencies.
- The school should be clear about when pastoral/wellbeing concerns become safeguarding concerns and require escalation to DSL/early-help/multi-disciplinary intervention.
- This Standard also includes the induction arrangements for new students (see Standard 9).

2B

The school has effective provision for the physical and mental health, and safe care of all students, allowing them to flourish in the school environment.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Adherence to local regulations in respect of health and safety
- Methods of reporting health and safety concerns which are effective both in terms of communication and actions
- Appropriate and effectively implemented policies, procedures and protocols for health and safety, including minutes of meetings
- Policies, procedures and facilities demonstrating an appropriate level of qualified medical and first aid support for all students which respects diversity and privacy, e.g. gender, and demonstrates cultural awareness
- Relevant policies, initiatives, activities and programmes to encourage and support mental and physical health and wellbeing, e.g. healthy eating, guidance about safe and responsible use of IT, mobile devices, social media and the use of AI, as well as support for students on long-term absence or those learning at a distance
- Clarity on the school's approach on filtering and monitoring informed by KCSIE guidance and the legal requirements of the host country
- Safe and appropriate supervision before, during and after the school day to discharge the school's duty of care, supported by relevant policies
- Student perceptions which demonstrate they feel safe, secure and included whilst at school
- Student voice and student involvement in policy and procedure review
- Assembly and tutorial programme
- PSHE programme
- How the school addresses all forms of bullying and communicates this to the whole school community

Additional Guidance (2B)

- We need to see that medical staff maintain proper records, that medicines are stored securely and dispensed safely and appropriately.
- Staff attending trips (see 2D) should be properly equipped with first aid kits and directed by trained first aiders.
- We also look at the role of medical staff within the wider safeguarding team and culture.
- We strongly recommend that schools refer to KCSIE and host country requirements for guidance on protecting students from online harm, particularly in the areas of filtering and monitoring. Filtering is preventative and protects users from accessing illegal, inappropriate and potentially harmful content online, e.g. by identifying and blocking specific web links and web content. Monitoring is reactive and refers to monitoring device usage either manually, such as a teacher viewing screens in a classroom, or technically, such as employing software that views a device user's activity and which can produce alerts on illegal, inappropriate, or potentially harmful activities, including bullying.

2C

The school has clear and effective policies and procedures to support positive behaviour for all students.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- A Positive Behaviour Policy and practices that are fair, equitable, and free from bias and discrimination
- Code of behaviour, rewards and sanctions
- Anti-Bullying Policy, which considers online bullying including the use of AI
- Attendance guidelines
- Exclusion Policy and records of related incidents and actions
- Case examples of positive and effective behavioural interventions
- Policies and procedures for attendance, school dress and punctuality which consider these as potential safeguarding concerns

Additional Guidance (2C)

- This section centres on how behaviour is managed in a positive framework. We will look at relevant policies and evidence, from different perspectives and across the school, which show how well procedures work in practice, including how positive behaviour is modelled and celebrated.
- Approaches to behaviour which are trauma informed and inclusive are also considered.
- We would expect that a school's approach to behaviour and attendance recognises that these can be safeguarding indicators.
- We would expect to see consideration of the impact of AI in terms of how it can be used to generate images that can contribute to the bullying of students and/or staff and how this is included in the Positive Behaviour Policy.

2D

The school ensures that off-site activities are appropriate and safe.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- School Visits Policy which prioritises safeguarding
- Visits are inclusive and accessible to the full range of students including the careful planning of support for individual needs both physical and emotional
- Risk assessments and review procedures
- Procedures for taking students off-site such as parental approval/ contacts and relevant medical and safeguarding information
- Appropriate staffing and medical/first aid cover
- A suitably trained educational visits co-ordinator in post
- Provision for contact, support and communication during trips and visits with senior leader(s)
- Evidence of emergency procedures, communication protocols, and contingency plans that prioritise participant safety and comfort in the event of unforeseen circumstances
- We would expect to see clarity of the school's position around the use of AI for visit planning and administration including potential sharing of sensitive data.

Additional Guidance (2D)

- The School Visits Policy and risk assessments should be produced and reviewed in consultation with the DSL and include a consideration of safeguarding, reporting, staff conduct, accommodation/sleeping, one-to-one situations, transport, missing child, personalised support for students where needed and host families.
- The DSL/safeguarding team should liaise with trip leaders about any students of concern.
- All communication with parents regarding permissions, contact details, medical information and allergies must be in place.
- We need to see regular reviews and evaluation of all off-site trips, visits and activities – including sports fixtures – whether residential or not, and how policy and practice is amended where necessary.
- We will also look at first aid provision, staffing and measures in place to respond to potential incidents.
- A regularly reviewed School Visits Policy must ensure appropriate access for all students to the opportunities offered. This is usually also part of the school's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- We will also discuss the monitoring of external provision and the commitment of providers to adhere to the school's Safeguarding Policy and practice (see Standard 1A).
- Should the school be considering using AI for the execution and planning of off-site activities, we would expect to see potential pitfalls, such as the sharing of sensitive data, have been considered.
- If the school is already using AI for trip planning, we would expect this to be included in the evidence provided.

Standard 3 – Facilities

The school provides all students with access to an environment conducive to learning and that keeps them safe.

3A

Buildings, facilities and resources support the learning needs of all students.

Examples of evidence to provide

Evidence in this section MUST include:

- All learning and meeting spaces have windows or doors with clear visibility panels to meet safeguarding requirements
- Provision of water supply, drainage, access to drinking water
- The safe construction of buildings in compliance with local regulations as a minimum
- All windows, across the school, especially above the ground floor, must only permit a narrow opening for ventilation purposes that is insufficient for even very young children to climb through. Internal and external balconies and mezzanine floors must be protected by high barriers to safeguard children.
- Classrooms and other learning areas and spaces, corridors, lighting, the ambient temperature, acoustics, quality of ventilation and air and the sufficiency of space are appropriate to the age of the student, the curriculum and specific individual needs

Evidence in this section is likely to include for example:

- Quality and suitability of specialist teaching and learning areas, including AEN and EAL.
- Indoor and outdoor cleaning and maintenance schedules and the safe storage of materials and equipment
- How food provision and catering facilities are managed in compliance with local hygiene standards, special dietary needs and healthy eating requirements
- Effective protection and procedures for outdoor areas relating to weather, including extreme heat or cold, lightning, storms and other events as appropriate
- Furniture, flooring, and fittings conducive to creating an environment which meets the needs of all students and staff, e.g. age and height appropriate furniture

Additional Guidance (3A)

- Standard 3 is concerned with the health and safety of the site and how well facilities support the learning and wellbeing of all students. We want to see that safety and security on this site is everyone's responsibility. A full site tour at the beginning of the school visit will be conducted by the LIP and staff with responsibility for facilities and health and safety. There is a checklist of all the main elements we need to look at, including boarding where applicable, in the *Guide to COBIS Accreditation and Compliance*.
- Standard 3A looks at the school environment in relation to learning and safety and considers the ages of the children in particular sections of the school.
- As well as general health and safety provision, we will focus on high-risk areas, like chemical storage rooms, laboratories, sports areas, swimming pools and technology rooms, as well as assessing the suitability of furniture, flooring, stairs and fittings.
- As in 2B, where cleaning and/or catering is contracted out, we will expect to see that requisite employment checks and safeguarding training, as outlined in Standard 1, have taken place. Food hygiene standards, dietary needs and healthy eating will be examined. We will talk with students and parents about the quality, value and inclusiveness of menus and how they are able to give feedback and are included in discussions. We will also discuss how the school monitors eating habits and how they intervene to support students, sensitive to the risks and range of eating disorders. This relates to Standard 2A and 2B.
- We will also look at external agency safety, hygiene and quality approval notices and up-to-date certificates around fire safety, evacuation, food hygiene, lift maintenance, building regulations and the safety of buildings.
- We are interested in how effectively the facilities enhance learning in its widest sense and support all learners, in the framework of the DEIJB Policy.

3B

The site(s) provides a secure environment for students, staff and visitors.

Examples of evidence to provide

Evidence in this section MUST include:

- For emergencies it is critical that there must be at least two entrances/exits to buildings and individual floors. One of these may be an external emergency fire exit/staircase.

Evidence in this section is likely to include for example:

- Security of the site
- Entrance and exit procedures for visitors and vehicles, including identification checks, safeguarding briefing, visitor pass and arrangements to escort and supervise
- Access to emergency exits should be well signposted and clear of obstacles
- Fire evacuation and lockdown procedures and how regularly these are practised and reviewed and include consideration of specific individual needs
- Critical incident policies and protocols, including the outbreak of serious infection and global pandemics and include consideration of specific individual needs
- Arrangements for the beginning and end of the school day, including pick up and drop off procedures
- Clear provision for the regular review and revision of all policies and procedures and for ensuring records are accurate and up to date
- Robust digital safety, data protection, and cyber security policies and practices
- Implementation of health and safety procedures especially in high-risk areas, e.g. science laboratories, science prep rooms, technology rooms, sports hall, swimming pool, climbing walls
- Clear incident reporting process both internally and externally where appropriate
- CCTV policies and procedures, if applicable

Additional Guidance (3B)

Staff, students and community

- We need to see that the site is safe and secure so will look at school access procedures on foot and with vehicles.
- We will observe how visitors, including parents, are admitted into and signed out of school following the Visitor Policy; that identity is checked, briefings on safeguarding and safety are shared and lanyards are issued. It is good practice to issue badges with different coloured lanyards to distinguish between different adult groups, e.g. staff, visitors, governors. Arrangements to escort and supervise, where appropriate, should be in place.
- There should be clear procedures for deliveries and external contractors that follow the school policy on safeguarding.
- All policies and procedures relating to drills around fire safety, lockdown and the evacuation of the site will be looked at as well as critical incident protocols. These include provision for partial, or full closure due to events beyond the control of the school such as global pandemics or local and national outbreaks of infectious diseases, civil unrest or military conflict. We will also discuss how regularly and effectively safety and security is reviewed, and that feedback is gathered and acted upon after drills.
- Where security is outsourced, we will also check that requisite employment checks and safeguarding training, as outlined in Standard 1, have taken place.
- Regarding cyber security, we will explore school policies to protect data.

Facilities

- Early in the COBIS process we will seek to confirm that there are two points of entry to all floors at the school. This will be checked during the school visit. Where there is only one internal stairway, we would expect to see an alternative, external fire evacuation stairway. **This requirement would apply even if the school's arrangements have been approved by local authorities.**
- Fire exits need to be carefully marked, and evacuation routes clearly signposted throughout the school. All fire equipment, precautions and arrangements must be regularly checked by the local fire service. Where buildings have lifts, we would need to see provision – evacuation chairs, for example – for evacuating people with temporary mobility, or permanent physical disability issues when the lifts are not used in emergencies.
- The security of the school's perimeter will be examined, as well as access for emergency vehicles.

3C

The school environment is learning-centred, inclusive and reflects core values.

Examples of evidence to provide

Evidence in this section is likely to include for example:

- Tangible evidence of the values and/or guiding statements of the school in displays, signage etc.
- How the school environment reflects the diversity of its student body. Evidence could include diverse representation in posters, curriculum materials featuring diverse perspectives, and multicultural events or celebrations.
- The library resources are representative of all members of the school community.
- Spaces that have been developed to inspire and engage students in their learning and interests, e.g. book corners, sensory rooms, buddy benches.
- Displays which celebrate student work
- Learning spaces/classrooms that create an environment where students are engaged and motivated.
- Understanding of the need to work towards more sustainable practices around facilities, e.g. recycling, use of solar panels, more efficient energy usage.

Additional Guidance (3C)

- There should be appropriate space for learning to take place across all age groups, including indoor and outdoor space.
- There should be suitable furniture and layout in classrooms across all age groups.
- We understand that not all schools will have solar panels, eco water systems etc. but there are many other ways in which a commitment to sustainable practices can be demonstrated within facilities.
- We will look at how a school uses digital technology across campus including accessibility across the age range of students, including user agreements in place. We will specifically ask the school what consideration it is giving to accessibility to, and the potential use of AI.

3D

Overall facilities meet the needs of all students including those with learning needs or physical disability.

Examples of evidence to provide

Evidence in this section MUST include:

- Appropriate separation of staff /adult toilet facilities from student facilities
- Provision of accessible toilet and washing facilities for use by students with temporary or permanent physical disability

Evidence in this section is likely to include for example:

- Access to suitable toilet and washing facilities appropriate to the age, needs, gender, privacy and safety of students
- AEN and EAL Policies and provision in the school, including consideration of the appropriate use of AI for student learning, for example AI-powered programmes such as translators, grammar checkers and speak-to-write software
- Appropriate, or necessary adaptation of, access for all students and staff
- Adaptation of accommodation, facilities, resources and equipment to provide suitable access to the curriculum and activities for all students

Additional Guidance (3D)

- This area is concerned with provision for students with additional educational needs, including any temporary or permanent disabilities, so that they have safe and easy access to facilities and learning areas. We will look at provision including any necessary adaptation of the timetable.
- We will also look at provision for supporting students with a long-term illness, or who are not regularly in school other than through normal absence reasons.
- The school's Equal Opportunity, AEN and EAL policies and any DEIJB framework in place will all be examined, along with specialist provision for supporting children with particular needs, or disabilities. Please also refer to Standards 7A and 7B for AEN in practice, and Standard 9D for admissions arrangements and testing.

Standard 4 - Governance

The school's governing body (board) works to support students and to provide strategic direction for the school.

4A

People: all board members meet all requirements for staff with access to young people, reinforcing the importance of safeguarding within the school, including appropriate induction and training.

Examples of evidence to provide

Evidence in this section MUST include:

- Clarity around the composition/membership of the board (and any subsidiary bodies or sub-committees) and safer recruitment processes for all board members
- All background, identity and police checks from all relevant countries recorded on the SCR
- Appropriate safeguarding training upon appointment and regular (ideally annual) refresher training for all board members
- DGS in post with a clear role and responsibilities description and enhanced safeguarding training (Level 3)
- Regular (termly) meetings between the DGS and DSL, including scrutiny of the SCR
- Safeguarding updates at each board meeting (usually from DGS)
- Safer recruitment training for any board members involved in the recruitment process for senior leadership posts at the school
- Designated governor for health and safety (DGHS) in post with role and responsibilities and providing updates at each board meeting
- Evidence that board members understand and support the school's commitment to DEIJB

Evidence in this section is likely to include for example:

- The same consideration of the use of AI in the recruitment process of board members as outlined in Standard 1A
- A clear induction programme for new board members which may include mentorship from experienced members
- Information and guidance for new members in a handbook for board members
- Annual strategic workshops
- Board member training on DEIJB in line with school policy for staff
- Board recruitment that follows clear processes established in governance articles/handbook
- Specific training on equitable recruitment where board members may be involved in recruitment
- Examples of additional training undertaken individually, as part of a group of schools or a company to increase the positive impact of governance

Additional Guidance (4A)

- We expect board members to undergo safeguarding training because they have a responsibility for the oversight of safeguarding, thus need both the knowledge to do so and to set an example to all staff.
- We expect that all meetings will include safeguarding and health and safety as standing items and that reports be submitted from DGS, DSL, Principal, DGHS following procedures established in the school's governance articles, constitution or handbook.

4B

Purpose and process: the legal status, purpose, functions, structure and procedures of the board operate in line with the vision and interests of the school and its students, providing strategic direction and oversight while delegating operational responsibility to the school leadership.

Examples of evidence to provide

Evidence in this section MUST include:

- The legal status of the board, e.g. a foundation, a single proprietor, a school group, a company
- A clear statement of the purpose of the board, how they will align with the vision, mission and guiding principles and values of the school
- A written constitution to show the structure and operating processes of the governing body and any sub-committees
- A board handbook (or collection of documents) that demonstrates the clear terms of reference of the board and how they should operate, communicate and hold key relationships, particularly with the Head/Principal and with parents. These documents together should clarify where the board has overall responsibility, for example around student safeguarding and disciplinary processes, complaints, educational quality, financial sustainability, facilities maintenance, and the development and management of the Head/Principal.
- Board protocols for serious safeguarding complaints, incidents and escalation for concerns involving senior leaders/board members
- An up-to-date register of interests
- A signed declaration of interests by all members of the board

Evidence in this section is likely to include for example:

- Role descriptions and responsibilities for members of the board with specific descriptions for the board's Chair, deputy, secretary, DGS, DGHS and any sub-committee chairs
- A current list of members of the board, their specific responsibilities and/or areas of expertise to show how the board seeks to meet specific needs, and their length of service
- Clarity around the building and maintenance of the key relationship between the Chair and the Head/ Principal
- How the ethos of the board can be demonstrated to have a positive impact at the school.
- Within the board handbook, a clearly understood and agreed code of conduct for board members.
- Evidence of a regular review of the board handbook
- Annual board evaluation/report of school progress to parents
- Evidence of recruitment that aligns with the school's Equal Opportunities and DEIJB Policies
- A protocol for the resolution of disputes and how this is managed in meetings
- Protocol for members of the board to declare interests in meetings

Additional Guidance (4B)

Legal status, purpose, functions and structures

- COBIS appreciates that boards across COBIS schools exist in different forms based on their ownership model, such as charitable trusts, not for profit organisations, school groups, owner/proprietor schools, companies.
- Where the articles and/or constitution of the board allow, we would expect to see a representative range of members including, staff and parents and experts in marketing, human resources, finance, legal matters, project management/civil engineering and British international education.
- The board sits separately from the day-to-day operational leadership of the school, concentrating instead on the strategic overview. Evidence should demonstrate how members of the board understand their strategic role, their responsibility to support the school and school leadership while also acting as critical friends and holding it to account.
- We would expect to see balance in the composition of boards and recommend that parents/caregivers and staff serve as board members.

Operation in line with the vision and mission of the school

- Every agenda should include a standing item about any declarations of interest of members present.
- The register of interests needs to be accurate and up-to-date and should be accompanied by an individually signed and dated registration-of-interests form. We will ask about what means the board has in place to manage disputes, or conflict of interest issues which may arise in meetings.
- The code of conduct included in the board handbook should focus on how the board conduct their work, expectations around practice, professional behaviours, the culture it develops and the positive impact it seeks to have on the school.
- We will arrange to speak to the Chair and/or other board members on an MS Teams meeting before the visit if they are not available to meet during the visit itself.
- Schools should consider how evidence can demonstrate how the purpose, structures and approach of the board have a positive impact on the school and its community.
- We would expect to see consideration of DEIJB in the recruitment procedures and membership of the board.

4C

Impact and communication: impactful strategic and reflective governance, demonstrated through critical thinking, evaluative practice and informed decision making, is in place and communicated with school leadership and the wider community as appropriate.

Examples of evidence to provide

Evidence in this section MUST include:

- Evidence of regular (at least termly) full board meetings and of any sub-committees
- Agendas and minutes of such meetings which record attendance and which exemplify the reflective, evaluative work of governing body members around the strategic direction of the school and their critical friendship
- Board agendas which include safeguarding and health and safety as standing items
- The contact details for the members of the governing body are made available to parents/caregivers along with key policies

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Up-to-date profiles of members of the board and their specific roles and responsibilities are available to staff
- Parents/caregivers and staff know how to contact members of the board
- Relevant policies are openly available and accessible to parents/caregivers
- Evidence of a process of setting and reviewing strategic priorities at board level for the sustainability of the school
- Evidence of how the board evaluates its own effectiveness and impact in supporting the ongoing development of the school
- Other evidence of active involvement in the life of the school by members of the board, for example supporting major events, performances, celebrations or activities, or communication with parents/caregivers and staff
- Consideration of the role of the board in the leadership of strategy around the development of AI at the school
- Consideration of the potential risk to sensitive data if AI is used to create agendas, transcribe and share minutes of board meetings. We would expect this to be included in the evidence provided if already the current practice along with evidence of risk mitigation.

Additional Guidance (4C)

- Consider how the impact of good governance can be demonstrated through minutes of board meetings, valuable community support and further communication with the school community.
- Along with profiles of, and contact details for board members, all relevant policies should be easily available to parents/caregivers, usually via a portal: Safeguarding/Child Protection, Complaints, Exclusions, Positive Behaviour, Visitor Policy, Admissions, Trips, Learning and Teaching, Assessment, Technology for Learning, AEN, EAL, Equal Opportunities, Wellbeing, Healthy Eating and so on.
- The more the school shares, the more compelling the evidence is of an inclusive and collaborative school community and the strength of relationships within it.
- Regarding AI it would be useful to consider what role the board plays in the development of AI strategy and how it is informed by the developments at student and teacher level. Schools may wish to consider having a designated governor for AI.

Standard 5 – Ethos and Values

The school has an evident British educational ethos, is outward looking and promotes international mindedness.

5A

British educational ethos and values are at the heart of a holistic approach to learning and to the development of learner qualities.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- A statement of the school's core values and/or qualities it wishes to develop in students. This may be part of the guiding statements, vision, mission or learner profile
- A holistic curriculum where values and/or qualities such as resilience, care, respect for others, and open-mindedness are promoted and explored in the classroom and wider curriculum
- An inclusive educational approach where the needs of all learners are met through the use of adaptive teaching
- Samples of curriculum maps or teaching plans which highlight how the curriculum has been designed to consider aspects of DEIJB and respect for a diverse student community
- Appropriate and effective AEN and EAL provision
- Use of common UK-style models of assessment including public examinations (where applicable), moderation feedback and reporting recognised in the UK
- Staff trained in UK methodologies and approaches to learning
- Students able to effectively transition to UK, or other British international schools
- Quality of guidance for students applying to higher education
- Staff have fair and reasonable access to CPL
- Most subjects are taught in English; there is parity of English with an additional language if in a bilingual school context

Additional Guidance (5A)

- British educational ethos and values are concerned with holistic support for the whole child and all children, the wider curriculum outside the classroom, and creating the conditions in which all children have opportunities to develop personal qualities and learner attributes. It relates closely to Standards 2 and 7.
- We will assess how values are lived, encouraged and reinforced daily. This might be through a learner profile, that sets out the core qualities that the school wishes to develop in its students. We will seek evidence that such qualities are promoted.
- We will also explore how the school effectively challenges and supports all students including through its approach to supporting AEN and EAL, through the chosen curriculum and nature of internal and external assessments undertaken, and also through awards for participation, progress, excellence in the arts, sport, the community, leadership and so on.
- We expect to see inclusive curriculum content, including subjects that address issues of equity and justice, and where students are challenged to think critically about these from their own and other perspectives.
- For university or careers support we would hope to see a clearly structured approach ideally beginning in KS3 around student interests, choices and aspirations building to incorporate increasing levels of guidance around subject choices in upper KS3 and KS4, perhaps as part of the PSHE programme. Post-16 there is likely to be sufficiently qualified university/careers guidance provision to support student applications and transition to UK, host country and other high-quality universities and colleges worldwide.

5B

The school has an outward-looking perspective, promoting its values via a wide curriculum and through opportunities to develop awareness of other cultures and global issues as far as this is permissible within the host country.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- How school values are demonstrated in commitment to international-mindedness, intercultural learning and developing responsible global citizenship in an interconnected world. This will incorporate diverse perspectives from around the world, offering students opportunities to explore different cultures, histories, and global issues.
- Raising awareness of global issues, such as tackling the climate emergency, poverty, human rights, and sustainability, and encouraging students to engage in discussions and actions to address these issues. This may include developing media literacy across the age range.
- The effectiveness of student voice and active leadership
- As appropriate, celebration and support for other first languages and cultures within the school community
- Respect for, and teaching of, the language and culture of the host country
- DEIJB Framework/Policy

Additional Guidance (5B)

- If following the Accreditation route, this section should be read in conjunction with Standard 10, which covers not just the extra-curricular programme and enrichment opportunities, but also student engagement.
- Interculturalism is more than raising international awareness. It should be a regular aspect of learning for all students. We would expect to see age-appropriate approaches, and we will look for evidence of how wide and regular student engagement in inter-cultural and global issues supports and encourages the development of learner and human qualities.
- We may see evidence in the taught curriculum, including PSHE, assemblies, the tutorial programme, global perspectives courses, external opportunities and other global issue-based conferences and events plus school projects and initiatives, including those which involve the culture and language(s) of the host country, and which take advantage of the international mix and experiences of students.

Standard 6 – Boarding

The school in its provision of boarding provides a high level of care for students promoting their health, emotional wellbeing and educational progress.

6A

The school has taken appropriate measures to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of boarders.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Boarding provision is age appropriate and considers the varying needs of all students, including in relation to safeguarding and child protection
- A Boarding Policy or sections in relevant school policies covering boarding, and the wellbeing and safety of boarders
- Safeguarding, medical provision and first aid both within, and outside, the school day for boarders
- Suitable and appropriate access to external sources of medical care, including dentistry, counselling and mental health support
- Medical information, accurate and up-to-date records, including contact with parents/caregivers
- Policy and procedures are in place for isolating and caring for students in the event of an outbreak of a highly infectious disease, or pandemic
- The safe storage and dispensing of medicines
- The same attention to supporting mental and physical health and wellbeing, e.g. healthy eating, guidance about safe and responsible use of IT, mobile devices and social media and use of AI, as well as support for students on long-term absence or those learning at a distance as outlined in Standard 2B
- Appropriate safety procedures to ensure the boarding environment is safe from hazards
- Evacuation and lockdown procedures are in place, are practised regularly and reviewed appropriately to refine protocols
- Measures to prevent and deal with intruders on the site
- The provision of services to meet the needs of all students in the boarding environment, such as toilets, washing facilities, light, noise, heating, ventilation, storage space, sleeping accommodation, cleaning, laundry, meals and privacy, including the space and means to worship comfortably
- Appropriately qualified and trained staff to meet the needs of boarders appointed according to the Safer Recruitment Policy and related procedures. Refer to Standard 1A and the *Guide to COBIS Accreditation and Compliance.*
- Evidence of regular and appropriate staff training, including safeguarding to a high level
- Appropriate arrangements are made to ensure the safety of boarders during weekends, exeats and holidays, where the parents/caregivers themselves are not responsible, e.g. guardians, or host families
- Policy and procedures around appropriate use of mobile devices in line with the Wellbeing Policy
- Clear and regular communication between school and home linked to pastoral care and celebration of achievements, specifically linked to boarding

Additional Guidance (6A)

- We would expect the same high expectations of safeguarding in all aspects of school life and practice, including boarding.
- In all elements of boarding, we expect to see sections in relevant school policies covering boarders.
- The wellbeing and safety of boarders may also apply during the school day where a student is sick, or when the school is partially or fully closed for some reason and students cannot go home. This might also apply to exeats and the holiday period.
- The school is advised to refer to the Department for Education's National Minimum Standards for Boarding for guidance here (see Appendix A).

6B

Staffing and facilities are designed to allow boarders to flourish educationally.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Sections in relevant school policies covering boarding
- Appropriate communication between academic and boarding staff to support boarders' learning
- Arrangements for study and access to learning materials in free time, including provision for online and distance learning
- Study (prep) time is appropriately timetabled and supervised and consideration is given to the use of AI as outlined by school policies/guidelines
- Suitable and easy access to technology for learning
- AEN and EAL support
- Relevant DEIJB training to ensure that staff can meet the needs of all students

Additional Guidance (6B)

- We will look for ways in which staff communicate and how well students are supported in their academic work outside the classroom, principally prep, home study and revision with proper access to technology and materials.
- We would expect to see examples of communication which celebrate student achievements as well as how concerns are shared.

6C

Boarders are able to communicate with parents/caregivers.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Sections in relevant school policies covering boarding
- Access to computers, telephones and postal services for communication purposes
- Provision to regulate and monitor the use of mobile devices in line with the school's related policies

Additional Guidance (6C)

- In this section we look for consideration of the balance between enabling students to effectively communicate with home while ensuring procedures and practice align with school policies around safeguarding and appropriate use of digital devices.

6D

New boarders are inducted and supported as they join the boarding community.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Sections in relevant school policies covering boarding
- Procedures for the induction of new boarders which take into account the specific backgrounds and needs of each student to develop their sense of belonging
- Evidence of pastoral support meetings involving boarding house staff

Additional Guidance (6D)

- We would expect to see suitable liaison here between boarding and all other staff in the school to monitor how well new boarders have settled, as well as contact with home.
- We would expect the relevant policies to show clarity around the expectations around the use of mobiles, technology and AI.

6E

Meals meet the needs of boarders.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Sections in relevant school policies covering boarding
- All boarders, including those with specific dietary, medical or religious needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety served in an appropriate environment
- Availability of drinking water
- A mechanism for boarders to provide feedback regarding meals and snacks

Additional Guidance (6E)

- This is a significant aspect of wellbeing, happiness and health which we will cross-reference with aspects of Standards 2 and 3.
- Food provision should focus on meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) but also on snacks and drinks and the facilities to prepare these safely and responsibly in the boarding houses.

6F

There is an appropriate range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time, including sufficient and suitably timed free time each day.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Sections in relevant school policies covering boarding
- Staffing ratios/experience and risk assessments are completed
- A range of activities/resources/equipment are available to boarders for leisure time that cater to different interests, abilities, and developmental stages of boarders, providing opportunities for exploration, skill development, personal growth and fun supported by appropriate levels of supervision
- Records of extracurricular activities offered, participation rates, and feedback from boarders and staff which are regularly evaluated to inform future planning and improvement

Additional Guidance (6F)

- Standard 6F covers wellbeing, health and range of activities for boarders as well as the safe supervision and safeguarding of activities and leisure time. This section ties in with aspects of Standards 3 and 10.



Part Two: The Accreditation Standards

Standard 7 – Learning and Teaching

The school recognises that its core business is learning and teaching and that the quality of this helps to define the school. The school celebrates and supports the development of high-quality learning and teaching for all students and encourages positive attitudes to learning.

7A

The curriculum meets the needs of all students.

The curriculum should be broad and balanced and aspire to develop learner qualities and skills.

The curriculum offers broad opportunity and choice for all students at all stages.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- A statement of philosophy regarding the curriculum and relevant policies, e.g. Learning and Teaching, Curriculum, EAL, AEN, Equal Opportunities, Assessment and Reporting, Transition, Homework, Technology for Learning, including the use of AI
- Evidence of a culturally responsive curriculum
- A description of how the curriculum is designed to foster the development of learner qualities and skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, resilient thinking and problem-solving, alongside development of knowledge and understanding. This is now likely to include age-appropriate development of digital/AI literacy.
- Samples of lesson plans, projects, or activities that explicitly target the development of these learner qualities and skills across various subject areas
- Timetables, curriculum maps and programmes of study
- Arrangements for mixed ability groups and classes, banding and setting
- Evidence of appropriate course offerings and pathways available to students at different stages of their education, allowing them to pursue their interests and aspirations including choices for 14-18 students
- How the school ensures learning continuity and curriculum links at the main points of transition
- Organisation of online learning and use of digital platforms and resources in, and beyond, the school
- Diverse representation and inclusivity in learning materials, including textbooks, literature, and resources, to reflect the backgrounds, identities, and experiences of all students
- Curriculum content and activities that address social justice issues, promote empathy, and empower students to become advocates for positive change in their communities and beyond

Additional Guidance (7A)

The curriculum meets the needs of all students

- We will look at a range of evidence from across the school in Standard 7 and, if the school has EYFS/ primary/secondary sections, we usually comment on these areas separately in the verbal feedback and report.
- Curricula should be ones recognisable in UK and British international schools. These would include IB and the IPC. We also acknowledge that, where schools have the independence to develop their own curricula up to the start of examination courses, these may be hybrid, drawing ideas, approaches and good practice from available programmes.
- We will also look at progression and how the school organises transition between stages, and the balance between challenge and access.
- In terms of embedding AI literacy, we would expect to see schools considering how they can do this appropriately with students across the age groups while taking into consideration the context of the school.
- We look at interventions to support students, on what basis, as well as the range of opportunity for students of all needs, backgrounds and abilities.
- We will look at student groupings and the rationale for these decisions.
- DEIJB policy statements should cover subject options and setting and banding, although these may be contained within the Curriculum Policy.

Breadth, balance, and learner qualities

- We explore to what extent the curriculum is broad and balanced across the whole school, and to what extent there is parity of esteem between subject areas.
- We will look at how the school's curriculum develops human and learner qualities, provides opportunities to develop thinking, skills and knowledge, and how it promotes the school's educational values.
- We will also examine the key transition points to see how the school manages those and, at 14 and 16, what choices are available and using what rationale.

7B

Teaching consistently encourages students to make progress.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Statements of educational and/or teaching philosophy, notably relevant policies, handbooks, and related school literature, including the website, programmes of study and curriculum maps
- The effective use of a range of learning and teaching strategies (including online and for distance learning) that challenge and support all students to progress in their learning
- How this is evolving, for example current initiatives or shifts in approach within parts of, or across the school. This may include how the school is supporting staff and students to implement AI into learning and teaching appropriately and effectively.
- The effectiveness and nature of challenge of AEN and EAL support in and out of the classroom
- How academic teams coordinate their teaching to ensure students have equal and consistent access to quality teaching, including during periods when the school is fully or partially closed during term time
- Student progress data

Additional Guidance (7B)

- During the Accreditation visit, the visit team will draw evidence for Standard 7B primarily from their observations of learning. The LIP and PAs will visit as many lessons as possible, spending around 20 minutes in each.
- We are looking for evidence of learning and student progress in line with best practice and the school's learning and teaching and safeguarding expectations as outlined in the relevant policy documentation.
- We are not reporting on specific subjects but on learning and teaching. Where subjects are mentioned in the final report, it will be to illustrate positive aspects of the school's practice.
- We offer all staff observed a reflective feedback session where they can discuss the lesson with a member of the team.
- In terms of data, we will explore outcome, value added and qualitative data to better understand the progress made by students.
- We also need to see the thinking that lies behind what happens in the classroom and how consistent practice is both vertically and horizontally, between age groups and subjects.
- We are interested in how developments in practice are planned, piloted, evaluated and shared for wider adoption where appropriate.
- COBIS schools are at different stages of development of the use of AI in learning and teaching. We are looking for due consideration of the benefits and challenges and carefully planned age-appropriate implementation. This links to staff training, please refer to Standard 7C.
- If the school is already using AI for learning and teaching, we would expect this to be included in the evidence provided.

7C

The quality of learning and teaching is monitored effectively across the school to ensure improvement and to identify best practice which can be shared and celebrated.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Evidence of how learning and teaching that meets the needs of all students is monitored and evaluated by senior and middle leadership
- Approaches to quality assurance in teaching that tackle underperformance, celebrate excellence and promote best practice
- Purposeful and effective peer observation
- How the school celebrates the quality of teaching and shares good practice across the school
- A CPL programme to support the sharing and development of effective and inclusive approaches to learning
- Feedback from students on their learning and how that information is used
- The use of data to improve learning outcomes, including affective and attitudinal data from students
- How the quality of learning and teaching is monitored when the school is partially or fully closed during term-time

Additional Guidance (7C)

This standard focuses on how the school monitors learning and teaching and what it does with the information the school gathers. Questions might include:

- Through appraisal, performance management or review, how does the school gauge the quality of teaching and support CPL?
- How do teams and individuals evaluate, reflect on and share their practice?
- How does the school approach the consistency of quality between classrooms?
- How does the school use data to inform practice?
- If the school receives student feedback, how does that information feed into the dialogue?
- How does monitoring and reflection influence and shape the provision of CPL collectively, in teams and for individuals?

As the school considers the implementation of AI into learning and teaching, it is essential that appropriate training is provided to regularly upskill all teaching staff. We would expect to see a guided process of appropriate adoption of technology under clear leadership. This often takes the form of a learning and teaching group of early adopters who share agreed practice across the teaching body with the aim of establishing a unified approach.

7D

Marking, assessment and feedback support students in making progress. The school meets the learning needs of the full range of students.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Policies, e.g. Assessment and Reporting, Equal Opportunities, EAL, AEN, Examinations and Academic Integrity, which should include guidance around appropriate use of AI
- The range and effectiveness of formal and informal assessment across the school
- Examples of assessment by age, section and subject areas
- The way in which the school meets the EYFS principles for young learners
- Evidence from students' work that demonstrates the consistency of processes and effectiveness of marking, assessment and feedback, appropriate to the age and stage of the student
- The use and effectiveness of different approaches to feedback, which may include the use of AI
- How data is used by the school to analyse progress, inform learning and teaching and reflect on assessment and examination outcomes, which may include the use of AI
- The systems and interventions to support students attitudinally and/or those who either do not meet, or who exceed expectations
- Range, quality, accessibility and effectiveness of enrichment and extension opportunities for all students
- Provision for monitoring and recording progress when the school is partially or fully closed during term-time

Additional Guidance (7D)

- This section (and others) covers how the school meets the learning needs of all students, in terms of appropriate support, challenge and enrichment opportunities that demonstrate high expectations for all.
- We are as interested in how the school uses the results of assessment to impact on future student learning as we are with the nature and organisation of assessment across the school.
- We are also interested in how the school draws on data to intervene to support learning, encourage progress and tackle attitudinal issues.
- If the school uses attitudinal surveys, that information and what the school does with it will be helpful.
- When considering academic integrity across the age range, schools should now be giving clear guidance to students around the appropriate use of AI. This should begin early in the school around the ethical use of AI and how it aligns with school values and expectations. Student AI declarations for key pieces of work will support them in understanding the importance of academic integrity. Schools should also consider appropriate responses to breaches of academic integrity and potential escalation.
- Where AI is used in assessment and feedback, human oversight should always be in place. Teachers should be aware of the risks, such as when using and uploading student and/or sensitive data, along with the benefits, such as fast individualised feedback. This should be used alongside other strategies, such as verbal, written and peer feedback.
- Schools may use AI to analyse assessment data, but we would expect due consideration around the security of sensitive information.
- If the school is already using AI for marking, assessment and feedback, we would expect to see examples of this included in the evidence provided.

7E
Student attitudes to learning.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- A student learner profile and evidence of learner qualities in action
- Students' high expectations of themselves and their ambitions
- Opportunities for students to learn independently and interdependently
- Learning relationships between students and teachers
- Student views and feedback on their learning from observations, surveys, attitudinal data, focus groups, action research and meetings
- Feedback mechanisms specifically focused on DEIJB, gathering input from students, parents, and staff on the inclusivity of the learning environment, opportunities for representation and cultural responsiveness, and efforts to address equity gaps in academic outcomes.
- Enthusiasm for, and participation in, enrichment and extension opportunities offered by the school
- Consideration of how and where the use of AI might impact learner qualities

Additional Guidance (7E)

Observing learning and talking with students are the chief sources of information here. We consider:

- Relationships in the classroom
- How independent students are and how well they work with others
- Their enthusiasm and engagement
- Their experience of the use of AI at home and school
- Attitudinal information including surveys the school may have conducted and where students have been given opportunities to offer feedback on their learning

Standard 8 – Leadership in the School

The high quality of leadership, at all levels and different areas, guided by the educational ethos and values of the institution, creates the conditions in which students, staff and the school can thrive and develop.

8A

The school's leadership at all levels actively promotes the wellbeing of students and staff.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Ways in which senior and pastoral leaders monitor, promote and intervene to support the wellbeing of all students, including the developing use of AI
- School leadership promotes and supports the wellbeing of all staff
- School leaders are informed about, and involved in all, safeguarding and welfare issues as appropriate including review of effectiveness of responses
- How student success in all respects is celebrated in a variety of ways
- Examples of initiatives or activities that affirm students' cultural identities, languages, and lived experiences, fostering a sense of belonging and pride in their heritage within the wider school community
- How the school actively promotes student mental health and wellbeing, e.g. healthy eating, exercise, alleviation from stress and advice about screen time, safe age-appropriate use of social media and AI
- How the school utilises member/s of staff with specific responsibilities for creating a whole school approach to support mental health and wellbeing
- A regularly reviewed PSHE curriculum and enrichment activities along with assemblies, the tutorial programme and special events, including information sessions for parents/caregivers to involve them in the promotion of wellbeing

Additional Guidance (8A)

- We will look to see how the school's wider wellbeing culture is embraced, monitored and reviewed. This includes safeguarding, which should always be a priority.
- We will link evidence gathered in other parts of the Standards related to the promotion of student and staff wellbeing alongside relevant policies. As with all policies, we need to see that they operate successfully in practice and are known to all parties.
- Evidence of CPL in this area for staff and consultation/involvement of student leaders and groups as well as parents will be useful to support this area.
- The LIP will meet with key leaders during the school visit, to ascertain that policies are effectively implemented and understood at all levels.
- PSHE curriculum reviews would be expected to consider the ongoing development of AI and ensure any modification to the programme aligns with the school's current policies.

8B

The leadership at all levels has high expectations and works to improve and enrich the educational experience of all students.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- How the school uses feedback from students and staff to improve the learning experience and inform teaching
- Academic attainment and student achievement are features of the school's development plan
- How the leaders evaluate and review attainment and progress outcomes and work with teachers, students, and governors accordingly to encourage and plan for improvement
- Consideration of how the strategic implementation of AI may improve and enrich the educational experience of all students
- How high expectations for all students operate through daily interaction

Additional Guidance (8B)

- We need to see evidence of policies, development plans, projects and educational values working effectively in everyday practice. This is not just about examination results but about wider achievement and rich opportunities for all students.
- This section also provides important evidence about the culture of a school and how it reflects the school's DEIJB framework.
- If the school is already using AI to improve and enrich the educational experience of all students, we would expect this to be included in the evidence provided.

8C

Leadership gives clear direction and vision for the improvement of the school.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- A clear written expression of vision, mission, values or guiding statements that shape the direction of the school and are understood by the Head, senior and middle leaders, staff, board and wider school community
- Examples of inclusive decision-making processes where diverse perspectives, voices, and experiences are actively sought and valued in shaping the school's direction and vision for improvement
- School and team development plans, which may include consideration of AI use at the school
- The effectiveness of work with the board in supporting the school's strategic direction (see Standard 4), which may include consideration of AI use at the school
- Opportunities for middle leaders and other staff to take part in whole school development planning as part of a collaborative culture
- The quality and range of leadership training opportunities, including cultural competency training or professional development to enhance understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues, equipping leaders with the knowledge and skills to lead effectively in diverse environments and Leadership of AI development with a focus on school settings
- Opportunities for staff and, where appropriate, students to take part in projects and action research
- Opportunities for staff to present and share good practice, ideas and research findings

Additional Guidance (8C)

- We will be looking at where and how widely staff, students and governors are involved in school development planning and improvement.
- Evidence of how effectively and clearly messages are conveyed within the school and to the school community, for example through meetings, annual reports and information provided to prospective families regarding the direction, vision and progress of the school.
- We would expect emerging clarity from leadership on the direction and vision relating to AI. If the school already has an established leadership strategy for AI, this should be included in the evidence provided.

8D

Student leadership and the student voice contribute to the development of the school and the quality of the students' experience.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Opportunities that exist for formal and informal feedback from students, e.g. through student councils, interviews, feedback from lessons, projects and surveys
- The influence of student leadership at all stages on the nature of their educational experience and learning opportunities, including active participation in decision-making processes related to their learning experiences, such as curriculum design, classroom expectations, use of AI and school policies
- How student leadership opportunities are supported and sometimes generated by the school leadership
- The extent to which students are actively involved in the promoting and raising awareness of wellbeing
- Student opportunities to engage actively, ethically and purposefully with the local community and outside world (see Standards 5B and 10B)

Additional Guidance (8D)

- We will seek to ascertain the value the school sees in student voice and the importance attached to developing various opportunities for students to experience leadership responsibility at different ages.
- We will also be looking at the impact of student leadership on the wider student body as well as on the individuals themselves. Talking to students and observing student groups and activities will be invaluable and will help us to gauge the level of engagement (see Standard 10) and commitment (Standards 5 and 7E).
- We would hope to see student leadership involved in the advocacy for and steering of the implementation of AI as well as around developing appropriate student use policy and practice.

Standard 9 – Communication

The school communicates effectively with parents/caregivers to keep them informed and to support the progress of their children. Parents/caregivers have the opportunity to be actively engaged in the life of the school.

9A

Parents/caregivers are aware of the school's aims and ethos and regularly receive news relevant to their children and about the development of the school.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- The vision, mission, values or guiding statements that shape the direction of the school are communicated and understood by parents/caregivers
- Clarity to parents of the school's position around the use of AI to support learning both in school and at home. This should include sharing policies and requesting permissions as appropriate.
- Showcase evidence of communication and engagement events, such as open houses, information sessions, or workshops across the school
- Induction for new families which may include a buddy system or opportunities to engage with other families
- Newsletters, communications, meetings and information that help to keep parents/caregivers informed. This could include social media, the website and school portal(s).
- Parent/caregiver survey data
- Information from a parent and friends association and their activities in the school community

Additional Guidance (9A)

- This Standard examines the strength of one side of the triangular relationship between the school, students and parents/caregivers. We will talk with parents/caregivers and staff about the means and quality of communication.
- We appreciate that the balance between too much and not enough is probably impossible to achieve in a school community, but a meeting will provide a reasonable indicator of how effectively the school messages are absorbed and understood.
- This is an ideal area to explore educational values and the school's ethos from a parental perspective.
- Regarding the implementation of AI, we would expect there to be opportunities for parents to attend information evenings or workshops around school adoption and be assured that all safeguards are in place, as well as receiving information to enable them to understand and support their children's learning.
- If the school has a parent association of some kind, they will be a good source of evidence for us. Likewise, any parents who also serve on the governing board and/or board sub-committees. However, it is important for us to meet with a range of parents/caregivers with children of different ages, with different lengths of time at the school and ideally representing the host country and expatriates to enable us to hear a range of perspectives.

9B

Parents/caregivers are suitably informed about their child's progress and pastoral welfare, as well as the curriculum, wider opportunities and important transition stages as their children move through the school.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Any relevant curriculum information sent to parents/caregivers, or on the website or school portal
- The frequency and format of reporting, either verbal or written. This includes clarity on any use of AI in the production of reports
- Triangular, age-appropriate dialogue between teachers, parents/caregivers and students, e.g. progress days and evenings
- Any other communication or feedback on the progress, or pastoral welfare of students
- Transition, curriculum and wellbeing information sessions, e.g. options and higher education meetings, arrangements for transition between stages, and initiatives and workshops that reflect the pastoral curriculum, e.g. wellbeing, safeguarding, responsible use of technology or healthy eating
- Programme for extra-curricular, enrichment and curriculum enrichment opportunities, including trips and provision for boarders, where applicable
- Involvement of the parent association in helping to promote student opportunities and health and wellbeing

Additional Guidance (9B)

- This section is also concerned with how the school informs and involves parents/caregivers about key moments such as transition between stages, options and preparing for higher education.
- The regularity and effectiveness of progress evenings and days as well as reporting will be looked at, as well as student participation in progress meetings.
- Evidence of curriculum sessions, meetings and information about extracurricular, enrichment and initiatives around wellbeing issues is also very useful.
- If AI is used to communicate with parents, for example in reports, we would expect this to be reflected in the appropriate policies.
- Where appropriate, critical information should be provided in relevant languages.

9C

Parents/caregivers know how to contact key personnel and how to raise issues or seek advice and information.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Clear and reasonable procedures for contacting staff and arranging meetings
- Contact details for parent representatives and/or committee members from the parent association
- The school Complaints Policy and procedures are openly available to parents, e.g. via a parent portal
- Parents/caregivers know how to contact the DSL/DDSL or DGS as needed with safeguarding concerns, or other appropriate staff for any wellbeing concerns

Additional Guidance (9C)

- The school will have its own procedures for parents/caregivers to visit the school in a secure and appropriate fashion.
- We will talk with parents/caregivers and staff about how well these arrangements work.
- We may draw upon the work of a parent association or parent representative meetings.

9D

Parents/caregivers are aware of admission arrangements and have open access to relevant school policies.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- The school has a transparent Admissions Policy regarding its processes and entry requirements
- The Admissions Policy should identify the information the school requires from families and/or previous schools, such as safeguarding, medical, pastoral and academic information
- Tailored information and resources specifically designed for parents/caregivers of children who may need support for EAL or AEN, including details on how the school supports students with diverse learning needs, adjustments available during the admissions process, and information on specialised programmes or services
- Induction for new families
- Policy and procedures regarding behaviour or exclusions
- Records of suspensions and exclusions
- Parental survey data
- Parent/caregiver portal for evidence of access to policies such as Safeguarding, Positive Behaviour, Exclusions, Admissions and Equal Opportunities, DEIJB (see Standard 4C)
- Arrangements for the positive induction of new students whenever they start during the academic year

Additional Guidance (9D)

- Admissions arrangements and relevant policies as well as an interview with staff from admissions will help us to get a picture of how the school enacts an equal opportunities admissions process.
- If the school is already using AI for its admissions process, we would expect this to be included in the evidence provided, including how sensitive data is handled and whether any part of the process is communicated to parents.
- We would seek to understand how relevant teams, notably safeguarding, inclusion and pastoral, might be involved in the process of making decisions around assessing, admitting, placing and inducting students. This section links to aspects of Standard 2.
- Standard 4C states that parents should have easy access to current and relevant policies, available to them on whichever parent portal the school uses.

Standard 10 – Extra-Curricular, Enrichment and Engagement

The school offers a wide range of clubs and activities and charitable, community and global opportunities that exemplify and strengthen its educational ethos and values, promote good health and wellbeing and, through the active, ethical and purposeful engagement with the outside world, enriches learning and the development of learner and human qualities.

10A

The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities for all students.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Information about the range and accessibility of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities on offer
- Opportunities to celebrate excellence or participation in areas of extra-curricular life or, for example, in COBIS competitions, or other external activities
- Opportunities for play or leisure appropriate to the context of the school
- Policy and procedures for safer recruitment and safeguarding that conform with best practice as outlined in Standards 1A, 1B and 2D
- Risk assessments and safeguarding procedures followed as appropriate taking into consideration the diverse needs of students
- Payment plans, where appropriate, as an option for parents/caregivers when paying for trips/events
- Any evidence on how AI is used from an administrative perspective regarding extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities

Additional Guidance (10A)

- This Standard links closely to Standard 5 and can provide rich examples. Standard 10 is about ensuring access for all students to the extra-curricular and enrichment programmes which support the development of skills, knowledge, confidence and curiosity.
- Schools are reminded that the same high expectations of safer recruitment and safeguarding apply to any external or third-party providers as they do to internal staffing, for example around staff conduct, supervision and changing room controls.
- If the school is already using AI to support extra-curricular activities, enrichment and engagement recruitment purposes, this should be included in the evidence provided.

10B

There are a range of opportunities for all students to engage with the world beyond their school - locally, regionally and internationally - which support and promote the school's educational ethos and values and provide rich learning experiences.

Examples of evidence to provide

Useful evidence in this section is likely to include:

- Consideration of how opportunities align with the school's educational ethos and values, such as promoting diversity, fostering empathy and compassion, and encouraging social responsibility and global awareness
- Projects and events around fund and awareness-raising
- Student groups and initiatives
- Participation in relevant student events, e.g. Model United Nations, student conventions on global issues, debate competitions, COBIS events and so on
- Links, activities and projects with the local community, e.g. service learning, volunteering
- Policy and procedures for safer recruitment and safeguarding that conform with best practice as outlined in Standards 1A, 1B and 2D
- Reference to how school policy is followed relating to safeguarding and sharing of sensitive information for any activities where AI is used

Additional Guidance (10B)

- We are looking at how the school builds knowledge of, encourages curiosity about, and fosters engagement with the local community and wider world.
- 10B is firmly linked with 5B and the outward-looking nature of the school as well as the development of learner and human qualities mentioned in other sections.
- This should not be just about charitable fund-raising but about awareness-raising and age-appropriate engagement with global issues and human problems. We would expect to see opportunities that enable students to develop their own informed views about the world around them through direct experience and connection with other people and places.
- Opportunities might arise from classroom learning, through student group or individual initiatives, service learning, or events outside the school. This section can also illustrate how well the school connects with its local community.
- See 10A for expectations of safer recruitment and safeguarding around third-party providers.



Appendices

Appendix A

Useful links

Link details:	Link address:
ACRO Criminal Records Office website	https://www.acro.police.uk/s/
BISSC Code of Conduct	https://www.cobis.org.uk/services/safeguarding/british-international-schools-safeguarding-coalition
COBIS website: Accreditation and Compliance	https://www.cobis.org.uk/services/accreditation
COBIS website: Accreditation and Compliance case studies	https://www.cobis.org.uk/services/accreditation/case-studies
COBIS website: annual surveys	https://www.cobis.org.uk/services/research/annual-research-survey
COBIS website: Guide to Good Governance	https://www.cobis.org.uk/about-us/policies/cobis-guide-to-good-governance
COBIS website: mission, vision and guiding principles	https://www.cobis.org.uk/about-us/our-mission-vision-and-guiding-principles
COBIS website: Privacy Policy	https://www.cobis.org.uk/privacy-policy
COBIS website: QAA mid-cycle review	https://www.cobis.org.uk/services/accreditation/qaa-mid-cycle-review-of-cobis-accreditation-and-compliance-scheme
COBIS website: safeguarding	https://www.cobis.org.uk/services/safeguarding
COBIS website: safer recruitment	https://www.cobis.org.uk/services/safeguarding/safer-recruitment
COBIS website: terms and conditions	https://www.cobis.org.uk/membership/for-schools/join-us-school/school-membership-terms-and-conditions

Link details:	Link address:
UK Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
UK Department for Education: National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/boarding-schools-national-minimum-standards
EU AI Act	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32024R1689
UK Department of Education: Working Together to Safeguard Children	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2



Appendix B

Key terms

AGBIS	Association of Governing Bodies and Independent Schools
ACRO	ACRO Criminal Records Office
AEN	Additional educational needs
AI	Artificial intelligence
Board	COBIS uses this term to refer to any form of school governing body
COBIS	Council of British International Schools
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DEIJB	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Belonging
DGS	Designated governor for safeguarding
DGHS	Designated governor for health and safety
EAL	English as an Additional Language
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HR	Human resources
ICPC	International Child Protection Certificate
IDTA	International Data Transfer Agreement
KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education
LIP	Lead improvement partner
PA	Peer accreditor
PSHE	Personal, social, health and economic education
QA	Quality assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
SCR	Single central record
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities
SENDCO	Special educational needs and disabilities coordinator
SLT	Senior leadership team

Appendix C

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Name
Job title
Address line 1
Address line 2
City/town
POSTCODE

DD/MM/YYYY

Dear Name

Council of British International Schools Testimonial

I would like to inform you of the key findings and results of the work that QAA has carried out since 2023 to review the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) Accreditation and Compliance Scheme, formerly known as the Patron's Accreditation and Compliance Scheme (PAcc).

Founded in 1989, today COBIS represents 349 high-quality British member international schools, educating more than 275,000 students and employing more than 25,000 teachers in 88 countries across Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas.
The purpose of the in-depth review carried out in 2023 was two-fold:

- Firstly, to analyse and evaluate COBIS PAcc Standards against the Standards and descriptors of the UK Government's Standards for British Schools Overseas (BSO);
- Secondly, to assure stakeholders that COBIS PAcc procedures and practices were executed strategically and operationally in a manner that aligned with similar quality assurance processes, warranting a high level of confidence in the scheme.

The QAA concluded that the COBIS accreditation and quality assurance scheme was rigorous and stretching with long-term school improvement at its core. In addition, QAA assessed that COBIS's PAcc Standards:

- Stand independently as a viable model for helping British international schools evolve an all-school holistic approach to learning and teaching, with a central focus on safeguarding for all pupils and staff
- Provides significant enhancement opportunities for British international schools at an individual and collective level.

QAA carried out a mid -cycle review in 2026. A mid cycle review takes place two to three years after a successful review as a requirement for the continued validity of QAA accreditation for the full 5-year period.

The mid-cycle review evaluates progress against the key actions since the review and considers any significant changes that may impact on the ability of COBIS to continue to operate processes that are well thought out and effective.

The review team concluded that COBIS has made excellent progress since the March 2023 quality review and that the period of validity of the review be extended to March 2028.

The outcome of the review and mid cycle review led QAA to conclude that COBIS' accreditation scheme, procedures and practices are executed strategically and operationally in a manner that is fit-for-purpose and aligned with UK Government BSO Inspection standards. As a result, the QAA has confidence that recognition of COBIS Accreditation and Compliance Scheme will further strengthen the reputation and high-quality export brand of British education worldwide. This recognition could be in the form of enabling Early Career Teachers to complete induction overseas in schools that have been quality assured against COBIS Standards. This could have a positive impact on teacher supply, development and retention, plus it would support the ambitions set out in the UK Government's International Education Strategy

As a next step, I would encourage you to meet with COBIS Chair, Lord Jim Knight of Weymouth, COBIS CEO, Colin Bell and members of the COBIS Accreditation Team. Mr Bell will be in touch to coordinate. The key purpose of this meeting would be to explore and discuss ways in which COBIS can collaborate on a domestic and global scale – for the benefit of schools and children and young people worldwide. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Yours sincerely/faithfully

Piers Wall

Head of International Quality Assurance and Enhancement
QAA

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Department for Business & Trade