

CAIS Policy G-209 – Accreditation-related Communication

Purpose: To describe how CAIS and schools will communicate their status on accreditation, the accreditation visit, the Visiting Committee Report, and the accreditation decision.

Application: CAIS Directors, employees, volunteers, members and candidate schools

Policy Statement:

(a) School Status:

It is the responsibility of all CAIS schools to represent their accreditation status accurately publicly and internally – both as a measure of accountability and as a school improvement process.

CAIS requires all schools to include a CAIS logo in a variety of areas, including the school’s website, promotional materials and/or prospectus. Member schools will use the standard CAIS logo, while candidate schools will use a CAIS candidate school logo and must state that they are working to achieve accreditation by a certain date.

On first reference in written materials, schools are expected to use the full name of “Canadian Accredited Independent Schools”. The abbreviated form of CAIS’ name may be used on second and continuing references.

Schools are invited to contact the CAIS office for the logo image formats. Login to **CAIS Connect** to access the CAIS Logo Style Guide and Assets.

CAIS will not make an announcement when a member (or candidate) school’s membership or candidacy changes. Any school who has its membership status revoked or withdraws from membership or its candidate status revoked or withdraws from candidacy must cease using the applicable CAIS logo immediately on its website and in all marketing materials.

(b) Accreditation Reviews:

All schools are required to announce to their community that a Visiting Committee will be on-site for four days during the accreditation review. Schools are encouraged to include in their announcements an overview of the CAIS organization and the accreditation process.

At the conclusion of the on-site review, an exit meeting will be held between the Visiting Committee Chair, On-Site Coordinator, Head of School and Chair of the Board of the School. The Visiting Committee Chair and On-Site Coordinator will share any significant findings from the visit including key strengths, key challenges, and any issues related to health and safety. They will also share an overview of next steps in the process and how decisions on accreditation are made. The Visiting Committee does not make the decision on accreditation (as this is a decision of the CAIS Evaluation Council and CAIS Board – see “Accreditation Decisions” below) nor should any assumptions relating to the decision be made by either the Visiting Committee or the school.

(c) Visiting Committee Report:

A Visiting Committee Report belongs to the school for which it was written and, once finalized by the

CAIS Evaluation Council, should be shared with the school community both as a statement of accomplishments and as a vehicle for school improvement.

In publishing any portion of its Visiting Committee Report internally or publicly, a balanced report should be communicated by the school, accurately reflecting the totality of the results.

CAIS will keep Visiting Committee Reports confidential except as they are shared with members of the Visiting Committee. In response to inquiries from the public, CAIS will disclose only whether a school is accredited, seeking accreditation or not accredited. Information regarding a candidate or member school's progress in the accreditation process or issues of concern will not be made public by CAIS.

(d) Accreditation Decisions:

Decisions on accreditation are made by the CAIS Evaluation Council and, when necessary, the CAIS Board after reviewing the final draft of a school's Visiting Committee Report. All decisions will be shared with the Head of School and Chair of the Board of the School through a written communication from the Executive Director of CAIS. The contents of these letters may be shared with the school community but only if they are published in full.

In the case of proprietary schools, the accreditation status letters and Visiting Committee Reports are sent to the Chair of the Board of the School, Head of School and the Owner of the School.

CAIS encourages schools to share all correspondence and reports with the full Board of the School.

Prior to receiving this written communication of the CAIS Evaluation Council/Board's accreditation decision, a school must not make any internal or public announcement regarding the accreditation decision. Rather school leadership is encouraged to update the community on the process and next step timelines.

Candidate schools and member schools with unmet Standards will have their decision on accreditation deferred for one year to allow the school to respond and demonstrate that they are meeting the Standard. During this time, the school will maintain its pre-review status.

For more information regarding the decision-making process, please refer to the Accreditation Procedures and decision-making flowcharts posted on the CAIS website.