OUNDLE
School

Education Guardianship Policy

The Corporation of Oundle School includes both Oundle School, a boarding and day School for pupils aged 11 – 18 and Laxton Junior School, a day School for pupils aged 4 - 11. This policy applies solely to Oundle School.

Introduction

This policy outlines the responsibilities of guardianship arrangements for all international pupils, including those on a Child Student Visa. It is designed to ensure compliance with UKVI requirements and to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of all pupils in our care. As a Child Student Sponsor, we have a responsibility to adhere to the UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration) regulations. Failure to comply with these can have serious repercussions for the School, including the suspension or revocation of our sponsorship licence.

It is a requirement that all parents who live overseas nominate an Education Guardian for their son or daughter to act on their behalf and as their representative while their child studies here. They will also be a point of contact if we are unable to reach parents in an emergency. It is important that pupils enjoy the relationship they have with their Education Guardian and that they look forward to spending exeats with them when these are too short to go home.

Definition of an Education Guardian

It is important to recognise the distinction between 'Education Guardian' and 'Legal Guardian'. 'Education Guardian' is not a legal term and should not be used interchangeably with a Legal Guardian. An Education Guardian is someone who has been appointed to care for international pupils in the UK, acting on behalf of the parents, when the pupil is not in school (eg. exeats, half- terms, holidays, for medical or disciplinary reasons or if the School has had to close in times of emergency).

Appointing an Education Guardian

The responsibility for appointing an Education Guardian lies solely with parents. We are not able to recommend a particular Education Guardian or Education Guardian agency, but strongly advise parents to ensure that their chosen Education Guardian is accredited by a recognised Education Guardianship agency (e.g. AEGIS or a BSA Certified Guardian under the Scheme operated by the Boarding Schools' Association). In our experience, this is the preferred option by the Home Office for those families requiring a child student visa. An Education Guardians can, however, be a relative or family friend living in the UK who is able to take on the role of guardian, as long as all UKVI and relevant safeguarding requirements are met. In all cases, parents must satisfy themselves personally that the arrangement is suitable for their child.

In order to meet UKVI requirements, we advise that an Education Guardian must be an adult individual aged 25 or over living within a reasonable distance so as to discharge their duties effectively.

They must not be in full-time education or be travelling for extensive periods and they must hold either settled status or British nationality. The Education Guardian, as well as any person usually living in their accommodation, must not have any criminal convictions. Nominated Education Guardians are required to confirm that they meet these requirements at the point of appointment and must also notify the School of any subsequent changes during their tenure.

Should we have concerns about the suitability of an Education Guardian to promote the best interests of a child, we will raise these concerns with you or through the appropriate channels. Please note than an Education Guardian cannot be a member of Oundle School staff or living in the household of a member of Oundle School staff.

An Education Guardian must be appointed before a child living overseas joins Oundle School. As part of the Admissions process, the Admissions Office sends all overseas parents an Education Guardianship Agreement which requires contact details of the chosen Education Guardian. This must be completed and signed by both parents as well as the Education Guardian, prior to their child starting at Oundle. A new pupil living overseas may not start at the School until the Education Guardian arrangements have been confirmed. Parents are responsible for ensuring that the Education Guardian has a copy of the Education Guardianship Policy.

The responsibility for carrying out any safeguarding checks rests solely with parents, but the School must agree to the suitability of the Education Guardian in line with the Education Guardianship Policy. Once appointed, we complete the necessary Agreement checks on individual Education Guardians, which includes their signed consent to the arrangement in place, proof of either their settled status or British nationality as well as proof of address. AEGIS or BSA accredited guardianship agencies undertake these checks on their guardians.

Please note that if the name, address or settled status of the appointed Education Guardian changes throughout a child's time at Oundle, parents must inform the School without delay and with as much notice as possible.

Involvement

Education Guardians will always be welcome at Oundle. We encourage taking an interest in school life by visiting the School to attend extracurricular events such as sports matches, plays and concerts. Their presence at Parents' Receptions if parents are unable to attend would be much appreciated. We encourage them to visit the pupil's boarding house and hope that they will feel at ease about contacting the Housemaster/mistress at any stage about any matter of concern. Education Guardians should let Boarding House staff know when they visit and introduce themself to staff on entering the House. Education Guardians will have access to School communication systems, including the Parent Portal and iGTM in order to facilitate involvement in their charges' School life and to support overseas parents with travel arrangements. This will not include any access to financial information. Guardians are therefore advised to be familiar with the School's Privacy Notice.

Exeats

Education Guardians will look after pupils during Exeats when necessary. If the pupil is here on a visa, details of their care, where they are staying and with whom, will be required by the Housemaster/mistress in advance.

Travel

Education Guardians are responsible for pupils on travel days whenever they are not formally in the care of the School, including journeys to and from School for Exeats and holidays. Detailed travel details must be provided to the School in advance in all cases, including when pupils are entering or leaving the United Kingdom.

Education Guardians are expected to take an overview of travel arrangements and ensure that their charges understand these arrangements. They must ensure that the pupil has their contact details, that these are included in the pupil's travel information and that the pupil understands they must contact their Education Guardian immediately if any issue arises during their journey. Education Guardians must be contactable at all times while travel is taking place and must be in a position to take responsibility for pupils in transit where necessary. This includes, but is not limited to, flight delays, cancellations, missed connections, severe weather or industrial action. In such circumstances, the Education Guardian must be able to provide suitable supervised accommodation at short notice, either directly or through appropriate alternative arrangements, and must remain contactable throughout the period of disruption. Where possible, Education Guardians are strongly encouraged to keep the School informed of any revised travel or accommodation arrangements by emailing osvisas@oundleschool.org.uk

For pupils sponsored under UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), responsibility for the pupil rests with the parent, legal guardian or appointed Education Guardian at all times when the pupil is not formally in the care of the School, including both before arrival at School and after departure from School on travel days.

Emergency permission

We anticipate that Education Guardians will have authorisation from parents to give permission in the unlikely event of an emergency operation being necessary. In a dire emergency and without any ability to contact parents or Education Guardian, we would make our own judgement in loco parentis.

Illness and Discipline

We expect Education Guardians to be prepared to look after the pupil in the event of them being unwell and in need of some home comfort, and would benefit from being in a home environment rather than the School Medical Centre or House Sick Bay, where there is limited capacity. We also expect Education Guardians to be prepared to look after the pupil in the unlikely event of suspension or expulsion.

Substitutes

If Education Guardians are out of the UK or cannot be contacted within term time during a specific time period, they must let the Housemaster/mistress know who is standing in for them.

Private Foster Care Arrangements

The following applies to any pupil under the age of 16 (or under the age of 18 if disabled):

Parents are obliged to inform the local education authority if the Education Guardian appointed for their child is not a relative (defined as: grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt and has British citizenship or settled status in the UK) or legal guardian with parental responsibility and if their child would be staying with the Education Guardian for 28 days or more. This length of stay is considered by

the state to be providing a Private Foster Care Arrangement and anyone providing a Private Foster Care Arrangement must inform and receive in advance all necessary approvals from the local borough in which they reside. Failure to do so without reasonable cause is an offence under the Children's Act 2004.

The School must inform the local authority of any Private Foster Care Arrangement where that arrangement has been made, or appears to have been made, without all necessary approvals having been properly obtained in advance from the local authority. The School will therefore require evidence of approvals from any Education Guardian who will be providing accommodation to any pupil in a Private Foster Care Arrangement.

Contact Details

For any questions relating to Education Guardianship, please contact the Admissions Office: admissions@oundlechool.org.uk.

Parents must inform the School as soon as possible should the Education Guardian for their child change at any point during the year.

Reviewer	Rachel Makhzangi
Post of Reviewer	Deputy Head Admissions
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