St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Guardianship Policy

This policy is the responsibility of the UKVI Authorising Officer.

Last review: March 26

Next review: March 28

Introduction

International students bring diversity and enrichment to St Mary's School, Cambridge (the School). The staff at the School provide vital support to international students, aiding integration and helping students make the most of their time in the UK. Educational guardians provide extra support to students, ensuring their welfare within and outside of the School grounds. An educational guardian acts as the overseas parents' representative in the UK and is independent of the School.

The types of services they offer include are:

- arranging homestay accommodation and airport transfers,
- attending parents' evenings
- supporting the student during their stay in the UK.

Aims

The aim of this policy is:

- to explain to parents and educational guardians the School's expectations regarding educational guardianship, including the responsibilities expected of an educational guardian;
- to ensure that parents understand that the School has the right to reject the arrangements planned for a student beyond the School's jurisdiction if deemed unacceptable or inappropriate by the School. The parents would then be expected to seek alternative arrangements deemed acceptable by the School and the School would be under no obligation to provide a place or continued place at the School if no arrangements deemed acceptable by the School can be put in place;
- to ensure parents and educational guardians understand the level and type of communication expected by the School;
- to provide the basis of a guardianship agreement for the educational guardian and one or both parents to sign (subject to custody arrangements).

Educational Guardian requirements

It is the overseas parents' responsibility to appoint an educational guardian for their child. It is important that parents choose a responsible adult and one they feel confident will support their child in day-to-day circumstances, as well as in emergencies. If the student requires a visa under a Child Student, the intended carer in the UK must also meet the requirements set by the Home Office. The parents should also consider the support the guardian will

provide to the student in the absence of the parents such as emotional, academic and, if applicable, religious guidance.

It is strongly recommended that parents consult the AEGIS website. AEGIS is an organisation which oversees the running of guardianship organisations and ensures that they are fully accredited. AEGIS may be contacted either by telephone on +44 (0)1453 755160 or visit www.aegisuk.net. Parents may appoint family member, or alternatively if they know someone living in the UK who is suitable for this role.

The educational guardian should be of a minimum age of 25 and regardless of age, the guardian should not, ideally, be a university student themselves. By age 25, a person is likely to have proven they are a responsible adult: that may have been employed, lived independently, paid bills, have experience of driving. They may also be more emotionally mature and able to provide a safe environment for the student.

The educational guardian should have UK residency and live within 50 miles of the School.

The educational guardian should be English speaking so that they can converse easily with the School in matters pertaining to the student (it is not necessary for English to be a first language).

The educational guardian must provide their full contact details to the School and agree to keep the School informed of any changes immediately. In the event that the guardian is out of the country, or unavailable for any period of time, an alternative UK contact must be arranged, and details communicated to the School.

The educational guardian must be available 24 hours a day in case of emergency.

Excellent communication is required of the educational guardian, keeping the School informed of all travel and accommodation arrangements, in writing, with at least one week's notice (email is preferred).

Any homestay accommodation arranged by the educational guardian must be safe, appropriately supervised, and of a good standard. Unsupervised hotel, B & B, hostel or rental accommodation are not considered acceptable. Parental approval must be sought by the educational guardian for such an arrangement and the School must be in agreement.

An educational guardian is expected to attend parents' evenings and is welcome to visit the School by appointment, in order to stay in contact with their student. Guardians must follow the visitor's policy.

An educational guardian must be available to host the student in exceptional circumstances, such as owing to illness or disciplinary issues and must be fully responsible for making travel and accommodation arrangements for the student during these times.

An educational guardian is expected to uphold the ethos and values of the school at all times.

An educational guardian is expected to respect and support the rights, religion and customs of the international student.

An educational guardian must ensure that all legal documents (e.g. passport, visa) are valid and arrange renewal when necessary.

In the event that there is a change in educational guardian and an alternative appointed, the School must be informed in writing immediately.

The Head will inform parents if they consider that the nominated educational guardian is not suitable. The parents will be charged for the full cost of any emergency arrangements which need to be made by the School until a suitable educational guardian is found.

Visa Requirements

The Child Student immigration route is for children between the ages 4 to 17 who wish to study at an independent school in the UK. More information can be found: Child Student visa: Overview - GOV.UK

In the student sponsor guidance, the Home Office have been introducing an additional duty on Child Student sponsors, requiring us to make reasonable endeavours to collect information on travel arrangements for students with a nominated guardian. Sponsors will have to:

- keep records of when the child is arriving;
- record details of the person collecting the child;
- record where the child will be staying if they are not proceeding directly to school;
- report to the relevant authority if the child does not enrol at school.

As part of being a Child Student sponsor, it is the School's duty to ensure the safeguarding of all its' students. Any privately appointed educational guardian who is not AEGIS registered will be required to come into School annually (within the first half term of the student joining the School) and bring documentation which School will hold on file to comply with UKVI inspections to confirm their identity.

An educational guardian will therefore need to provide copies of their:

- Passport
- Birth certificate
- Any associated visa/BRP
- A utility bill confirming the address that the school will hold on record as to where the student will go during holidays etc
- If working, their National Insurance number