

**Boarding Schools' Association**

**International  
Accreditation  
Scheme**

## Why become an accredited BSA full member school?

International BSA affiliate member schools must start the BSA International Accreditation Scheme within two years of joining the BSA. This leads to full international membership.

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 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 full members" and to use the BSA full member logo on their branding.

## Accreditation Principles

Schools will be assessed 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 assessed 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 assessed. Wherever possible, assessments 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.

## Preparing for the Accreditation

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.

The accreditor will hold an initial online meeting with the relevant senior leaders to agree the timescale of the accreditation and the relevant activities. There will also be an agreement about which policies, documents and records need to be made available.

## The Accreditation Visit

The accreditation process can take place virtually, face to face, or a combination of the two. Any judgements made through an online process will be considered to have equal weight to those made face-to-face, but BSA reserves the right to verify those judgements in person when the circumstances allow.

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.

For safeguarding reasons BSA will always ensure that two staff are present when interviewing boarders online.

## The Evaluation

The evaluation will be based on the BSA Accreditation Standards, listed on page 4.

## The Report

Verbal feedback will be given at the end of the assessment process. 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 and recommendations made regarding areas for potential improvement. Areas of outstanding practice will also be identified. Specific requirements will 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-evaluation will take part within 12 months.

A written report of the visit will be sent to the school as soon as possible after the process has concluded. 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 full 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 assessment will be arranged approaching the fifth anniversary of the initial accreditation. If a school fails to meet the criteria during the next assessment, it remains accredited while an opportunity is given to correct any shortfalls, 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.

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.

## Cost of the Scheme

The cost of the scheme will be negotiated at time of the initial inquiry, and will be based on the relevant BSA day rates for affiliate members. Following successful completion of the accreditation process, schools will become full members and will then be able to access all BSA services at the discounted full member rates.

## 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.

## 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.

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