



English Language School
Accreditation Council
PURSUIT OF QUALITY

STANDARDS & EVIDENCE FOR ACCREDITATION

(Key Performance Indicators)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

ELSAC



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INTRODUCTION

Accreditation by the English Language School Accreditation Council (ELSAC) is independent and unbiased and will provide English language schools, students, and parents with reassurance that the schools accredited are fit for the purpose of delivering ethical, high quality education and related services.

In accrediting English language schools, ELSAC considers the performance of the schools in relation to a wide range of features, facilities and activities delivered. The Standards and Evidence for accreditation are grouped into eight areas of operation as described in detail below. While several of the features, such as health and safety, are based on (legal) requirements which apply in the UK and US, it is appreciated that these may not be matched or required in other countries. Similarly, the rules and regulations applying to students entering the US for study purposes are likely to be different from those which apply to students entering other countries to study.

Nevertheless, ELSAC's accreditation sets out to demonstrate that students entering English language schools in any country will receive a sound educational experience, delivered with the aid of appropriate human and physical resources in a safe, caring and hygienic environment; that, in addition, successful students will be rewarded by the delivery of a high quality education programme. It is expected that the school will be able to demonstrate that it is operating within the legal educational framework of the home country and that students from other countries will be admitted, subject to fulfilling the passport/visa requirements of the host country.

ELSAC's accreditation arrangements normally do not require visits to the school (although this may be required in exceptional cases). The visit to the school is waived to reduce costs to the school (especially small businesses and start-ups).

(Note: the term "staff" used in this document refers to all employees, management, teaching faculty and support staff.)



STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

To gain a satisfactory threshold accreditation, schools must normally be deemed to satisfy all of the Sub-Areas in all eight Areas of Operation.

Note: Evidence/Supporting documentation is provided during Stage 2 of the Accreditation Process.

*ELSAC recognises that some schools may offer distance or online learning programmes in different forms and that some of the sub-areas below may not be relevant.

AREAS OF OPERATION

A Premises, and Health and Safety

Expected standards for accreditation are that:

A.1	The school has documented tenure on its premises and appropriate planning approval.
Supporting documentation required:	
A.1.1	Lease agreement or evidence of ownership (as applicable);
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A.2	All external and internal signage is clear, comprehensive, current and accurate. (This includes school floor plans and room signs; and courses, affiliations and logos on display.)
A.3	Building facilities and maintenance ensure a safe and clean environment for staff and students, with adequate lighting, heating and ventilation, and sanitary provision. (Toilets should be clean and well maintained with full hand washing and drying facilities.)
A.4	Any dedicated facilities for the preparation of food and drink meet statutory, local authority, hygiene requirements.



Supporting documentation required:

A.4.1	Local regulation certificate showing compliance with health/sanitary regulations or satisfactory inspection reports by the local Environmental Health Department or equivalent if required.
A.5	Students have access to informal study areas including IT provision where appropriate. (It is expected that there are opportunities for independent study within the school, that is, quiet study areas and casual access to IT laboratories/Wi-Fi facilities. Students are expected to have free access to the internet, including e-mail.)
A.6	All staff have access to work spaces, including those which are shared (hot-desking) and IT.
A.7	Classrooms, laboratories and other specialised teaching areas, provide safe and adequate space for the numbers of students required to use them and are equipped to a level consistent with the needs of the academic programmes. (Classrooms: the number of seats in teaching facilities should match class numbers. IT laboratories are expected to have up-to-date computers, printers etc. with broadband access.)
A.8	The school's health and safety measures ensure that local legal (statutory) requirements are met in relation to general safety, first aid, fire precautions and safety in areas of particular hazard (e.g. escape routes); relevant staff receive appropriate training in these aspects, and rules and procedures are properly displayed and students and staff fully briefed. This applies to all premises owned or leased by the school. (ELSAC recognises that some requirements may not be achievable in certain countries).



Supporting documentation required:

A.8.1	Health and safety declaration by Principal/Owner (Appendix 3 to Application Form);
A.8.2	Fire Precautions declaration (Appendix 4 to Application Form);
A.8.3	Health and safety policy, including duty of care to students;
A.8.4	List of qualified first-aiders and their certificates, and/or other medical facilities; (At least one first aider should have a certificate from attending a three day course.)
A.8.5	Records of testing of fire detection equipment, extinguishers, alarms and emergency lighting
A.8.6	List of trained fire marshals. (NB lists of fire marshals and first aiders/medical staff should be prominently displayed on student notice boards).
A.8.7	Records of timed fire drills (evacuation of the premises) including any hazards encountered, and remedial actions taken;
A.9	Fire extinguishers correctly wall or floor mounted;
A.10	Fire notices and emergency/fire exit signs;



B Governance, Management and Staff Resources

Expected standards for accreditation are that:

B.1	The governance arrangements, staff numbers and structure, and vision for the school are appropriate for the scale and nature of the operation.
Supporting documentation required:	
B.1.1	Membership and documented role of the Governing Body;
B.1.2	Diagram of staffing structure with names (this includes management, quality assurance administrators, curriculum developers, assessors, teachers, and support staff).
B.1.3	Appropriate vision and mission statements.
B.2	Communication amongst governors and all staff is effective (regular, recorded meetings of staff – including online meetings where appropriate - should take place to manage the operation of the school.)

Supporting documentation required:

B.2.1

Minutes of staff meetings (sample).

B.3

Local/legal employment requirements are met/good practice exists in terms of equal opportunities, disciplinary and grievance procedures, Employer's Liability insurance, Public Liability insurance, staff workloads.

Supporting documentation required:

B.3.1

Employer's Liability Insurance certificate;

B.3.2

Public Liability Insurance

B.3.3

Equal opportunities policy relating to employment

B.3.4

Written procedures for staff discipline and complaints/grievance.

B.4

Courses/programmes and/or academic subject areas are managed by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

Supporting documentation required:

B.4.1

CVs of the relevant staff.

B.5

In the case of full-time/distance learning provision, classes are timetabled appropriately in terms of room sizes and their facilities, and, regardless of mode of delivery, all programmes and assignments are scheduled to provide reasonable workloads for students and staff.



Supporting documentation required:

B.5.1

Current course and room timetables;

B.5.2

Study facilities and supervision arrangements

B.6

Written procedures exist for the production and conduct of tests/mock examinations, course work and other assessments; there are arrangements for the secure storage of examination papers, students' scripts and students' work in whatever format, including encoded electronic data.

Supporting documentation required:

B.6.1

Written procedures for the production of examination/test papers for tests/mock examinations and for summative assessments if appropriate;

B.6.2

Written procedures for the conduct of assessments, including invigilation arrangements; proctoring arrangements;

B.6.3

Arrangements for the receipt, from external awarding bodies, and secure storage of examination/test papers and students' scripts, course work and other submitted work, in whatever format;

B.6.4

Confirmed approval of the school as an awarding body test/examination centre as appropriate.

B.7

New staff receive an appropriate induction. There are appraisal/performance review and staff development systems for staff and all staff are encouraged/supported in engaging in self-development.



Supporting documentation required:

B.7.1	Staff handbook;
B.7.2	Records to show that staff have signed confirming receipt of their copy of the staff handbook at induction;
B.7.3	Written staff induction programme;
B.7.4	Appraisal/performance review system;
B.7.5	Staff development policy;
B.7.6	Records of staff development activities
B.8	All teaching staff are subject to review of their teaching (that is, delivery of the academic programme), their curriculum development activities, and their assignment marking with a view to achieving continuous improvement of standards.

Supporting documentation required:

B.8.1	Written procedures for the monitoring of the delivery of the academic programme and curriculum development;
B.8.2	Records of monitoring of the delivery of the academic programme;
B.9	Copyright regulations are observed – suitable copyright notices at photocopiers.
B.10	Data protection requirements are observed.



Supporting documentation required:

B.10.1

Copy of Privacy Policy.

C Learning and Teaching Activity

The general approach to students' learning is that they should be guided and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. This helps to ensure that they can build on the knowledge and experience gained on their courses in taking higher level courses and/or in developing their careers.

Expected standards for accreditation are that:

C.1

Pre-enrolment, students receive details of entry requirements/other criteria, fee charges and refund policy and the personal documentation which has to be produced in order to complete enrolment.

Supporting documentation required:

C.1.1

Pre-enrolment information

C.2

Students are carefully briefed on the nature and requirements of their chosen courses including curriculum, mode(s) of distance/online education delivery, assessment regulations, completion schedules, reading lists/relevant academic materials.

Supporting documentation required:

C.2.1

Course/programme descriptions

C.3

Academic staff have an appropriate level of subject knowledge (normally at least a first degree, or equivalent professional qualification and at an academic equivalent to the level of the course(s) being taught) and pedagogic skills as evidenced (normally) by formal qualifications.

Supporting documentation required:

C.3.1

CVs of all teaching staff detailing: Responsibilities within the Institution; Academic, professional and teaching qualifications; Summary of academic career and other relevant employment; Recent/current self-development activities; Publications; Academic papers refereed and submitted at conference; Peer reviews/citations.

C.4

The delivery of courses/programmes is conducted in ways which facilitate student learning, success and active participation, and is supported by appropriately equipped teaching facilities where applicable and by relevant distance education technology. (For programmes involving face-to-face/blended learning, classroom observation by Inspectors will assess the effectiveness of course delivery including the recognition by staff of the needs of non-native speakers.)

Supporting documentation required:

C.4.1

Sample lesson plans relating to the course description, curriculum and learning outcomes;

C.4.2

Written procedures for teachers on providing feedback on students' work;

C.4.3

Samples of marked student work and relevant mark scheme;

C.5

The school library, which can be online, provides copies of set texts and supporting texts, journals and relevant research publications. Guidance is provided on the use of public and electronic libraries, including the inter-library loan scheme. Guidance on further study and careers is available through the school.





D Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Course/programme review is an important procedure whereby the school reviews the delivery of its courses and the success of the students as part of a process of continual improvement and of ensuring the on-going relevance of the curriculum.

Expected standards for accreditation are that:

D.1	The school undertakes an annual academic review of its courses/programmes, which includes formal input from students and staff.
Supporting documentation required:	
D.1.1	Written procedures for conducting academic review;
D.1.2	Records of academic review meetings which include action points.
D.2	As part of the academic review process, the school monitors students' academic development and pass/completion rates, and analyses examination results to identify trends and inconsistencies.

Supporting documentation required:

D.2.1

Student examination/assignment results (sample);

D.3

As part of the academic review process, mechanisms exist for students to provide feedback on the delivery of their courses and/or the quality of research supervision, and the quality of the supporting resources. The mechanisms may include student questionnaires assessing individual staff performance, course delivery and academic/welfare support; representation on committees and/or staff/student liaison groups.

Supporting documentation required:

D.3.1

Examples of completed student feedback questionnaires;

D.3.2

Records of relevant meetings involving students (if applicable).

D.4

For internal courses (see definition in Area of Operation F) the school has written procedures for curriculum development and course design; and the academic level of internal courses is consistent with internationally equivalent courses.

Supporting documentation required:

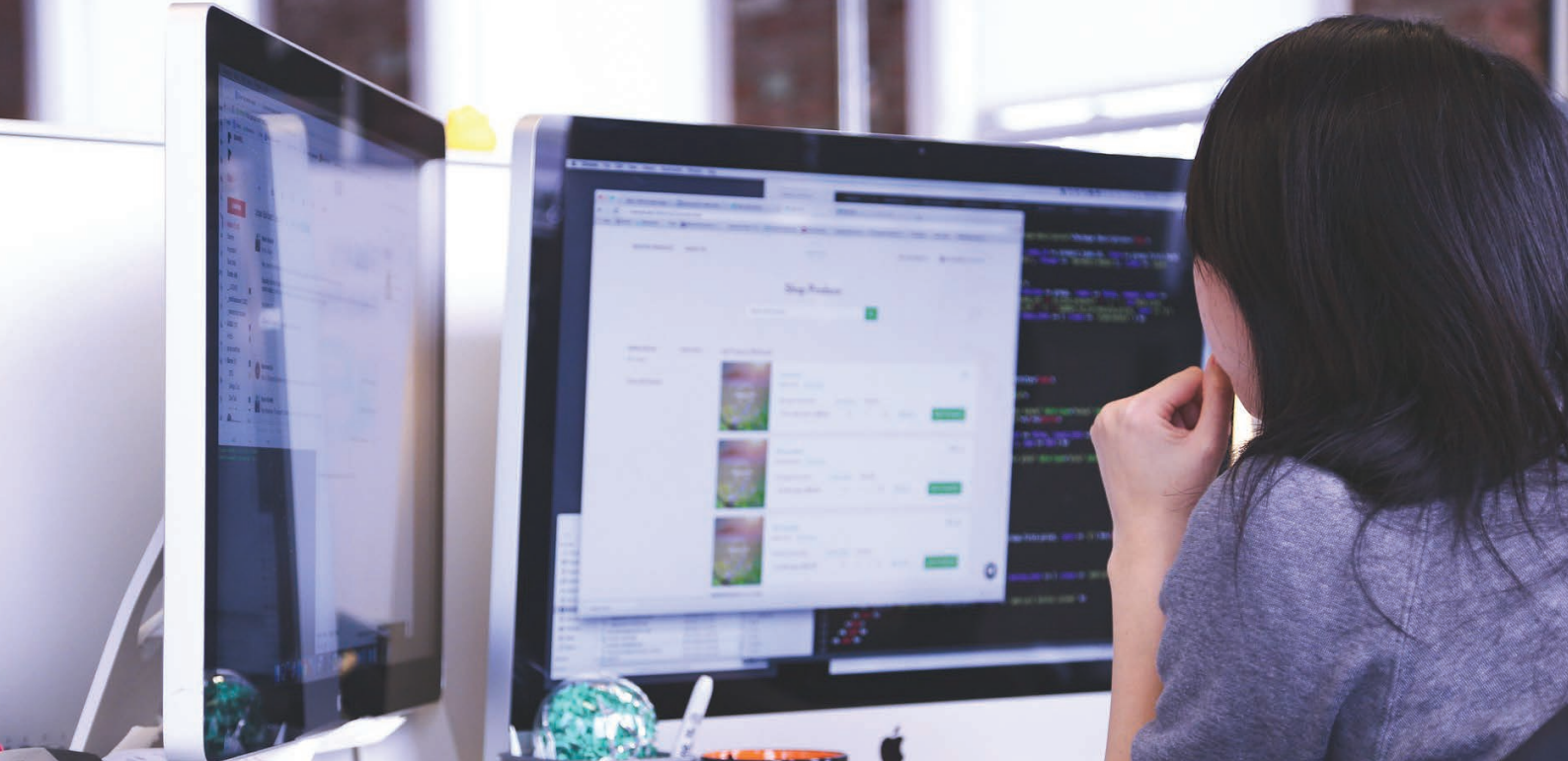
D.4.1

Written procedures for course/programme design and curriculum development;

D.4.2

Course/programme descriptions, including details of curriculum, learning outcomes, teaching approaches and assessment arrangement;





E Student Welfare

Schools in many countries now seek to recruit international students from other countries. Such students often need support in addition to that provided for home students.

Expected standards for accreditation are that:

E.1

On full-time learning programmes involving attendance at the school, students receive advice/information and assistance in relation to such topics as living costs, police registration, registration for medical treatment, banking and travel cards.

Supporting documentation required:

E.1.1

Pre -arrival information for home and international students.

E.2

Ongoing welfare support is available to students from identified staff.

E.3

There is an induction programme for new students.

Supporting documentation required:

E.3.1

Written student induction programme;

E.3.2

Student handbook;

E.3.3

Records to show that students have signed confirming receipt of their copy of the Student Handbook at induction.

E.4

In the case of students under the age of 18, the requirements of current legislation are met in respect of police checks on relevant staff, including enhanced checks where personal tutoring/mentoring is in place. It is suggested that all teaching staff are CRB checked, including Principal, owners and directors

Supporting documentation required:

E.4.1

Staff list recording police checks (under 18s);

E.4.2

Staff list recording enhanced police checks (under 18s plus personal tutoring/mentoring system).

E.5

In the case of students with special learning, medical or physical needs, the requirements of any current local (in-country) legislation are met and a level of support is offered, appropriate to the needs of the individual.



Supporting documentation required:

E.5.1

Disability strategy, which must include advice to students with special learning, medical or physical needs which the Institution cannot support to seek guidance from appropriate identified bodies;

E.5.2

Written documentation where students have the opportunity to declare special learning, medical or physical needs, including the Institution application form.

E.6

Any homestay (that is, with families) arrangements are satisfactory in terms of selection and monitoring of providers and compliance with current in-country legislation. Written guidance is given to students and providers.

Supporting documentation required:

E.6.1

Written guidance to homestay students and providers, including a recommendation that adults also living in the homestay are police checked;

E.6.2

Records of homestay inspections by the institution, including compliance with in country legislation.

E.7

Formal and informal mechanisms exist for students' complaints and grievances to be addressed.

Supporting documentation required:

E.7.1

Written student complaints and grievance procedure.





F Awards and Qualifications

An **external course/programme** is one in which the curriculum and assessment schedule is provided by an approved awarding body, including approved universities, professional bodies and other recognised awarding bodies (e.g Cambridge/Trinity).

An **internal course/programme** is one which has been totally devised by the school and may be validated by a university or another approved awarding body.

The ELSAC Evaluation Council will include an examination of the courses as well as the quality of its delivery to learners. We also pay close attention to the consistency and reliability of assessment. However, it should be noted that ELSAC neither confers nor validates certificate or diploma awarding powers. Applicants for distance/online education programmes should always satisfy themselves that the level of recognition of a relevant award is sufficient to meet their

Expected standards for accreditation are that:

F.1

External courses/programmes. The school can demonstrate that its external courses lead to genuine accredited awards, such as franchises or validations from approved international universities and/or those leading to awards of recognised awarding bodies including those overseas; the school ensures that students are registered with the

Supporting documentation required:

F.1.1

Course/programme summary (Appendix 4 to the Application Form) for each approved external course/programme;

F.1.2	Confirmed centre status of recognised awarding bodies;
F.2	Internal courses/programmes. The school can demonstrate that its internal courses/programmes lead to awards/certification relevant to the needs of students
Supporting documentation required:	
F.2.1	Course/programme summary (Appendix 2 to the Application Form) for each internal course/programme;
F.2.2	Award certificates for each internal course/programme;
F.3	A documented framework for the frequent and regular formative assessment of students. Assessment of students is undertaken in an ethical, fair and robust manner.
Supporting documentation required:	
F.3.1	Written guidance for staff on assessment of all courses/programmes;
F.3.2	Written regulations for assessment for internal courses/programmes where the assessment is not provided by the awarding body;
F.4	Students are made aware of what constitutes academic misconduct, such as cheating, collusion, fabrication, and plagiarism, and of the consequent penalties. The school takes steps to prevent academic misconduct.
Supporting documentation required:	
F.4.1	Written guidance on academic misconduct.



G Marketing and Recruitment of Students

Expected standards for accreditation are that:

G.1	All staff and education representatives/agents adopt an honest, ethical approach in the marketing of the school and its courses/programmes and in the recruitment of students. An appropriate infrastructure exists for dealing with student enquiries.
Supporting documentation required:	
G.1.1	Ethics policy in relation to: the marketing of the Institution; the recruitment of students; the ethical practice of staff and agents;
G.2	Agents working on behalf of the school overseas are recruited in the context of formal appointment criteria, are fully briefed and provided with relevant school literature so as to be able to assist prospective students with visa applications, if appropriate, and with the course/programme application process and associated aspects of
Supporting documentation required:	
G.2.1	Written criteria for the appointment of agents;
G.2.2	Copy of agent agreement;
G.2.3	List of active agents and their contact details;
G.3	In its promotional literature and website the school provides prospective home and international students with accurate and comprehensive information on admissions requirements and procedures, the courses/programmes available, tuition fees and living costs, living conditions, accommodation and student welfare. Prospectuses, websites and marketing literature neither include misleading, inaccurate or ambiguous statements in these respects nor draw false or unfounded comparisons with any other provider.



Supporting documentation required:

G.3.1	The school website will be viewed and continuously monitored by ELSAC;
G.3.2	School prospectus (where applicable);
G.3.3	Approvals/licences for the use of images used on the website and other hard copy literature;
G.3.4	Sample advertisements and other marketing literature where applicable.
G.4	Academic selection criteria, including English language requirements, for home and international students are appropriate to the academic standards of the courses/programmes for which they have applied so that students have a reasonable expectation of being successful. In selecting students, the school meets the requirements of equal opportunities and anti-discrimination legislation

Supporting documentation required:

G.4.1	Written academic admissions requirements; (on course summary, Appendix 2 to Application Form)
G.4.2	Written English language or other language of instruction admissions requirements; (on course summary, Appendix 2 to Application Form)
G.4.3	The Institution's equal opportunities policy in relation to student selection.



H Systems Management and Compliance with Immigration Regulations

ELSAC expects all of its accredited schools to have written procedures for all of their policies and actions, and that the person with responsibility for each procedure is able to explain it to the ELSAC Evaluation Council. This has the added advantage that if staff undertaking particular roles leave or are unavailable at short notice, other staff assuming these roles will know exactly what is expected of them. This applies in particular to procedures for the recruitment, enrolment and monitoring of attendance and academic progress of home and international students.

Expected standards for accreditation are that:

H.1	An appropriate infrastructure exists for dealing with student applications and making offers. Written administrative procedures exist for: processing applications; monitoring the number of offers made and accepted; the admission of students, to include verification of students' academic qualifications, including competence in English language at an appropriate level; checking the financial viability of the students; student admission and enrolment; the payment of deposits and fees and for maintaining financial records, together with a policy for the refund of deposits and payments.
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Supporting documentation required:

H.1.1	Student application form;
H.1.2	Written administrative procedures for processing applications;
H.1.3	Sample offer letter and visa letter (if appropriate);
H.1.4	Written administrative procedures for monitoring the number of visa letters issued and accepted (if appropriate);
H.1.5	Enrolment form;
H.1.6	Written administrative procedures for student admission and enrolment;



H.1.7	Written administrative procedures for handling deposits, fee payments and refunds and for maintaining records of these transactions;
H.1.8	School policy for the refund of deposits/payments;
H.2	The school creates and maintains accurate and up-to-date student files and stores these securely.
Supporting documentation required:	
H.2.1	Written administrative procedures for creating and maintaining student files;
H.3	Students are enrolled on courses/programmes which comply with local Education Department requirements and with immigration authorities' requirements (if appropriate).
Supporting documentation required:	
H.3.1	Written administrative procedures for recording and monitoring student attendance;
H.3.2	A sample of a completed student attendance register (if appropriate);
H.4	Where learning requires attendance at the school, there are robust procedures for contacting students who miss classes without authorisation to ascertain the reasons for absence and to issue warnings that de-registration will occur in the case of inadequate attendance. If required, the school informs immigration authorities that the registration of relevant students has been cancelled.



Supporting documentation required:

H.4.1

Written administrative procedures for dealing with student absences and if appropriate reporting to immigration authorities;

H.4.2

Sample warning letters to students regarding unsatisfactory attendance;

H.5

The school closely monitors students' academic progress, for example through a system of personal academic tutoring and/or formative assessments, to ensure that they are capable of completing their chosen course/programme. The school has robust procedures for issuing warnings to students whose progress is unsatisfactory.

Supporting documentation required:

H.5.1

Sample student assessment records;

H.5.2

Written administrative procedures for dealing with unsatisfactory student progress and if appropriate reporting to immigration authorities;

H.5.3

Sample warning letters to students regarding unsatisfactory progress;

H.6

The school records voluntary withdrawals and deferrals, and in the case of students requiring a visa, is able to inform the immigration authorities accordingly.

Supporting documentation required:

H.6.1

Written administrative procedures for dealing with voluntary withdrawals and deferrals and, if appropriate, reporting to immigration authorities.

H.7

All staff appointments are made in the context of written procedures; and the qualifications of appointees and their right to work are verified.



Supporting documentation required:

H.7.1	Written staff appointment procedures, job descriptions and appointment criteria;
H.7.2	Sample job advertisement;
H.7.3	Sample contracts for management, academic and support staff;
H.7.4	A list of staff showing their visa status (if appropriate) and written evidence of verification that staff have the right to work in the country.
H.8	The school creates and maintains accurate and up-to-date staff files.

Supporting documentation required:

H.8.1	Written administrative procedures for creating and maintaining staff files;
H.8.2	Sample of a staff file;
H.9	The school is aware of the need to inform ELSAC of change of premises or extension of existing premises.





CONTACT US

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