



**THE PREMIER ASSOCIATION FOR
INTERNATIONAL BRITISH SCHOOLS OVERSEAS**

Development Plan 2017-20

Dear Members,

This plan expresses what COBIS is, and its intentions and considered ambitions for the period ahead.

It contains a clear statement of our purpose and our expectations of membership. And it sets out the services and activities on behalf of our members that will be led by the CEO and his team.

We are a listening organisation: it is based upon open consultation with members and shaped by your elected Board.

Like all good plans, it will be periodically reviewed and refreshed – and provides a confident road map, with flexibility to respond to new opportunity or to changed circumstances.



Trevor Rowell (Chairman)



Colin Bell (CEO)

What we are

COBIS is the Premier Association for British Schools Overseas

It is a high-quality service organisation supporting member schools
- the most effective and active organisation for BSOs globally.

It exists to serve, support and represent its member schools
– their leaders, governors, staff and students.

Membership is open globally to
British international schools of quality.

We understand these terms to mean the following:

British: Schools recognised by COBIS are – regardless of their name – distinctively British. They offer a curriculum (learning programmes and assessments) wholly or substantially similar to those current in the United Kingdom; and they express a philosophy of education with those enriching features for which British education is renowned worldwide (including for example teaching that develops knowledge and also the skills of lifelong learning, encouragement of self-discipline, care for the development of the whole individual, and opportunities to develop talents in co-curricular activities). School leaders, teachers and support staff in our schools are trained or work in the British tradition.

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

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

Of Quality: COBIS admits into membership only schools which meet the high quality compliance standards defined by us and assured through internationally proven systems for school improvement: principally the COBIS Patron's Accreditation (or inspection offered by the British government). Full details of membership requirements can be found on our website.

What we have recently achieved

COBIS has achieved much during the last three years (the period of an earlier plan). We have:

- Established the COBIS Patron's Accreditation and Compliance - providing first class, modern, cost-effective quality assurance for British international schools globally that supports their development and improvement.
- Opened dialogue concerning the future supply of teachers and leaders - to inform a support strategy for the period of this plan.
- Given child safeguarding priority: with mandatory training for school staff and governors, a standing committee of our board, and support for a leading international coalition.
- Extended COBIS's name and influence globally - with UK government as a DIT 'Trade Challenge Partner', in official trade missions, and through contact with governments in the Middle East and Asia.
- Strengthened links and co-operation with key UK bodies including the DfE, FCO, British Council and as a member of the Independent Schools Council.
- Provided access to high quality CPD for hundreds of school teaching and administrative staff at all levels in a dozen countries across the world, including the COBIS Programme for Middle Leaders (formerly with the National College), and stimulating annual conferences of high quality.
- Seen several thousands of staff take part digitally in online CPD - frequent webinars on a wide range of professional topics.
- Added student competitions or events (the COBIS MUN, a music festival, art, medical and summer schools) to already popular annual games, debate, science, student leadership and poetry activities.
- Improved membership communication with regular digital newsletters, a periodic educational news digest, the World Student Magazine and an updated website.
- Further strengthened the HQ executive team - with professional support for curriculum developments, student activities, membership communication, digital platforms, qualified financial control, and high quality management of CPD.
- Attracted 100 more members (and many more aspirants) - with now 280 high quality schools in 75 countries across the world.
- Welcomed 50 more supporting commercial members - now 180 that provide schools with goods and services.
- Maintained highly competitive membership fee rates - while putting our growing income to work for members.
- Further strengthened our governance with scrutiny of quality, finance and safeguarding, and an impressive range and depth of experience.

This has firmly established COBIS as a respected and trusted world leader for BSOs - a strong and confident platform upon which to develop further.

What our members want next

Above all:

- Continued access to strong, supportive, experienced and welcoming professional networks.
- High level and effective lobbying and representation of their current interests - in the UK and also in developing regions.
- Quality assurance that reflects modern professional practice, is internationally respected and that supports school improvement.
- Active and informed support for the future supply of teachers and leaders in a fast-growing international education economy.
- Global access both regionally and digitally to CPD of high quality in a changing educational world, for a wide range of staff and governors.
- Good communication - informed, clear and timely.
- Value for money and an organisation that is up-to-date and listens.

Our Plan is therefore designed to meet these wishes.

We shall continue to grow. Managed growth with a keen eye on quality results in even stronger, better and more accessible networks of support for member schools, remains a worthy ambition.

Medium & Longer – term aims 2017-2020 and beyond

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

We plan:

1. **Membership:** To continue to welcome schools into membership where they meet our high standards.
2. **Quality:** To maintain the high standard of membership, through quality assurance that distinguishes the best while supporting individual school improvement.
3. **Teacher Supply:** to research, advocate, encourage and inform routes to meet the urgent need for teachers and leaders in British international schools in a fast growing educational economy.
4. **Representation:** To develop further our strong contacts with governments both in the United Kingdom and abroad - to represent the interests of our members and of British school education overseas.
5. **Safeguarding:** To continue to encourage the highest standards of child safeguarding in member schools, as a requirement of continuing membership.
6. **Organisation:** To develop regional networks of members in key parts of the world - to support significant areas of development, and regional and diverse interests.
7. **Professional Development:** To continue to provide courses and networks of high quality both locally and digitally that support the full range of school staff, and are accessible to our global membership.
8. **Students:** To maintain the range inter-school educational activities of high quality that encourages international understanding and enriches personal development.
9. **Communication:** To provide informative, clear and timely communication to members.
10. **Governance:** To maintain advice, supervision and accountability that is always supportive of the executive, and which keeps the value and cost of membership under continual review.

Objectives 2017-18

The following are our particular objectives for the next year (to August 2018).
Each item is important, and the list does not express order of priority.

We shall:

1. **Membership:** Continue to welcome schools into membership - implementing COBIS's compliance standards.
2. **Quality:** Establish, monitor and support the administration of the Patron's Accreditation and offer training for further cohorts of LIPs and team members.
3. **Teacher Supply:** Focus a teacher supply committee of the board to research, advocate, encourage and inform routes to meet the urgent need for teachers and leaders in British international schools.
4. **Representation:** Develop further our strong contacts with governments both in the United Kingdom and abroad, in particular in the Middle East and Asia - to represent the interests of our members and of British school education overseas.
5. **Safeguarding:** Continue our requirement for the highest standards of child safeguarding in member schools, with access to training of good quality.
6. **Organisation:** Consider and determine how best to establish regional networks of members, initially in the Middle East and Asia, to support significant areas of development, and regional and diverse interests.
7. **Professional Development:** Enhance the current range of digital and face-to-face courses, by establishing the CPSL (COBIS Programme for Senior Leaders).
8. **Students:** Maintain the current range inter-school educational activities, while considering alternative models for sports and games.
9. **Communication:** Maintain the current range and standard of communication.
10. **Governance:** Provide a high quality of supportive governance while ensuring careful supervision of risk, financial control and forward planning; monitoring the development of Accreditation; giving strong focus to the strategy to support teacher supply; and ensuring appropriate executive capacity and resources.