

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 under the age of 18, 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 exeat 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. exeat, 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). An Education Guardian 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 UKVI 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. Neither the Education Guardian, nor any person usually living in their accommodation, can have any criminal convictions. 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 that 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 your 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 an identity check on individual Education Guardians, which includes their signed consent to the arrangement in place, proof that he/she holds either settled status or British nationality and proof of address. AEGIS or BSA accredited guardianship agencies undertake the necessary Agreement checks on their guardians.

Please note that if the name and/or address 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 would 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 the parents are unable to attend would be much appreciated. We encourage them to visit the pupils boarding house as soon as term begins and we hope that they will feel quite 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 themselves to staff on entering the House.

Exeats

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

Travel

Education Guardians are expected to take an overview to ensure that their charges are aware of the travel arrangements for Exeats and holidays. They should be in a position to look after them 'in transit' when necessary. Travel details are required in advance by their Housemaster/mistress in all cases, including entering and leaving the country.

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

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.

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.

Discipline

We expect Education Guardians to be prepared to look after the pupil in the unlikely event of suspension or expulsion. It may sound bleak to mention this, but we do wish to ensure that any child who has to leave Oundle for such reasons is properly looked after.

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@oundleschool.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.**

<i>Reviewer</i>	Rachel Makhzangi
<i>Post of Reviewer</i>	Deputy Head Admissions
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