

MEMBERSHIP OF AGBIS

Reference: AGBIS publication 'Guidelines for Governors'

1. A school wishing to join AGBIS should submit an application which will be referred to the Training and Membership Committee for consideration. If the application is approved, the school will then be recommended to the AGBIS Board for ratification of Membership or Associate status. Thereafter, Member schools will normally be expected to remain in membership unless there is notification of a significant change in circumstances, i.e. a change that means the school no longer meets the membership criteria below or a serious regulatory failure (especially if this relates to poor standards of safeguarding), in which case AGBIS will review membership. Member schools should report to AGBIS any such change that might affect their membership. There are two categories for schools: **Member** and **Associate**. The criteria for each are set out below.

CRITERIA TO BECOME AN AGBIS MEMBER SCHOOL

2. Schools in England and Wales applying to become a Member must have heads in full membership of one of the five independent schools Heads' Associations: Girls' Schools Association (GSA); Headmasters' & Headmistresses' Conference (HMC); Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS); Independent Schools Association (ISA); The Society of Heads or expecting to be so within one year. If this membership is not granted within that period, the school's membership of AGBIS will be terminated. Once a school is a Member of AGBIS, membership of a Heads' Association remains a strong recommendation and should a Head leave their association then the school will be allowed to continue to be a Member of AGBIS for up to 12 months to allow the Head time to join one of the other associations.

3. To be accepted as a Member, schools will need to demonstrate that the composition of the Governing Body and governance procedures meet the principles of good governance practice set out in the AGBIS publication 'Guidelines for Governors'. Specifically, the Governing Body will need to:

a. Consist of sufficient governors for there still to be a quorum when some members face a conflict of interest. For example, the number of governors who are current parents must not be so great that a vote cannot take place if they face a conflict over a matter such as setting school fees.

b. Demonstrate that members of the Governing Body are able to contribute a suitable range of expertise and experience.

c. In accordance with Charity Commission and OSCR Guidance, if the School is a Charity:

- i. Not include any employees of the school (it is usual for the Head, Bursar and Clerk to be 'in attendance' at governing body meetings and other employees may be invited to attend as required);
 - ii. Not include individuals who are elected by other groups or bodies.
 - iii. Not include any individuals disqualified from being governors, trustees or directors of a school of the relevant status.
4. If the school is not a charitable trust it must have either a governing body or an advisory or management committee which fulfils a similar function and is constituted in such a fashion as to provide a significant degree of oversight.
5. All schools must be able to demonstrate that they are viable by presenting their latest appropriately audited accounts and any other information as appropriate.
6. Schools must also be able to demonstrate compliance with appropriate regulations by providing a satisfactory current inspection report issued by a recognised inspectorate. This will usually be:
 - a. ISI, SIS, Ofsted, Education Scotland or Estyn for schools in England, Scotland or Wales which are already a member of an ISC association;
 - b. A recognised or DfE-approved inspectorate for British curriculum schools overseas;
 - c. An independent inspectorate of overseas schools for schools outside the UK.

CRITERIA TO BECOME AN AGBIS ASSOCIATE

7. Schools which do not meet all the criteria above to become a Member may be offered Associate status at the discretion of the AGBIS Board.
8. To qualify for Associate status a school must as a minimum have a Governing Body or Advisory Group (if proprietorial) and governance procedures must meet the principles of good governance practice set out in the AGBIS publication 'Guidelines for Governors'. Schools must also be able to demonstrate that they are viable by presenting their latest appropriately audited accounts and they must also be able to provide a satisfactory current inspection report issued by a recognised inspectorate.
9. Associates pay the same annual fee as Members and are entitled to all the same services and benefits as Members, except that they have no right to attend/vote on any resolution considered at the AGM. Associates will not enjoy any of the benefits provided by the Independent Schools Council (ISC), unless they qualify by dint of separate membership of

one of the ISC heads' associations. Associates are not allowed to use the AGBIS logo on any of their literature and may not cite AGBIS membership in correspondence.

TEMPORARY STATUS

10. The offer to become an AGBIS Member or AGBIS Associate can be temporary and may require a school to rectify a perceived shortcoming or weakness. Once this condition has been met the school may apply for the temporary caveat to be removed.

***Endorsed by the AGBIS Board
5th June 2019***