



Membership Engagement Report

for

Newton International Academy, Smash

May 2025

CIS Code of Ethics

School Response

The ethical practices of Newton International Academy, Smash (NIA Smash) are reflected in our mission; we are ‘an international community of learners striving for excellence and celebrating success’. Diversity and opportunity of all, irrelevant of the religious, cultural and international heritage of our students has been molded into a set of values that has been cultivated by the Board of Directors and is an integral part of our staff recruitment process, leadership vision and spearheads our communication with parents. All nationalities are recognised and celebrated through different school events such as National Day, International Week and Arabic Week. We also recognise and seek to support challenges that confront sections of our school community. An example of this is the recent conflict in neighbouring Palestine and Gaza. The academy, supported by the Board of Directors, parents and teachers have offered emotional and charitable support to students, parents and teachers who have relatives in Palestine and the school has conducted prayers and has refrained from national celebrations during the height of the conflict. We also ensure that there is no reference to this conflict in lesson planning, e.g. Global Citizenship

The Board of Directors is well established and is supportive of the school’s leadership. The academy’s Principal enjoys a close rapport with the C.E.O. and their shared vision is reflected in an agreed set of objectives that drive forward school improvement. These improvement goals are mutually agreed with the leadership, the Board and are shared with parents, teachers and other stakeholders e.g. the Ministry of Education. The academy has its own designated Ministry of Education link who offers advice on cultural sensitivities and makes regular visits to ensure that quality of learning and teaching adheres to national standards and expectations. This is demonstrated by regular visits to ensure that ‘1st language’ Arabic students are receiving the appropriate level of challenge. The school also receives regular visits to ensure adherence to the safety and security requirements of the State of Qatar.

Stakeholders are regularly consulted about school practices through frequent surveys and the school operates a ‘Parent, Teacher Association” (P.T.A.) This is a voluntary body and although it has no statutory responsibility, it plays a vital role in ensuring that parent’s views are fed directly to the school leadership team. This is supported by a full time “Parent Liaison Officer’ who is bi-lingual and ensures that parents can communicate quickly with individual teachers and is skilled in ensuring that cultural differences do not become a barrier to communication. There is also a “Managing Parent Communication” Department who acts as a conduit between parents and the school. This department seeks to ensure that any problems or complaints are addressed in order to avoid a formal process being activated. The school publicises a clear and structured complaints policy. All core policies are agreed by the Board of Directors and the Ministry of Education and are shared with stakeholders through the school website and parent handbooks.

CIS Response

Newton International Academy, Smash (NIA Smash) is one of several schools in the Newton Group applying for CIS membership. All the schools are overseen by the same Board, which includes the founding member. Through the CIS application process for



their schools, the Board is familiar with the CIS Code of Ethics and the CIS key drivers. The Board believes that CIS membership and future accreditation will provide the right support and expectations to ensure that the school is on track. NIA Smash shares several policies with other schools in the group and has also developed some of its own. Staff often move to other schools in the group as part of their career development, and the Board is keen to promote staff who they believe have what it takes to lead a school in the Newton Group. NIA Smash opened during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 but has grown quickly in a relatively short period, graduating the first students, a small cohort of two, last academic year. The Principal previously worked in another NIA school and brought with him an understanding of the schools in the group and the expectations of what it means to be a NIA school.

NIA Smash's website is linked to the Newton Group, and clicking on some of the pages takes the browser directly to shared, group information. While the schools share several aspects of operations, it can be confusing if expecting to read information about NIA Smash specifically.

The Board and Principal share a mutually respectful relationship and work as a team to ensure the school's success. The school budget is managed at the Board level, but they are keen to note that the Principal and his Leadership Team present their needs for the academic year to the Board, and most of the requirements are approved. The Board and Principal interact almost daily, and the Principal is responsible for submitting regular reports to the Board. The Principal receives regular and ongoing feedback, however, there is no formal annual appraisal process.

Students at NIA Smash have numerous ways in which to voice their concerns and ideas. The students themselves noted that everyone has a voice at the school. In addition to the school council, prefects, captains, and ambassador roles, students can approach any teacher or administrator. The staff also ask students for help with activities and solving problems.

Developmental Considerations

The Board should consider conducting a formal annual appraisal for the Principal so that there is clarity between ongoing feedback and an annual review and summary.

Those responsible for the NIA Smash website should consider ways to ensure that it is regularly reviewed and that information about the school for prospective families and staff is clear.

Purpose and Direction

School Response

NIA Smash's vision and mission are clear, measured and concise and the impact of the vision and mission is measured in detail by the Ministry of Education 's Qatar National School Accreditation', (QNSA) process. The mission and vision statements are prominently displayed on the school's website, in handbooks, in classrooms, and in public spaces and are consistently referenced in school communications, such as, newsletters, assemblies, and meetings. The curriculum is structured to support the



school's overall goals and reflects the mission and values of the school through lesson planning and teaching. The school's management structure is designed to ensure all aspects of the school's development are shared and supported with all members of the school's community. There is a collaborative school improvement plan which is regularly reviewed and its impact is shared with teaching and non-teaching colleagues.

Student voice is vibrant and their ideas are seen as central to policy making and expenditure. This is seen by the allocation of funding from the school fayre to finance whole school projects such as outside facilities, sporting events and overseas visits to Madrid. In line with our school's vision, we instill a culture of continuous self-evaluation and benchmarking against UK and International standards. This is evidenced by the recent Wellbeing Award for School (WAS) accreditation in January 2025. NIA Smash aims to deliver high-quality education to students of all abilities and participates in international assessments such as TIMSS, PIRLS, and PISA. The academy implements international GL Assessments from Year 2 to Year 9 and international IGCSE outcomes. We were awarded membership of COBIS in 2025 and have completed the BSME membership process successfully, including country representative visitations. We have a 3-year whole school development plan that is transparent to all stakeholders.

Our purpose is to improve and enhance our strengths and address our areas for development. Every department works with specific action plans that align with the school's objectives. We seek feedback through surveys for parents, students, and staff, ensuring that we gather evidence to validate current practices and identify areas for improvement. This feedback helps us introduce new ideas and systems that drive progress. We use a variety of platforms to communicate, such as emails, Class Dojo, SMS messages, and regular meetings—both individual and whole-school parent meetings. Students engage in assemblies, student council, events, educational visits, and leadership meetings, while parents collaborate through workshops, surveys, PTA meetings, and policy discussions. Teachers meet regularly with middle and senior management to ensure clear communication. All departments participate in appraisals and observations to maintain transparency and ensure that feedback is considered.

We review school plans and appraisals termly with the senior management team and the CEO, providing feedback at all levels. Stakeholders play an integral role in executing the strategic plan and accreditation processes, with an accreditation plan shared to ensure full transparency regarding the school's purpose and direction. We align our efforts with Qatar's Vision 2030 to contribute to the nation's future plan for growth.

CIS Response

NIA Smash shares its guiding statements with all the schools in the Newton Group, and these were already in place when the school opened. There is no formal timeline to review the guiding statements with input from all stakeholders. NIA Smash sets its own objectives, which are not linked to other schools in the group, but which are aligned with the Mission and Vision. The school regularly shares the guiding statements with the PTA and school council; they are referred to within lesson plans, and they are connected to themes in the curriculum. The guiding statements are visible in weekly newsletters, and students are frequently asked what they mean to them. The Newton Group oversees the school website, and because all schools share



the same Mission and Vision, they appear as a link to the group section of the webpage as opposed to the NIA Smash webpages. While it may be repetitive to place the guiding statements on each of the schools' webpages, it would also reinforce that they belong to each of the schools.

Families apply to the school through the website portal, indicating which of the schools in the group they want to apply to. While this is a centralized system, each school has its own registrar who is responsible for taking on the application. Students take an entrance exam, and if they are not successful, the school provides feedback to the family regarding what they need to address if they wish to reapply at a later date. Much of the focus with potential families is about the school being a good fit and whether the child will be able to adapt to the environment and the school's expectations. School tours help to define what the school is about, and once accepted, transition days are provided to help students integrate into the school. The school works closely with parents to help them understand the importance of their choice for their child's school and the role that they need to play in their child's education, particularly regarding attendance.

Teachers also apply to the school through the group portal. They are interviewed by NIA Smash leadership, who noted that they are looking for teachers who can demonstrate that they are passionate about teaching. Following the interview, the Principal makes a recommendation to HR. Final decisions are made by the Board to ensure that staff are appropriately placed within the group. New staff orientation includes a presentation on the history of the group and a deep dive into the guiding statements and their relevance to the school.

Developmental Considerations

Those responsible for the school website should consider having the school's guiding statements visible on the NIA Smash webpages as opposed to being redirected to the Newton Group homepage.

The Board should consider setting a timeline for reviewing the Newton Group guiding statements, which are adopted by all the schools in the group. They should ensure that there is an opportunity for all stakeholders to participate in the process to increase a shared understanding of the guiding statements.

High-Quality Learning and Teaching

School Response

The NIA Smash curriculum is reviewed annually and revised according to the needs of the students. Consideration is given to the recommendation of examination boards and specialist teachers, such as special education needs, EAL and gifted and talented coordinators. Teaching and learning stimulates critical thinking, problem-solving, active and inquiry-based learning. This is demonstrated by the teaching of Philosophy for Children (P4C) and Character Education. Regular assessments and progress tracking tools monitor student performance, with data-informed analysis.



In Key Stage 4, our students work towards international IGCSE, BTEC, and IAS qualifications, following Cambridge and Pearson courses. We have recently expanded our subject provision in Key Stages 4 and 5, introducing Global Perspectives, Global Citizenship, Environmental Management, and Business Enterprise. This broadens our students' choices while providing a clear pathway for them to develop as global citizens. Gifted and talented students in Key Stage 4 may take some subjects at the end of Year 10, enabling them to deepen their understanding in key areas by studying courses such as English as a First Language or Statistics. This allows them to achieve up to 12 IGCSE qualifications. At Key Stage 5, students may choose to pursue the Cambridge International Project Qualification, gaining valuable experience in independent research and enhancing their competitiveness when applying to international universities.

We place a strong emphasis on professional development, providing comprehensive training and opportunities for collaboration amongst our teachers. Classroom observations, peer observations, learning walks, and SMT drop-ins, accompanied by feedback and targets for improvements, help to improve learning and teaching. Teachers are also given a voice when it comes to their own professional development; as a school, we set up programmes and opportunities tailored to their needs and input, e.g. courses such as OLEVI training, QIS Leadership Networking and Thinking Moves.

Effective practices are shared in various ways, e.g. the academy's appraisal process, professional development days, department meetings, staff meetings, and workshops. Middle management monitors effective differentiation and scaffolding to impact on learning. There are opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration.

Students are provided the opportunity to feedback on their learning through peer and self-assessment. The teachers use this feedback to adapt lesson plans that meet the needs of all learners. This is demonstrated by high quality starters and plenary activities. This also allows the teacher to use higher order questioning that stretches the learning of all students. Teachers are also expected to apply assessment for learning strategies that feed into carefully scaffolded lessons. A key function of the role of Team Leaders and Subject Leads is to ensure that these practices are well embedded. Holistic feedback is received through student and parent questionnaires as well as direct feedback from the parents to the parent liaison officer.

CIS Response

NIA Smash does not have a definition of high-quality learning and teaching; however, teachers follow some shared strategies, such as starting each lesson with a recall and following the Smash *high five*, which are non-negotiables within the class expectations. The quality assurance process for teachers includes class observations and an appraisal system, which includes the setting of targets. Teachers share good practice, and lesson planning is expected to reflect that students do not learn in the same way, with examples of opportunities to differentiate and scaffold learning for the students. Teachers celebrate student achievements and use student interests and the local environment as a means of engaging students in their learning. The school has a focus on ensuring that students have the English language skills to be able to access the curriculum, and in the older grades, the school offers a variety of subjects in both English as a first and second language. The school has assigned a coordinator for gifted students and a separate coordinator for talented students. Teachers are made



aware of students who have been identified as either gifted or talented, and each lesson is designed with provisions to challenge all students according to their needs.

The school conducts mid- and end-of-term assessments, which are used to track student progress and alert strengths and areas requiring development. Parents receive student report cards each term, and the school conducts parent-teacher conferences each term. There is an open-door policy for parents to come and discuss their child's progress, as well as a designated parent liaison officer whom they may approach with any questions. The school does not conduct student-led or three-way conferences.

The school website has limited information about the curriculum, and the reader is redirected to a separate document that provides some information about the program within the different sections of the school. Likewise, there is no information about NIA Smash results and college applications. The Newton Group webpages merge some limited information about alumni from the group as a whole.

The students shared numerous learning experiences which they enjoyed across a range of different subjects. They noted that the teachers were always available to support them and provide time for them to ask questions in class. In addition, they spoke about informational posters around school which highlighted ways in which they could seek help with their work. Students in Primary and Secondary talked about differentiated learning in their classes. They stated that they thought it was a good idea to provide different worksheets for students to support their learning.

Developmental Considerations

The Academic Leadership team should consider leading the teaching staff in a collaborative development of a school-wide definition of high-quality learning and teaching so that they have a shared understanding of what this looks like in practice.

Whilst updating the Newton Group website, the Board and Academic Leadership should ensure that information on NIA Smash's webpages provide adequate and up to date information about the curriculum and teaching practices at the school so that prospective families and teachers are able to understand the school's offering, as well as college and awarded grades information pertaining to NIA Smash graduates.

The Academic Leadership team should consider exploring the potential benefits of expanding the current parent-teacher conferences to include a three-way conference and/or student-led conferences so that students are able to play a participatory role in their learning journey.

Well-Being

School Response

NIA Smash is committed to the wellbeing and protection of all members of our school community. We demonstrate this commitment through robust policies, staff training and a nurturing school environment. We foster a culture of openness, encouraging all employees, students and parents to share concerns and talk about their wellbeing and mental health. NIA Smash has been awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools (WAS)



that focuses on changing the long-term wellbeing culture. We have implemented our own wellbeing vision, 'Together for a healthier, happier school, supporting minds, bodies and hearts'. Surveys, suggestion boxes and a wellbeing committee provide stakeholders with a voice to keep wellbeing and mental health at the forefront. Employee initiatives such as staff Arabic lessons and team building activities, build rapport and supportive relationships. Opportunities to thank and acknowledge employee performances are plentiful, including weekly 'Staff in the Spotlight' nominations and 'Thankful Thursday'.

The roles and responsibilities are clearly defined within the school structure and all employees sign a job description and a written declaration that they understand and will adhere to safeguarding protocols. Strict safeguarding procedures are followed to protect all parties, led by a Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs). Our Child Protection policy aligns with UK guidelines (including KCSIE updates) and ensures all employees within the school are equipped to recognise and respond to concerns. All employees are safeguarding trained, this includes all auxiliary employees, e.g. cleaners and security guards who have limited English. The principal platform for safeguarding training is EduCare. NIA Smash has a designated HR officer who ensures that the academy adheres to strict recruitment guidance; all staff are recruited and employed through a safe recruitment process. References are checked and police clearances are in place to ensure all staff are eligible and safe to work with children. Further school policies include Health and Safety, Behaviour Management, Anti Bullying, Counselling, Spiritual Moral Social and Emotional Policy. All external appointments must be approved by the CEO and the Principal conducts random compliance checks on the Single Central Record.

Our Pastoral team and School Counsellor, follow up daily and support student's pastoral needs. Any child protection concerns are dealt with confidentiality by the safeguarding team. Concerns are logged using a secure form, alerting the DSLs immediately. A QR code found in school and on the online learning platforms, allows pupils to refer themselves for support. Additionally, we implement positive behaviour for learning strategies, support with emotional regulation and hold assemblies celebrating successes.

Platforms such as Class Dojo and Teams provide parents with information to further support their child's emotional wellbeing. We engage in supportive networks such as Flourishing Minds and the Mind Institute to ensure systems and external partnerships are in place to support different types of emotional and mental health needs. Students play a crucial role in creating a positive and inclusive environment. Students are taught how to use their voices effectively through a number of forums, e.g. school council, student surveys and various student leadership roles.

CIS Response

Staff and student well-being are prioritized at NIA Smash. The school's BSO accreditation report highlights the good work that the school has undertaken to ensure the well-being of the students and community as a whole. The school has established a support structure that includes three nurses and clinics, a counselor, and a dedicated pastoral team who work with the staff to ensure that students are monitored and supported. Well-being and mental health are embedded into lesson plans, and well-being posters are visible around the school, providing support and



information about how to act if needed. The school counselor sends out a letter once a week with useful advice on matters such as the importance of getting enough sleep. School assemblies address relevant themes regarding well-being, and there is a focus on building resilience in students.

The school meets regularly with the MOE to ensure that it meets the local health and safety requirements. The staff receive regular safeguarding training, and students and parents are surveyed to understand if they feel safe at school. Posters provide information to the community related to safeguarding and how to take action. All staff receive first aid training. The staff note that the school takes good care of them. Staff feedback impacts how things are done, and staff feel that they are listened to. New staff are met at the airport and support is in place to help them settle in and adapt to their new school and surroundings. They are provided with a SIM card for their phones, given a start-up fund, assigned a staff buddy, and taken on tours of the local surroundings. The Well-Being team helps to ensure that staff are taken care of, and staff activities, such as the staff sports day, help to build the community spirit.

Last academic year, NIA Smash graduated its first two graduates and anticipates that the graduating class will increase in size each year. The school has allocated the role of career ambassadors who work with the college counselor on matters related to careers and college counseling. Counseling is provided to ensure that students have the right qualifications for their college and course choice, and there are workshops on how to write a personal statement as well as opportunities for scholarships and bursaries. The college counseling focuses on applications to universities in Qatar and the UK, the destination of the first and current graduating classes.

The students spoke very positively about the support that they receive from the teachers and pastoral teams. They appreciate the variety of extracurricular activities (ECA) that are offered, although they would like the school to consider letting the students run some additional ECAs. They noted that they have many different leadership opportunities and channels for student voice. They would like to see the number of PE lessons increase and diversify. They feel safe at school and enjoy being a part of a caring and friendly school where staff and students look out for each other.

Developmental Considerations

The Board and Leadership team should consider ways to carefully monitor the careers and college counseling needs of a growing high school to ensure that there will be sufficient staffing in place to support students in their future pathways, which may extend beyond Qatar and the UK.

The Academic Leadership team should consider reviewing the current weekly PE classes to increase these and align with the school's emphasis on student well-being. It may be beneficial to collate student feedback on the potential PE class.



Global Citizenship

School Response

NIA Smash is committed to fostering global citizenship and intercultural learning through community engagement, curriculum development, and cultural celebrations. We create an inclusive environment where students develop a strong understanding of global issues, cultural diversity, and responsible citizenship.

A significant aspect of our commitment to global citizenship is its involvement in community service initiatives, e.g. a beach cleanup organised as part of their IGCSE Global Citizenship project. These experiences promote environmental awareness and instill a sense of responsibility for global concerns, encouraging students to take meaningful action beyond their immediate surroundings.

Integrating subjects such as global citizenship, global perspectives, history, geography and environmental management into the curriculum is another fundamental component of our educational strategy. Students develop a deeper understanding of international affairs. They critically examine challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and human rights issues, ensuring they gain both academic knowledge and the skills necessary to become informed global citizens.

Qatar actively encourages schools to invest in its '2030 Vision'. The purpose of the 2030 vision is to involve Qatar in international events such as 'World Economic Forum', Qatar Expo 2023 and various sporting events, e.g. Qatar's bid for the upcoming 2032 Olympic Games with Saudi Arabia. The school supports these initiatives by sending students to participate in arranged events organised by the Qatari government. Cultural diversity is celebrated across the school, reinforcing its commitment to multiculturalism, e.g. International Day, International Teacher's Day and International Woman's Day. Students showcase their heritage through traditional attire, performances, and cuisine. These activities promote mutual respect and cultural appreciation, helping students recognise the richness of global diversity while strengthening their own sense of identity.

Character development is also a key focus at NIA Smash. Weekly assemblies highlight global themes and celebrate occasions like Anti-Bullying Week. Character Education and Philosophy for Children (P4C) sessions encourage ethical reasoning and discussions on important global topics, fostering critical thinking and meaningful dialogue among students.

Peer reading between primary and secondary students further promotes intercultural learning. Student suggestion boxes, and the school council empower students to play an active role in shaping the school community, enhancing leadership and participation skills.

A positive school culture is reinforced through a reward system that includes DOJO points, achievement points, and house points. Annual sports events, mindfulness sessions, and extracurricular activities support students' well-being, teamwork, and personal growth. Additionally, careers education, career fayres, and guest speaker sessions expose students to international career opportunities, preparing them for an



increasingly interconnected world, e.g. students go on to study at universities around the world.

Educational visits and participation in sporting Olympiads provide students with firsthand exposure to diverse cultures. The international trip to Madrid, Spain, allows students to experience different cultures, broadening their global perspectives and appreciation for diversity.

Through its dedication to community service, curriculum integration, cultural celebrations, and extracurricular activities, NIA Smash effectively nurtures global citizenship and intercultural learning. The school ensures that students become open-minded, socially responsible individuals who contribute positively to an interconnected and diverse world.

CIS Response

All schools in the Newton Group of Schools share the Mission and Vision, and this includes reference to global citizenship. NIA Smash integrates global citizenship into the curriculum in both Primary and Secondary schools. In the Secondary School, it is a taught program (up to Key Stage 4), in addition to a course on global perspectives. In Primary School, it is taught through global themes, in addition to offering courses in citizenship and character education. While NIA Smash does not have a definition of global citizenship, conversations with the leadership team indicated that the school is implementing activities and student opportunities, in addition to the curriculum, that support the development of global citizens.

After a little prompting from the NIA Smash staff member present, the students were able to reference some global citizen characteristics. They spoke about several activities that the school offered that helped them to develop their respect for others and the environment. They also referenced examples of curriculum content that addressed global issues.

Developmental Considerations

The school should consider working with the students, staff, and parents to develop a definition of global citizenship, ensuring that there is a shared understanding of what this means to the NIA Smash community.

Conclusion

Newton International Academy, Smash is a school that places high expectations on all stakeholders to build the community and deliver a high-quality education to its students. The staff believe that the community is highly ambitious, and they feel that they have achieved a great deal in a relatively short time. The staff identifies as a community of learners with their own goals, as well as being a member of the Newton Group of schools with a set of shared values. The school walks and talks about their commitment to well-being and is proud of the recognition that they have received for these endeavors.



The CIS Evaluator would like to thank Michael Wilson, Principal of NIA Smash, CEO and Board representatives, members of the leadership team, staff, and student representatives, for their openness and engaging conversations during the virtual visit.

CIS looks forward to supporting NIA Smash on its ongoing journey of self-improvement and the exciting and rewarding times ahead.