

St Edmund's School Guardianship Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out St Edmund's school's requirements and expectations relating to educational guardianship for international students whose parents live overseas. Its purpose is to ensure clarity of responsibilities, safeguard pupil welfare, and comply with the school's legal obligations, including those relating to Child Student visa sponsorship and boarding standards.

It applies to all international pupils at St Edmund's school who require a UK-based guardian regardless of age.

2. Definition of an Educational Guardian

An *Educational Guardian* is a responsible adult appointed by a pupil's parents or legal guardians to act in loco parentis when the pupil is in the United Kingdom. The guardian provides support, representation, and care for the pupil outside normal school hours and during holidays, in line with this policy. **St Edmund's School only accepts guardianship arrangements made through accredited Education Guardian Agencies.** Private or informal guardianship arrangements (e.g., with family friends or relatives) are not permitted.

3. Guardian Eligibility and Appointment

3.1 Requirements for Guardians

Guardians must:

- Be registered with and accredited by the **Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS)** or an equivalent recognised body.
- Provide **24-hour emergency contact** and pastoral support.
- Be able to respond immediately in case of an emergency.
- Ensure that accommodation provided during holidays and exets meets **UK safeguarding standards**.
- Be located within a **two-hour travel radius** of the school.
- Be at least **25 years of age** to ensure maturity and responsibility in handling student welfare.
- Provide a **homestay address** and full details of hosts if applicable.
- Be a **UK citizen or hold settled status**.
- Have a sufficient level of **English proficiency** to communicate effectively with the school and emergency services.
- Confirm that they, or anyone regularly residing at the above address, **have not been convicted of a criminal offence** in the UK or overseas.

3.2 School Approval

The guardian must be **approved by the school prior to enrolment**. St Edmund's reserves the right to determine the acceptability of any guardianship arrangements and request alternative provision if necessary.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of Guardians

Educational Guardians should:

4.1 Welfare and Support

- Act *in loco parentis* on behalf of parents in emergencies.
- Provide a **24-hour point of contact** for parents, pupils, and the school.
- Offer pastoral and educational support, ensuring pupils' wellbeing and adaptation to life in the UK.

4.2 Communication

- Maintain regular contact with the pupil's Head of House and pastoral staff.
- Attend school meetings (e.g., Parents' Evenings) when parents cannot attend.

4.3 Travel and Accommodation

- Liaise with the school regarding travel and accommodation arrangements for exeat weekends, half-terms, and holidays to ensure that the school can maintain accurate records of pupils' whereabouts during exeat weekends, weekends, and holiday periods.
- Ensure appropriate transport arrangements are in place for arrival, departure, and holiday periods.

4.4 Emergency and Medical Matters

- Make decisions ordinarily made by a parent, including providing consent for **routine and emergency medical treatment** when parents are unavailable.
- Assist with visa or immigration matters if required.

4.5 Respect and Safeguarding

- Respect the rights, religion, and customs of the pupil and adhere to best practice in child welfare and safeguarding.

5. Safeguarding and Compliance

- Guardianship arrangements are subject to the School's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.
- The school will keep records of all guardianship agreements and may conduct interviews or request further information as needed.
- In the event of concerns regarding a guardian, the school will act in accordance with its safeguarding obligations.
- If the details of the guardian change at any point while the named child is studying at St Edmund's, the school must be informed immediately.

6. Contingency Where Arrangements Fail

If suitable guardianship arrangements are not in place or break down, the school will take immediate action to ensure the pupil's safety and welfare, including arranging alternative approved accommodation or supervision, informing parents/agents as appropriate, and reviewing visa sponsorship compliance where required.

7. Private Foster Care Arrangements

For pupils under 16 (or under 18 if disabled), any guardian providing care for 28 days or more is offering a *Private Foster Care Arrangement* under the Children Act 2004. Where this applies, the guardian must have appropriate local authority approval prior to the arrangement; the school will require evidence of such approval. Failure to provide appropriate approvals will be referred to the relevant local authority.

8. Documentation and Record-keeping

For each guardian, the school must hold:

- Signed Guardianship Nomination Form from both parents
- Signed Guardianship Agreement
- Proof of the guardian's identity and UK residence
- Emergency contact details
- Approval confirmation from accredited Guardianship Agencies, if applicable

9. Policy Confirmation and review

This policy has been approved and confirmed as the official framework for ensuring compliance with the school's responsibilities, including safeguarding, welfare oversight, and UKVI sponsorship obligations. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure ongoing compliance with legislation, UKVI requirements, and best practice in pupil welfare.

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