



ABINGDON

Educational Guardians Policy and Guidance for Parents and Guardians

1. Introduction

Every pupil whose parents live outside the UK for some or all of the time are required to have an educational guardian appointed by their parents. Effective educational guardianship is essential to a successful boarding experience. Guardians ensure that international students have a consistent means of support and suitable accommodation outside of the School whenever it is required.

All students remaining in the UK during the school holidays must **always** stay with an adult over 25, whether that is a guardian or parent. They should not stay by themselves or with friends without an adult being present. This also applies to students who are over the age of 18. **Parents must inform their Head of House of these arrangements so they can be kept on file.**

It is very important for the welfare of the pupil that their educational guardian is actively interested in their education and wellbeing and lives close enough for the pupil to stay during holidays, to collect them and look after them if needed for any reason during term or during extraordinary circumstances such as school closures.

2. UKVI Requirements for Sponsored Students

Changes to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) guidance were made in May 2025 (updated 11 November 2025) relating to the appointment of guardians for sponsored Child Student visa holders and the School, as a licensed Child Student sponsor, has a legal duty to ensure that appropriate care arrangements are in place at all times for sponsored pupils and that these arrangements comply with UKVI sponsor guidance. These very specifically cover the undertaking of the educational guardian to ensure safeguarding of child student visa holders. The current guidance is [here](#).

3. Responsibilities of Parents

The selection of an appropriate guardian is the sole responsibility of the parents. The School will not recommend or arrange guardianship on behalf of parents. Responsibility for the welfare of pupils while in the care of their guardians, and while travelling to and from their guardians, rests solely with the parents and not with the School.

Parents must:

- Appoint an appropriate educational guardian who is either:
 - an accredited guardians from the [AEGIS](#) (the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students) website or the [BSA](#) (Boarding Schools' Association) website list; or
 - a nominated close family member or friend who must be able to meet in full the criteria below.
- Satisfy themselves that the guardian is a fit and suitable person to have care of their child.
- Complete and sign the School's 'letter of undertaking'.
- Promptly notify the School of any changes to the guardian's contact details.
- Inform the Head of House of all holiday, leave and travel arrangements in writing. **Travel information provided to the School must be accurate and must include full travel details (dates, times, flight numbers) and any host family addresses.** It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that they satisfy themselves that they are happy with all transport arrangements, including the safety of taxi services being used. Only taxi companies whose drivers are DBS checked should be used. Parents are also responsible for ensuring that travel arrangements comply with the School's requirements for timings of arrival and departure in the Boarding Handbook. Arrivals to School are usually between 17:00 and 21:00 the evening before published term starts and departures from School are by 17:00 on the last published day of term or 18:00 the day before a half term break.

4. Suitability of Educational Guardians

Parents are responsible for appointing a suitable educational guardian but the School reserves the right, if necessary, to reject any guardianship arrangements that it considers unsuitable or non-compliant with UKVI regulations.

Heads of House and parents will both oversee how the appointed educational guardians are doing. In certain circumstances, a Head of House may discuss with parents the suitability of a particular guardian and the School expects that the parents will take the necessary action in the best interests of their child.

Suitable guardians must be able to undertake all the responsibilities of an educational guardian as set out in this policy. The School therefore requires that educational guardians must:

- Be from an accredited guardianship agency or a close friend or relative.
- Be independent of the School (school staff may not be appointed as guardians under any circumstances).
- Be resident in the UK and a British citizen or with settled status that is not time-limited.
- Live within 90 minutes travel of the School.
- Be a responsible adult aged over 25 and not in full time education with adequate experience to meet the student's needs.
- Be able to provide appropriate accommodation with a bedroom for the student - student/university accommodation is not suitable.
- Be able to meet the other needs of the student as required during school holidays or for any required absence from school during term time (e.g. providing food and appropriate activities).
- Be available at short notice (including same-day collection where reasonably required) in order to collect and look after the student as required for any absence from school, including illness, a significant pastoral concern or disciplinary reasons.
- Be able to communicate effectively verbally and in writing with the School, parents and the student.
- Take an active and caring interest in the student's safety, welfare and wellbeing, including attending meetings or events at the School in the parents' absence.

Appendix A includes the **Top 10 Questions to ask Guardians** as recommended by [AEGIS](#) which parents may also find helpful in selecting a guardian.

5. Responsibilities of Educational Guardians

The guardian's role is to promote the welfare, physical wellbeing, and emotional wellbeing of the boarder. Key responsibilities will include:

- Providing suitable accommodation during all school holidays, including half terms, ensuring that an adult is always present, including where the student is over 18. If the pupil will be staying with the guardian for more than 28 consecutive days, you must contact the School.
- Collecting the student and looking after them if they need to leave school unexpectedly for any reason including due to illness, a significant pastoral concern, disciplinary reasons or

for any other reason whereby the School considers it is not suitable or possible for them to board at school.

- Providing a 24/7 point of contact for the School. Please note that guardians will be included in all correspondence (excluding school fee invoice correspondence) unless parents have agreed another arrangement with the school.
- Ensuring safe transportation to and from airports and the School. This will include temporarily hosting/accommodating pupils whose flights arrive before or depart significantly after the end and start of terms (arrivals to School are between 17:00 and 21:00 the evening before published term starts and departures from School are by 17:00 on the last published day of term or 18:00 the day before a half term break). The school cannot accommodate boarders before the publicised start of term or after the publicised end of term and they are not able to access the Boarding House at any stage over the School holidays.
- Engaging actively in and supporting the student's life at school including attending welcome events at the start of term, parents' evenings or school concerts or events in which they are participating wherever possible.

The Guardian must sign a 'Letter of Undertaking' which will be submitted with the student's visa application. ESP Solicitors will provide a template for this.

6. The Responsibilities of the School

The School, through the Boarding Heads of House, will monitor the provision of guardians, in line with the [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#) and [UKVI guidance](#). They will be supported by the Admissions Department. The School will:

- Ensure that all pupils whose parents live internationally have a named guardian before the pupil enrolls in the school.
- Ensure that guardian contact information is kept up to date where changes have been notified to the School by the parents.
- Ensure that each guardian (or guardianship organisation) of sponsored Child Student visa holders has signed a 'letter of undertaking' (this letter covers all the elements required by UKVI).
- Take all reasonable care and measures to check that guardians who visit the School have been verified and approved by the parents.
- Keep accurate records of when pupils are discharged to the care of their guardians.

- Keep accurate records of pupils' travel and transport arrangements in line with UKVI requirements.
- Take appropriate care to ensure that guardians are promoting the welfare, physical well-being and emotional wellbeing of the boarder. This will be done through appropriate discussions with the boarder both before being discharged into the care of their guardian, and on return to school. This welfare check information is kept on file.
- Take immediate action if any concerns arise about an educational guardianship arrangement by notifying parents and referring to any relevant agencies.
- Provide advice and information to parents and guardians to aid travel arrangements, such as a list of taxi companies which have been used by students before - it is the parents' responsibility to satisfy themselves both that the transport arrangements are safe and that they comply with the School's requirements regarding arrival and departure timings and term dates.
- Promptly notify parents and guardians of any issues concerning the pupil which require the guardian's support, including mental or physical illness or behavioural concerns, including exclusion.

7. School Oversight and Failure to Meet Responsibilities

The School reserves the right to review and, if necessary, reject any guardianship or homestay arrangements that it deems unsuitable or non-compliant with UKVI regulations.

If an appointed guardian fails to meet their responsibilities or a parent fails to arrange for their child to be cared for by a suitable guardian at any point where this is required, such as if they are unwell, or a return flight to the UK arrives early or their return flight from the UK is delayed, the School has the right to take action. This may include:

- Appointing an emergency guardian at the parents' expense.
- Charging administrative and chaperone costs.
- Notifying relevant external agencies, including the UKVI where relevant.
- Withdrawal of Sponsorship: Continued failure to maintain a suitable guardianship arrangement or follow the school's boarding and guardianship requirements (including failure to provide accurate travel information or comply with rules regarding departure and arrival at School) may result in the School being unable to continue its sponsorship of the student's visa, which would require the student to leave the School.

Appendix A

Top 10 Questions to ask Guardians (as recommended by AEGIS)

- Are you AEGIS or BSA accredited and when was your company last inspected by AEGIS or BSA?
- Can you provide a caring host family that matches the needs of my child?
- Will my child have the same host family every holiday?
- Will the host family be in a convenient location, close to the school?
- How often will the educational guardian visit my child at school?
- Do you provide a student handbook which helps my child understand your role as educational guardian and clearly explains who to contact in different circumstances?
- Is there bilingual support for parents and children?
- How much is your service and are there any additional costs?
- Are your drivers DBS checked?
- What response time can I expect to emails?