

Boarding Schools' Association

Accreditation of Overseas Members

Why become a BSA Accredited School?

The programme of accreditation is run by the Boarding Schools' Association, the world's leading provider of training and consultancy to boarding schools. It draws upon the highly respected and well-established benchmarks of the standards for boarding schools in the UK, but reflects the huge diversity of schools worldwide. The accreditation programme is designed primarily for schools which have their own distinctive character and are rooted in their own local communities, but wish the added assurance of benchmarking against the BSA's wider membership.

Accreditation is available to any school outside the UK which meets the criteria as set out within this booklet. The accreditator(s) will need to be satisfied that the boarding provision is run efficiently and safely and with good outcomes for the boarders. Schools which meet the accreditation criteria will be entitled to call themselves "BSA Accredited" and to use the BSA accreditation logo on their branding.

Accreditation Principles

Schools will be visited by an experienced professional with considerable experience of boarding and who is an approved BSA accreditator. Judgements will be made according to an agreed set of standards, which are based on the UK National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, but which recognise the unique social, cultural and educational environments within which each school is working. Schools which do not meet the accreditation criteria in the first instance will be given clear guidance as to the reasons why, will be given a reasonable time frame (no more than twelve months) to meet the required standard, and will then be visited again. Schools which fail to meet the criteria on the second occasion will be able to reapply after a period of two years.

Application for Accreditation

Schools wishing to be accredited must complete the relevant form including pre-visit information which will be used during the evaluation process. BSA will acknowledge receipt of the form, and it will be assumed that a school submitting a form considers itself ready to be visited. Wherever possible, visits will take place within three months of receipt of an application, and BSA will advise accordingly if, for logistical reasons, this timescale cannot be met.

Notice of Accreditation Visit

The accreditation procedure is not designed to be a "no notice" process. Schools will be given notice of at least five working days, and preparation for the visit will be a collaborative process with the accreditator, which may include assisting with suitable accommodation locally, and advising on travel and transfer arrangements. Accreditation visits will not take place during the first or last week of any school term or semester, unless this is at the specific request of the school.

The Accreditator

All accreditors will be suitably trained and authorised members of the BSA pool of accreditors. For most visits, one accreditator will visit a school for a period of two days, to include at least one evening. Larger boarding establishments might require a larger team.

Preparing for the Accreditation Visit

The application form will contain all the basic information the accreditor needs in advance of the visit. In addition to the form, schools may wish to submit any self-evaluation material against the standards to assist the with the evaluation. Schools will be sent three short surveys, one for boarders, one for staff and one for parents, and will be asked to distribute these in advance of the visit, so that the findings can be used to inform judgements.

A telephone/skype conversation will be held with the Principal or Head of Boarding as appropriate to agree the timetable for the visit, to outline any initial concerns or lines of enquiry, and to clarify the process. This will be at the beginning of the notice period

The Accreditation Visit

The accreditor(s) will arrive as close as possible to the agreed time. A passport will be presented as proof of identification. Schools are asked to find a suitable location for the accreditor(s) to be based, with easy access to toilets and drinking water. Arrangements for refreshments will be made during the preparation phone call, including agreement on any costs as appropriate. The accreditor(s) will need access to the base throughout the visit. All accreditors will be suitably qualified under UK law to work alone with children, but schools are responsible for ensuring that any local requirements are made known in advance of the visit, so that suitable measures can be put in place without jeopardising the integrity of the accreditation.

Accreditation Activities

The following activities will be undertaken, all based on a series of key questions designed to produce appropriate evidence:

- Initial discussion with Head/ Principal and Head of Boarding
- Pupil guided tour of boarding facilities
- Group discussion with boarders
- Tracking welfare arrangements for boarders
- Scrutiny of record keeping and paperwork
- Group discussion with boarding staff
- Individual meetings with key staff
- A visit to the medical facilities as appropriate
- Attending meals
- Observing free time activities
- Observing interaction between boarders and staff
- Any other appropriate activities relevant to the boarding environment.

The Evaluation

The evaluation will be based on the BSA Accreditation Standards, which are attached as Appendix 1.

The Report

Verbal feedback will be given at the end of the accreditation visit. It will be made clear at this point whether accreditation will be granted or not, or whether accreditation will be granted provisionally:

- Where accreditation is granted, feedback will be given on observed strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations may be made regarding areas for potential improvement. Areas of outstanding practice will also be identified.
- Where accreditation is granted provisionally, this will indicate that there are minor shortfalls which need to be rectified, but which do not impact significantly on outcomes for boarders. Feedback will be given on observed strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations may be made regarding areas for potential improvement. Areas of outstanding practice will also be identified. There will, however, be specific requirements which need to be addressed within an agreed timescale for the accreditation to be ratified.
- Where accreditation is not granted, feedback will still be given on observed strengths and weaknesses, but there will also be a list of required actions. Schools will be asked to produce an action plan to address these issues, and a re-visit will take place within twelve months to re-evaluate.

A written report of the visit will be sent to the school within 10 working days. Schools will be asked to correct any factual inaccuracies within five working days, and the final report will be available within a further five working days. The report will not be published, but will be made available to members of the BSA Executive Committee. Schools may publish reports locally if they wish. All accredited BSA schools will be listed as such on the BSA website, and may refer to BSA accreditation in their promotional and other material.

Duration of Accreditation

The accreditation lasts for five years from the date of the report. Unless a school identifies in writing that it no longer wishes to be accredited, a further visit will be arranged approaching the fifth anniversary of the accreditation visit. If a school fails to meet the criteria at the next visit and requires an action plan, it remains accredited until revisited, unless the failings are so extreme that immediate revocation of the accreditation is deemed necessary by the accreditor. Any such recommendation will be confirmed in writing by the Chief Executive.

Cost of the Scheme

The cost of accreditation is £4,000 (plus VAT) plus the cost of return flights from the UK for the accreditor and accommodation for two or three nights depending on flight times. Schools may provide accommodation in suitable provision in school or in local hotels as appropriate. BSA will always seek to find the most cost-effective travel solution. Schools which are not members will need to join BSA before they can be considered.

Withdrawal

A school may withdraw from the scheme at any time by writing to the Chief Executive.

BSA may withdraw accreditation at any time should a school be conducting itself in such a way that it brings the BSA into disrepute by association. Any such withdrawal must be sanctioned by the BSA Executive.

Language

All materials will be produced in English in the first instance, and all accreditation activity will be undertaken in the medium of English initially.

Appendix 1

Accreditation Standards

Boarding providers wishing to be accredited by the BSA must comply with the following standards:

QUALITY OF THE BOARDING EXPERIENCE

- 1.** Relationships within the boarding environment ensure boarders are well looked after:
 - Relationships between boarders and between boarders and staff are good
 - New boarders are well supported
 - Communication with parents and carers is good
 - Communication between boarding and academic staff is effective
 - Rewards and sanctions are applied appropriately and effectively.
- 2.** Health and welfare provision contributes to boarders' well-being:
 - Boarders are well looked after when they are ill
 - Day to day health needs are met
 - Boarders with specific health and welfare needs are well looked after
 - Dispensing of medication is properly controlled, in line with local guidance
 - Boarders have adults and other professionals to turn to for help and support.
- 3.** Domestic arrangements meet the boarders' essential needs
 - Food is of sufficient quality and quantity to meet boarders' needs
 - Boarders have ready access to water
 - Boarders are helped to look after their possessions securely
 - Laundry arrangements for bedding and clothing are appropriate
 - Boarders are able to access all appropriate personal and stationery requirements.

- 4.** Boarders have an appropriate range of free time and other activities
 - There is an adequate range of indoor and outdoor facilities for boarders
 - There is an appropriate range of on and off-site activities, trips and visits to meet the boarders' needs
 - Boarders have an appropriate amount of free time
 - Boarders have ready access to information about the outside world
 - Access to, and controls of, electronic media and devices is appropriate to the boarders' needs, and safeguards their welfare.

QUALITY OF BOARDING PREMISES

- 5.** Boarding accommodation is fit for purpose
 - Rooms and dormitories are well lit, heated and ventilated, and comfortably furnished and are of sufficient size for the number and age of boarders
 - Boarders have access to suitable study facilities
 - Toilet and washing facilities are sufficient in number, of adequate quality, and allow boarders suitable privacy
 - "Sick bay" and any other medical accommodation is suitable for the purpose
 - Staff accommodation is suitably separated from that for boarders.

- 6.** All appropriate safety provisions are in place
 - There are no obvious hazards which could endanger boarders, and any hazards identified are quickly dealt with
 - Boarders' accommodation is safe from intruders, and there are procedures in place to deal with authorised visitors to the boarding house
 - Boarders are aware of the action to take in the case of fire, and fire exits are appropriately identified
 - Fire equipment is properly tested, and practice evacuations are held regularly
 - Any other safety checks required in the host country are met.

QUALITY OF BOARDING LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 7.** Boarding is well led and managed
 - Those leading boarding do so effectively, have an appropriate level of experience and training, and keep accurate records
 - All matters of regulatory compliance in the host country are met
 - Boarders' are asked their views about the boarding provision, and these views are responded to effectively
 - Any complaints made, or concerns raised by boarders, parents, carers or others are properly investigated and responded to appropriately
 - As far as is possible within the structure of the school, the nature of the provision and the customs of the host country, there is equality of opportunity for all boarders.

- 8.** Staffing and supervision arrangements ensure the boarders are kept safe
 - There are sufficient staff on duty for the number of boarders, and boarders know how to contact them
 - Staff know where boarders are, and make appropriate checks to ensure they are accounted for, and there are procedures in place if boarders go missing
 - Staff are clear about their role and have received appropriate training, including specific training for staff new to the boarding house
 - Staff performance is reviewed regularly to ensure that the best outcomes for boarders are met
 - Robust procedures are in place to ensure that the welfare of children is safeguarded and that best outcomes for boarders are promoted.

Boarding Schools' Association
4th Floor
134 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9SA
bsa@boarding.org.uk
www.boarding.org.uk