



LORD
WANDSWORTH
COLLEGE

GUARDIANSHIP POLICY

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Robert Hannington
Chairman of Governors

Guardianship Policy

Introduction

International students bring diversity and enrichment to UK schools. College pastoral staff provide vital support to international students, aiding integration and helping pupils get the most out of their time in the UK.

Educational guardians provide extra support to students, ensuring their welfare in and out of College grounds. An educational guardian acts as the overseas parents' representative in the UK and is independent of the College. The types of services they offer include; arranging homestay accommodation and airport transfers, attending parents' evenings and generally supporting the pupil during their stay in the UK.

All parents resident abroad must arrange full guardianship support for their child/children while they are pupils at Lord Wandsworth College.

All guardians must be resident in the UK and able to act with the full authority of the parents.

The choice of guardian is the responsibility of the parent; the College can accept no legal responsibility for any guardianship arrangements. The College expects the guardianship arrangements to meet the expectations outlined in this policy and may request a change of guardian if it has concerns about a guardian's suitability.

Aim

The overriding consideration is our duty of care to our pupils. This policy is constructed to be straightforward and workable.

Our aim is to take into consideration the interests and preferences of the various parties affected by guardianship arrangements for pupils from overseas. These parties include: UK authorities; the College's administration and monitoring personnel; houseparents; the parents of the pupil; guardians and guardianship agencies; recruiting agencies; our international pupils.

This policy is intended explain to both parents and educational guardians the College's expectations regarding educational guardianship, including the responsibilities expected of an educational guardian. It outlines, as per the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, Standard 22, that the College must be satisfied that the guardianship arrangement promotes the welfare, physical and emotional wellbeing of the boarder and that concerns about an educational guardianship arrangement will be acted upon immediately and referred to relevant agencies.

Eligibility of Guardians and Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of parents to appoint an educational guardian for their child. It is important that the parents choose a responsible adult and one they feel confident will support their child in day-to-day circumstances, as well as in emergencies. The College may be able to provide details of organisations who have acted as guardians to pupils in the past but does not recommend any specific agency or individual. Parents must fully satisfy themselves as to the suitability of their chosen guardian.

Guardianship Policy

- Parents may appoint a close friend or family member (see below note on UK residency), or alternatively an AEGIS accredited guardian, www.aegisuk.net.
- It is advisable that a contract is in place between the parent and guardian.
- The educational guardian should be at least 25 years old and should not be a university student themselves. This is to ensure that the guardian can provide a safe environment and has adequate emotional maturity to fully support a pupil.
- The guardian must have a permanent or semi-permanent place of residence in the UK, independent of any educational institution.

The educational guardian should have UK residency and live within two hours of the College (by car or public transport).

- The guardian must speak sufficient English to communicate adequately with the College.
- If the child requires a visa under the Student Visa Route the intended carer in the UK must also meet the requirements set by the Home Office
- The educational guardian must be independent of the College (as per NMS 22.5)
- The educational guardian must provide their full contact details to the College 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 College.
- The educational guardian must be available 24 hours a day in case of emergency.
- Excellent communication is required of the educational guardian, keeping the College informed of all travel and accommodation arrangements, in writing, with at least one week's notice (email is preferred). The College may require a meeting or regular contact with the guardian e.g. email or telephone updates once a week. For this reason, the educational guardian should be English speaking (it is not necessary for English to be a first language, but a minimum level of fluency is required).
- 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 is not considered acceptable.
- The educational guardian is expected to attend parents' evenings and is welcome to visit the College by appointment in order to stay in contact with their student.
- The educational guardian is expected to uphold the ethos and values of the College at all times.
- The educational guardian is expected to respect and support the rights, religion and customs of the international student.
- An educational guardian must be prepared to support the renewal and validity of all legal documents (e.g. passport, visa) so that they are valid.
- In the event that there is a change in educational guardian and an alternative appointed, the school/college must be informed in writing immediately.

The College can also consider whether or not they require the guardian to undertake any form of safeguarding training, at their own cost or at the guardian's cost to ensure that they are aware of potential safeguarding risks. The school/college will need to be satisfied about the care arrangements prior to issuing a certificate of sponsorship (CAS). Evidence will need to be submitted with the visa application. The College will need to be notified of any changes whilst the student is in the UK.

Guardianship Policy

It is important to note that LWC has the right to reject the arrangements planned for a child beyond the College's jurisdiction if deemed unacceptable or inappropriate by the school. The parents would then be expected to seek alternative arrangements deemed acceptable by the College and the school would be under no obligation to provide a place or continued place at the LWC if no arrangements deemed acceptable by the College can be put in place.

Private Foster Care Arrangements

Private foster care is an arrangement where someone, other than a close relative, provides care and accommodation for a child under the age of 16 years for 28 consecutive days or more. The local authority should be told about a private fostering arrangement at least six weeks before the start of an arrangement or in an emergency, within 48 hours. Failure to notify the local authority of a private fostering arrangement is an offence, and could risk a fine.

Where the College is sponsoring the child under Student Route, the local authority will need to be informed of the name of the foster carer and the address where the foster carer and the student will live as soon as they become aware that the child has arrived in the UK or as soon as they become aware of the change if the child is already in the UK. In some cases, this may require the College submitting further evidence for the new care arrangement on behalf of the child to the Home Office.

Guardians are asked to provide evidence of approvals from the local authority for any student in a private foster care arrangement.

Visa Requirements

As a Student Route sponsor, the College has certain responsibilities it has to meet. Appointing a reliable educational guardian is one way of ensuring that suitable care arrangements are in place. The CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study) will not be issued until the College is satisfied with the guardianship arrangements and that confirmation has been obtained that the educational guardian meets the Home Office requirements.

Guardianship Policy

Appendix A: Emergency Guardianship Cover

Our emergency cover is provided by Alpha Plus. In lieu of full and permanent cover, parents agree that for an annual fee, Alpha Plus will step in and take care of their child in any case of emergency until the parent is able to make other satisfactory arrangements. An additional daily rate (per 24 hours or part thereof) will be charged should emergency cover be required. Please contact the agency directly for current fee information.

If the parents are not able to collect their child from Alpha Plus in person, the school or Alpha Plus reserve the right, if in their opinion the arrangements are not satisfactory, to insist that the pupil remains in the care of Alpha Plus.

In an emergency the Deputy Head Pastoral (or in his/her absence, the Headmaster) will make the decision to invoke emergency cover. They will first contact the parent and, where appropriate, the recruiting agency. To avoid emergency cover being invoked, the parent or agency must be able to arrive at the school within 12 hours. If it proves impossible to contact the parent or agency, emergency cover will be invoked.

Emergency cover will be deemed necessary if:

- the pupil has contracted an illness and the school nurse considers it important that the pupil be removed from the school campus
- the pupil is seriously distressed, emotionally or psychologically and needs to be away from school
- the pupil has had an accident and requires prolonged treatment off site
- the pupil has been disciplined and this results in suspension or exclusion
- The College is required to close due to an epidemic or pandemic

Emergency cover under other circumstances

The College reserves the right to invoke emergency cover if the guardianship arrangements put in place by parents fail. The College will nominate an emergency guardianship agency, the cost of which will be borne by the parents.

Where full and permanent guardianship has been deemed by the College to have failed, the College will insist that a new arrangement is put in place to meet the requirements of the **Eligibility of Guardians and Responsibilities** section of this policy. The new guardianship arrangements must be in place within four weeks of being asked by the College to make a new arrangement.

Invoicing for emergency cover

The College will invoice parents for emergency cover through the termly billing procedure.