



What is BAISIS?

BAISIS is the British Association of Independent Schools with International Students and is a group of 36 British independent schools and colleges. It exists as an organisation to share best practice in academic and pastoral provision for international students and provides networking opportunities and training for teachers, boarding staff and managers dealing with these children.

Who are its members?

BAISIS was formed in 1997 by Sherborne School, Taunton School, Bedford School and Rossall School, which had all at that time opened international study centres to prepare international students better for the challenges of British education. But in recent years, BAISIS has opened its doors to schools that have all sorts of different types of pre-sessional courses or support mechanisms in place for newly arrived international students. As a result of this more inclusive membership, the name was changed recently to BAISIS, whereas it was previously known as BAISC (British Association of International Schools and Colleges). The common link, however, between BAISIS members is a commitment to a high quality of provision and care for the academic and pastoral support of students, without which membership will not be granted. Membership is granted to ISC schools by the recommendation of any two existing member schools which can personally vouch for the quality of provision for international students. Prospective schools which are not ISC schools will be inspected by a member of the BAISIS executive committee, which at present comprises representatives of Taunton School, Box Hill School, The Leys School and D'Overbroecks College. Members range from traditional boarding schools, such as Charterhouse, to schools which have only recently offered boarding, such as Whitgift School, to prep schools such as Highfield School, to colleges such as CATS.

What are the aims of BAISIS and what does membership offer?

39% of boarders in UK boarding schools are international students. This percentage has increased rapidly over the last few years (36% in 2012 and 31% in 2008) and looks set to carry on increasing. So sharing best practice is essential and this is the main aim of BAISIS, whose members meet termly, share focussed training sessions and keep in email contact in order to ask each other for advice on specific issues that may arise. This creates a meaningful network of professionals in the field of international education in the UK as well as a means of mutual support and development. Not only do teachers and house staff share best practice on academic and pastoral issues, but registrars and heads share agent knowledge to help with marketing and recruitment, often passing on students where they are better suited to other member schools. BAISIS also has an annual two day conference which this year was held in Birmingham on 16th and 17th October 2014. The conference this year looked at both ends of the age spectrum, with sessions on supporting the youngest prep school pupils as well as helping 6th formers to gain good university places. There were also speakers on topics as varied as social marketing, UKVI issues and mindfulness in schools.

What does the future hold for BAISIS and its members?

Looking ahead, BAISIS has 8 new schools in the process of joining which will take the organisation to a membership of 44. For many schools which are relatively new in the international market, the mentoring and development support that BAISIS schools can give new members will hopefully result in better provision for students. As BAISIS continues to grow, we will also be better placed to lobby on issues such as the visa system which affect us all. BAISIS also plans to organise joint marketing trips abroad, offering member schools the chance to recruit using the assurance of quality that BAISIS membership brings.

Caroline Nixon
Chairman BAISIS.

More information can be found at www.baisis.org.uk

