



POLICY – Teaching and Observation

Education – Universal

Policy Author	Laura Dickie, Head of Policy Tonia Lewis, Education and Quality Improvement Lead
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Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
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Version No.	001
Policy Level	Education
Staff groups affected	All Education

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Proprietor Representative and Regional Lead.

A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval, or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to the universal content to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.



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Tawanda Madhlangobe
(Headteacher / Principal)

Andrew Sutherland/Rob Mcconomy
(Proprietor Representative/Regional Lead)



Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

Term	Definition
'Establishment' or 'Site'	A generic term referring to the school/college owned by CareTech.
Learner	Any child or young person under the age of 18, or young adult over 18 who receives education.
Service Head	The senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college.
Tutor/Teacher	Members of staff who have teaching responsibility for learners at the school/college.
Parent/Carer	Parent or person with parental responsibility.
Regulatory Authority	The independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services (e.g., Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland).
Social Worker	The worker allocated to the individual learner; if none is allocated, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	The local authority/agency responsible for placing the learner or commissioning the service.
Local Authority	The local authority for the establishment's location.
Staff	All staff working at the location, including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors.



Cambian Wisbech School is an independent specialist school within The Cambian Group, operating as one school across two sites in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. Sessions House provides the primary phase and Anglia Way provides the secondary phase. The school supports pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans, including pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and associated additional needs. Our ethos is underpinned by the values Aspire, Achieve, Engage, Empower and Excel. We provide a safe, inclusive and ambitious learning environment in which curriculum, pastoral support, safeguarding and personal development are adapted to individual need and prepare pupils for successful next steps and adulthood.

2. Purpose

This policy applies to Cambian Wisbech School and sets out how lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny are carried out.

It provides a universal framework and outlines the expectations that apply to:

- Staff
- Senior leaders
- Learners
- Visitors and contractors (where relevant)

This policy enables Cambian Wisbech School to meet statutory duties, uphold safeguarding responsibilities, comply with data protection requirements and maintain high-quality provision.

3. Scope

This organisational policy applies across all education sites, services and functions. It establishes the universal standards and expectations that must be followed consistently throughout the organisation.

Each site implements these standards in accordance with the statutory and regulatory requirements of the nation in which it operates as set out in **Appendix A-C**.

4. Local Adaptation Requirement

The locally adaptable sections of this policy have been completed for Cambian Wisbech School to reflect the school's operational procedures, safeguarding arrangements, inspection context, curriculum and quality assurance framework and data protection requirements.

Cambian Wisbech School operates in England. England-specific statutory and regulatory references therefore apply throughout this localised policy.

All local additions are:



- Accurate
- Up to date
- Consistent with national legislation and regulator guidance
- Fully aligned with the universal standards in this policy

Where no local adaptation or local equivalent is required, the universal content remains fully applicable.

5. Legal and Regulatory Context

Cambian Wisbech School is governed by the statutory duties, safeguarding requirements and inspection arrangements applying to independent schools in England. The universal standards in this policy are implemented alongside the Teachers' Standards, the Education Inspection Framework and school inspection toolkit, the Independent School Standards, Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Equality Act 2010, UK data protection legislation and the SEND Code of Practice.

6. Principles

Our approach is deliberately developmental: each activity helps us strengthen practice, encourage reflection and improve the learning experience for all learners.

We aim to create a culture where teachers and instructors feel supported and confident to develop their practice. Monitoring is handled professionally, with clarity of purpose, fairness and trust. Activities use agreed criteria and are recorded consistently. At Cambian Wisbech School they are aligned with the Teachers' Standards in England, the Independent School Standards, Ofsted expectations for the quality of education and the school's own quality assurance priorities, including the School Development Plan and self-evaluation processes.

These processes feed directly into our wider work on self-evaluation, appraisal, curriculum planning and the School Development Plan. Most importantly, they help maintain a professional environment where conversation about teaching and learning is open, constructive and valued.

7. Planning and Preparing for Observation

The annual quality assurance calendar is published by the Headteacher (or delegated leader). Staff are given at least five working days' notice of a formal observation.

Observers will be appropriately trained and will plan their visits thoughtfully throughout the year to avoid unnecessary workload pressure or bunching.

Before any observation, the teacher/tutor will know:

- its purpose and focus,
- how it links to relevant standards or development priorities,
- the timing and expected duration,



- what supporting evidence may be reviewed (such as planning, assessment information or samples of learner work),
- and any links to appraisal or the SDP.

The aim is to make the process transparent, purposeful and genuinely helpful, not performative.

8. Guiding Principles for Teaching & Learning

Our shared view of high-quality teaching and learning sits on several core principles:

- **Collective accountability:** All staff contribute to learner progress and outcomes.
- **Consistency:** We use shared expectations of effective practice and apply them fairly across the organisation.
- **Professional learning:** Everyone is encouraged to refine their practice, draw on research and collaborate with colleagues.
- **Impact:** Feedback should lead to meaningful changes that benefit learners.
- **Typicality:** We focus on what learners usually experience, not isolated moments.
- **Proportionality:** Quality assurance supports improvement; it must not create unnecessary workload.
- **Respect for context:** Observers consider the composition, needs and dynamics of the group being taught.

9. Work Scrutiny (Book Looks)

Work scrutiny helps us understand what learning looks like over time. It enables us to check how consistently feedback is given, how well learners are progressing and whether curriculum intentions are being realised in practice.

It is **not** used on its own for performance management, although sustained concerns may contribute to broader appraisal discussions.

How it works

- There are three scheduled cycles across the year, with dates and focus themes published in advance.
- Staff receive five working days' notice of what will be looked at.
- Sampling is small and manageable—typically three pieces of work or folders per teacher/tutor.
- All work is returned within 24 hours.

Feedback and follow-up

- Staff may request a short conversation; a written summary is also produced.
- Whole-school/college themes feed into CPD planning and inform the SDP.
- Names of individual staff do not appear in whole-organisation summaries.
- Any safeguarding concern identified through work scrutiny is passed immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Designated



Safeguarding Lead. Any health and safety concern is escalated without delay to the Headteacher and the relevant site leader in line with school procedures.

10. Learning Walks

Learning walks provide a snapshot of what learners typically experience. They are short, supportive and deliberately low-stakes. Their purpose is to build a picture of consistency, climate for learning and curriculum delivery across the site.

How they operate

- Usually conducted by one or two trained staff.
- Designed to minimise disruption; observers may view displays or learner work, but do not collect live learner voice.
- At least three walks take place each year, each with a clear published focus.
- Visits are brief—normally no more than 10–15 minutes per room—and several rooms may be visited within the same period.

Feedback

- Staff receive verbal or written comments, depending on the nature of the walk.
- Themes are collected centrally to help identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Any concerns related to safeguarding or health & safety are escalated immediately via related policies and local procedures.

11. Lesson Observation Protocols

Lesson observations provide a more detailed look at teaching, learning and progress. They typically last 30–45 minutes and the teacher/tutor can usually nominate the group and agree the focus in advance.

During the observation

Observers will:

- review planning or assessment information where this is relevant,
- focus on the quality of learning and the experience of learners rather than on a specific teaching style,
- draw on a range of evidence including interactions, engagement, routines and learner work,
- identify strengths and areas for development linked to the Teachers' Standards in England, the Independent School Standards, agreed school teaching expectations and the individual needs and Education, Health and Care Plan outcomes of pupils

Feedback and support

- Verbal feedback is usually given within 24 hours.
- Written feedback is provided within five working days.
- Feedback is practical and specific, with clear next steps and an offer of support, coaching or professional development.
- Records are shared with the appraiser in line with the appraisal timetable.

When concerns arise



If practice requires improvement, extra support and reasonable further observation may be arranged. This might include coaching, joint planning, peer observation or resource sharing. Staff can ask for a repeat observation if they feel the lesson observed was not typical of their practice. Any safeguarding or H&S issues are escalated immediately via relevant policies and local procedures.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Headteacher:** Ensures compliance with relevant standards, publishes and oversees the whole-school quality assurance cycle across Sessions House and Anglia Way, assures the quality and consistency of observation practice and monitors the impact of agreed actions.
- **Assistant Headteachers and Lead Teacher:** Support teaching teams across the primary and secondary sites, coordinate quality assurance activity within their areas and promote consistent expectations across the school.
- **Observers:** Carry out activities professionally, record accurately, offer constructive feedback and maintain confidentiality.
- **Teachers and Instructors:** Engage in professional dialogue, reflect on feedback, implement agreed actions and demonstrate how teaching is adapted to pupils' Education, Health and Care Plans and identified needs.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:** Respond to safeguarding concerns arising from quality assurance activity and ensure concerns are recorded and followed up through the school's safeguarding procedures, including Behaviour Watch where appropriate.

Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual's rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance.

Appendices

Appendix A – Legal and Regulatory Framework in England

Appendix B – Legal and Regulatory Framework in Wales

Appendix C – Legal and Regulatory Framework in Scotland



Appendix A — England

The legal and regulatory frameworks and guidance underpinning Teaching and Observation in England.

Teachers' Standards (England)

- **Means:** Sets minimum requirements for teachers/tutors' practice and conduct for QTS, induction and appraisal.
- **Requires:** High-quality teaching, effective assessment, behaviour management, safeguarding and professional conduct.
- **Our stance:** Observation criteria map to the Standards; feedback references specific TS elements.
- **Example:** Lesson note cites TS6 (assessment) and TS7 (behaviour) with direct evidence.
- Links: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted)

- **Means:** How Ofsted inspects schools and FE; principles, evidence expectations and evaluation areas.
- **Requires:** Providers evidence curriculum/teaching, achievement, leadership, safeguarding and inclusion via published toolkits.
- **Our stance:** QA (observations, learning walks, work scrutiny) aligns to EIF evidence so sites remain inspection-ready.
- **Example:** QA calendar mirrors EIF focus; evidence pack shows typicality and curriculum intent/implementation/impact.
- Links:
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework-for-use-from-november-2025>
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- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/690b26c69456634d9795fde0/Schools_inspection_toolkit.pdf

Independent School Standards (ISSR)

- **Means:** Legal standards for independent schools: quality of education, welfare/health/safety, staffing, leadership.
- **Requires:** Robust curriculum/teaching, safeguarding, safer recruitment, premises and complaints procedures.
- **Our stance:** Observation/scrutiny evidence retained to demonstrate Part 1 compliance and leadership oversight.
- **Example:** Termly QA report to Headteacher/Principal summarises strengths, risks and actions against Parts 1–8.
- Links: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents/made>
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67605baec80a844a7aa4b7cb/Independent_School_Standards_Guidance.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025

- **Means:** Statutory safeguarding guidance for schools/colleges in England; duties, DSL role, safer recruitment.
- **Requires:** Clear reporting routes, training, record-keeping, escalation, filtering/monitoring and safer recruitment checks.
- **Our stance:** Observers escalate concerns to DSL immediately; QA tools check protective education evidence and training.
- **Example:** Post-walk log shows immediate DSL notification and chronology filed in safeguarding system.
- Links: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

Equality Act 2010 — Education

- **Means:** UK-wide anti-discrimination law; includes duties on schools and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- **Requires:** Anticipatory adjustments, eliminating discrimination, advancing equality, fostering good relations.
- **Our stance:** Observations check equitable access, “normal way of working,” and reasonable adjustments in delivery/assessment.
- **Example:** Work scrutiny sample includes learners with SEND/ALN/ASN; notes adjustments and impact on progression.
- Links: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

Data Protection (UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018)



- **Means:** UK GDPR plus DPA 2018 govern processing, security and rights over personal data (incl. observation records).
- **Requires:** Lawful basis, minimisation, secure storage, retention schedules and subject rights handling.
- **Our stance:** Observation/work-scrutiny records follow DPA retention; access provided on request via site process.
- **Example:** QA folder held in restricted drive; retention period listed in Record of Processing Activities.
- Links: <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>

SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years

- **Means:** Statutory guidance for identifying, assessing and supporting SEND 0–25 in England (EHC plans, graduated approach).
- **Requires:** Assess-Plan-Do-Review, multi-agency coordination, reasonable adjustments, and monitoring of impact.
- **Our stance:** Observation feedback references support strategies and “typicality” for learners with EHC plans/SEND K.
- **Example:** Lesson note evidences adaptive teaching and planned reviews linked to EHC outcomes.
- Links: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)



Appendix B — Wales

The legal and regulatory frameworks and guidance underpinning Teaching and Observation in Wales.

Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership (Wales)

- **Means:** National standards for teachers/tutors and leaders; pedagogy, collaboration, leadership, innovation, CPL.
- **Requires:** Use in induction, appraisal and professional learning; alignment with Curriculum for Wales.
- **Our stance:** Feedback and CPD targets reference specific standard elements.
- **Example:** Post-observation next steps link to “Pedagogy” and “Professional learning” with review dates.
- Links: <https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-learning/supporting-professional-development/professional-standards/>
- <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/19bc948b-8a3f-41e0-944a-7bf2cadf7d18/professional-standards-for-teaching-and-leadership-interactive-pdf-for-pc.pdf>

Estyn Inspection Frameworks

- **Means:** “What/How we inspect” across sectors in Wales, including maintained schools, independent schools and FE.
- **Requires:** Evidence on teaching/learning, wellbeing/support, leadership/improvement; inspection-ready documentation.
- **Our stance:** QA cycle mirrors Estyn areas; themes from observation/walk/scrutiny feed SEF and improvement plan.
- **Example:** Central log summarises three inspection areas with actions/impact for inspection dialogue.
- Links: <https://estyn.gov.wales/inspection-guidance-resources/>



Keeping Learners Safe (Wales)

- **Means:** Statutory safeguarding guidance for education in Wales; roles, routes and training expectations.
- **Requires:** Designated leads, clear reporting, record-keeping, multi-agency working aligned to Welsh law.
- **Our stance:** Observers escalate immediately; QA checks protective education evidence and training logs.
- **Example:** Learning-walk note shows rapid DSL referral and completion of Estyn-ready safeguarding checklist.
- Links: <https://www.gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe>
- <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-04/220401-keeping-learners-safe.pdf>

Equality Act 2010 — Education

- **Means:** UK-wide equality law; includes Public Sector Equality Duty for education settings.
- **Requires:** Anticipatory adjustments, eliminating discrimination, advancing equality, fostering good relations.
- **Our stance:** Observation/walk criteria check reasonable adjustments and inclusive “normal way of working.”
- **Example:** Work scrutiny includes ALN learners’ work to evidence progression with adjustments.
- Links: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Data Protection (UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018)

- **Means:** UK GDPR and DPA 2018 govern processing, security and rights for QA/observation records.
- **Requires:** Lawful basis, minimisation, secure retention, access rights and breach handling.
- **Our stance:** QA records stored securely with defined retention and access process via site lead.
- **Example:** Observation feedback saved to restricted drive; retention listed in data asset register.
- Links: <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) — ALNET (Wales) Act 2018

- **Means:** Replaces SEN with ALN; introduces Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and multi-agency duties.
- **Requires:** Identification, assessment, IDPs, reviews and coordination across education/health/social care.



- **Our stance:** Observation feedback references ALN strategies and planned IDP review points.
- **Example:** QA sample includes IDP targets and evidence of adaptive teaching and review timelines.
- Links: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2018/2/contents>
- <https://www.gov.wales/additional-learning-needs-and-education-tribunal-wales-act>

Data Protection (UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018)

- **Means:** UK GDPR and DPA 2018 govern processing, security and rights for QA/observation records.
- **Requires:** Lawful basis, minimisation, secure storage/retention, data subject rights and breach handling.
- **Our stance:** QA records handled under site's Record of Processing Activities with restricted access.
- **Example:** Observation forms stored in secure drive; retention schedule published in data register.
- Links: <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>

Additional Support for Learning (ASL) — 2004 Act

- **Means:** Legal framework for identifying, providing and reviewing support for learners with ASN; CSPs where needed.
- **Requires:** Duties on education authorities to assess needs, plan support, review provision, and collaborate with agencies.
- **Our stance:** Observation feedback references ASN strategies, planned reviews and coordination with partners.
- **Example:** QA sample includes evidence against CSP/child's plan targets and impact on learning.
- Links: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/4/contents>
- <https://education.gov.scot/resources/education-additional-support-for-learning-scotland-act-2004/>