

APPOINTING AN EDUCATIONAL GUARDIAN POLICY

AIMS OF THE POLICY

Tonbridge School aims to provide a caring and enlightened environment in which the talents of each individual flourish. We encourage boys to be creative, tolerant and to strive for academic, sporting and cultural excellence. Respect for tradition and an openness to innovation are equally valued. Care for every aspect of each boy's life at Tonbridge is the responsibility of all teachers, and especially of Housemasters. The prime responsibility is to safeguard and promote the welfare of each boy. However, young people also have rights which must be observed by Housemasters and staff. Key principles are established in law to promote and protect the rights of young people, in particular with reference to privacy, independence, dignity, choice, and self-fulfilment.

The School aims to ensure that there is constant liaison and exchange of information between parents and the School during the five years that a boy is at Tonbridge and this partnership and strength of relationship is an important part of creating the environment in which each individual can flourish. To assist the School in caring for the boys of parents living overseas parents must appoint an Educational Guardian for the entire time a boy is at Tonbridge School. The role of the Education Guardian is to support the boy, act as a representative of the parents and provide a welcoming home in the UK when a boy is not at School or at home with their parents.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies:

- Safeguarding Policy (Including the Child Protection Policy);
- Tonbridge School Ethos and Aims
- Admissions Policy
- Medical Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Philosophy of Care
- Statement of Boarding Principles
- Trips and Educational Visits
- Attendance
- Boy Who Has (Or Seems to Have) Gone Missing Policy
- Pupil Supervision Policy
- EAL Policy
- Provision of Food for Boys with Particular Religious Cultural or Medical Dietary Requirements
- UK Visas and Immigration Compliance Policy

RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility for choosing an appropriate Educational Guardian rests solely with the parents of the boy. The parents are responsible for satisfying themselves that the guardian is able and willing to fulfil the requirements outlined below. It is a condition of your son's joining and remaining at the School that you complete and submit to the School an Educational Guardian Consent Form for your son. This form will nominate an Educational Guardian (or 'responsible adult') for your son. If your son's visa is sponsored by the School under the Child Student Visa route, this is a requirement of their visa.

The responsibility for carrying out any safeguarding checks rests solely with the boy's parents, but **the School must agree to the suitability of the Educational Guardian**. The Guardian will only be deemed suitable if:

- He / she agrees to fulfil the requirements listed in this policy.
- He / she is resident in the UK at a suitable proximity to the School
- He / she speaks English, so as to ensure effective communication with the School
- He / she is not regularly in travel overseas
- He / she is capable of providing care for a child in a happy, secure home environment as would a reasonable and responsible parent promoting the welfare, physical and emotional wellbeing of the boy.
- He / she has read, understood and agreed to comply with this policy and completed and agreed to abide by the Educational Guardian Consent Form.

Please note: a university student resident in student accommodation or halls or residence would not be accepted as a suitable Educational Guardian.

Parents must select reputable, UK-based Educational Guardianship companies which are either:

- a. Approved by the Association for the Educational and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS – www.aegisuk.net)
- b. Or have been passed by the Boarding Schools Association (BSA) Certified Guardian Scheme (<https://www.boarding.org.uk/497/about-us/bsa-certified-guardian-scheme>)

It is the experience of both Tonbridge School and families with boys at the School that AEGIS / BSA member guardianship organisations have provided the best support for overseas students in the past and are able to have multiple contingency plans in place to support boys in the event of emergencies, such as extreme weather events or pandemic.

While Tonbridge School does not recommend specific agencies or guardianship companies, the following BSA / AEGIS approved companies have been shared by families with boys currently at the School and may be able to provide host families in the local area:

- Quest Guardians: <https://www.questguardians.co.uk/en/>
- College Guardians: <http://www.collegeguardians.co.uk/>
- English Country Guardians: <http://www.english-country-guardians.co.uk/aboutus.html>
- Bright World Guardianships: www.brightworld.co.uk
- White House Guardians: www.whg.eu.com
- Pippa's Guardians: <https://www.pippasguardians.co.uk/>
- Guardians International: paula@gis-uk.com

The Educational Guardian may be a nominated friend of the family or another family member who can fulfil the criteria stated in this policy. However, it is essential that the nominated friend or family member fully understands the level of commitment required before agreeing to the role.

- Parents must ensure that Educational Guardians receive a copy of this Educational Guardian Policy.
- Parents must also ensure that Educational Guardians read, understand and agree to this Guardianship Agreement.
- An Educational Guardian who is a nominated friend of the family or member of the family must also:
 - Ensure they have suitable contingency back-up
 - Ensure that the boy is cared for in a happy, secure home environment promoting the welfare, physical and emotional wellbeing of the boy.
 - Provide a second person as a contact, verified by the parents, who are also resident in the UK in case of emergency.

Parents of overseas boys must arrange for their child's Educational Guardian to meet with a member of the Admissions Team before the beginning of their boy's first term at the School, or at the time of moving to the School, either remotely on a platform such as Zoom / Microsoft Teams or in person. Guardians of the School's boys must agree to provide proof of residency in the UK, photographic ID (biographic data page from passport) and proof of living within suitable proximity of the School at this meeting.

Educational Guardianship arrangements will be monitored on a regular basis, using online Boy Feedback Forms following School holidays and Exeat weekends and through regular communication between boys' Educational Guardians and Housemasters/Matronas and the boys' parents. Parents must keep the School informed of any changes to the Educational Guardian, including all up-to-date contact details via the Housemaster / Matron or School Administrator.

The following incorporates guidance from Standard 22 of the National Minimum Standards (NMS) The Role and Responsibilities of the Educational Guardian:

1. The Educational Guardian will be responsible for the care and wellbeing of the boy, as would a responsible and caring parent, whenever the boy is residing in the UK outside term time and their parents are not available. This includes Exeat weekends, half term breaks, School holidays and in times of emergency, such as an exclusion, pandemic or extreme weather event, when the School has to close.
2. An Educational Guardian is required to take full responsibility for a boy:
 - a. During Exeat weekends, half term breaks and end of term holidays if travel home is not possible
 - b. When travel arrangements mean there is a gap between the boy arriving in or leaving the country and the start or end of terms
 - c. In the event of illness or injury that cannot be cared for by the Medical Centre including a mental health crisis
 - d. If disciplinary measures result in the boy being suspended or excluded from School
 - e. If the School has to suddenly close due to unforeseen circumstances
3. During the times listed above, the Educational Guardian will be responsible for looking after the boy if medical issues require or if the boy is involved in an accident that cannot be cared for by the Medical Centre. The Educational Guardian will need to be available to provide care for the boy and make decisions as appropriate at such times.
4. The School also requires the Educational Guardian to:
 - a. Be able to act with delegated responsibility in the case of emergency and in other matters pertaining to life at School
 - b. Be over the age of 25 and not in full time Education (applications for exceptional circumstances can be made to the Deputy Head Pastoral for consideration)
 - c. Live within **two hours** travelling time of the School in which the boy is enrolled and / or be able to provide host families within **two hours** travelling time of the School. Educational Guardians who live further away need to be discussed with and agreed with the School before the boy starts
 - d. Be able to communicate with the School in proficient English and the parents in their native language if they do not speak English
 - e. Be permanently resident in the UK during published term dates. If an Educational Guardian is going to be away from their home, or out of the country, for more than 48 hours, the parents must inform the School of alternative guardian arrangements before the guardian

- leaves their home. They must give full contact details for the period of their absence and name and address of a responsible person in the UK, fully authorised by the parents to act on their behalf.
- f. Ensure that the boy is in attendance at School from the first day of term right through to the last in all but exceptional circumstances. Failure to ensure this may result in a visa violation.
 - g. Ensure that safe, adequate travel arrangements are made for the beginning and end of holidays and Exeats, within published times, and to communicate these to the School in a timely manner. In addition, the Educational Guardian is responsible for ensuring that the boy is collected at the appointed time at the end of a School term, and that they do not arrive back early, as there may be no-one in School which would be a safeguarding concern. Boys are the responsibility of their Educational Guardian until the appointed time that the School re-opens, except when transport is organised to and from the School by the International Student Liaison Officer.
 - h. Where the boy is studying at the School on a sponsored UKVI Child Student Visa and the Educational Guardian is facilitating appropriate travel arrangements to and from the UK, they must ensure the child, regardless of their age, has consent to walk unaccompanied to and from the arrival / departure gate at a station or airport and immediately contact both parents and the School in the event that the boy does not reach them at the specified time, whether that be arrival at the airport or at their home.
 - i. Notify the School at least one week in advance of holidays and Exeat weekends where the boy will be staying and with whom
 - j. Ensure that visa requirements are complied with and that the boy has a valid passport
 - k. Ensure that the boy is properly equipped with clothing and other necessities on entry to the School and at the beginning of each term
 - l. Be contactable by phone and email at all times during term and be able to come to the School if required (sometimes at short notice)
 - m. If possible, attend parent meetings to discuss academic progress with staff if the parent is unable to do so
 - n. Act for parents in granting permission for
 - Overnight leave- at weekends
 - Overnight leave- at weekends
 - o. To be familiar with the School's rules, regulations and policies referred to in The Memoranda
 - p. Be able to offer or arrange suitable accommodation to the boy whilst in their care and provide all meals. Host families / guardians should ensure that boys:
 - Have their own room
 - Are invited to join family activities / treated as part of a normal caring family and are not spending excessive amounts of time alone
 - Are able to enjoy an appropriate level of privacy e.g. locks on bathroom doors
 - Have appropriate level of supervision including adult / boy ratio of 1:3
 - Have a quiet place to study
 - Have access to an outside space
 - Have access to facilities to prepare snacks or drinks
 - Have appropriate access to shops and other facilities
 - Comply with the School rules and UK law at all times e.g. with regard to activities involving alcohol, drugs, relationships with others

(These areas form the basis of the questionnaire for the initial Zoom meeting with a guardian and later with host families.)

- q. Keep up to date with School events and activities so that the boy can fully participate in the life of the School

The following are not acceptable to Tonbridge School:

- r. Boys accommodated in hotels, bed and breakfast and other such establishments without the direct supervision of the guardian or other appointed adult about whom the School is notified
- s. A guardian who is not resident in the UK during term time or who is unprepared to take responsibility for the boy when requested
- t. Being supplied with deliberately false or misleading information as to the whereabouts and/or travel arrangements of a boy
- u. An arrangement which does not provide the boy with accommodation, food and supervision at least of the standard experienced at School
- v. Any employee of Tonbridge School acting as an Educational Guardian for boys at Tonbridge School.

Housemasters / Matrons / Tutors are reminded to ask boys about their experience at host families / Educational Guardians and to flag through concerns immediately to Deputy Head Pastoral via CPOMS.

When a concern is raised, actions could include:

- Meeting with the boy
- Speaking to the Educational guardian / host family – passing concerns to parents promptly, with the aid of a translator as required (e.g. on a Zoom call)
- To request a new guardianship arrangement from parents for the boy
- Alerting relevant authorities: AEGIS / BSA / LEA / Safeguarding partners
- In exceptional circumstances, UKVI may need to be informed if this policy is not adhered to and violates visa requirements.

EDUCATIONAL GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM FOR ENTRY IN 2024**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENTS:**

To assist the School in caring for the boys of parents living overseas, the School requires parents to nominate an Educational Guardian in the UK. Please refer to the Appointing an Educational Guardian Policy (above). Having a suitable Educational Guardian is **a condition of entry to the School** and we expect the Guardian you have nominated to formally accept their responsibilities for the duration of your son's time at Tonbridge. Please ensure both you and the appointed Guardian complete and return the forms to the Admissions Department on admissions@tonbridge-school.org and School Administrator on schooladmin@tonbridge-school.org

The following person has agreed to act as Guardian during his time at Tonbridge School:

Insert your son's name and initials: _____

Guardian's full name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone numbers: Home: _____

Work: _____

Email addresses: Home: _____

Work: _____

Relationships Status: _____ (please advise how the Guardian is known to you)

Contingency back-up

Contact Name: _____

Telephone numbers: Home: _____

Work: _____

Email addresses: Home: _____

Work: _____

Signed: (Parent) _____ **Date:** _____

Signed: (Guardian) _____ **Date:** _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPOINTED GUARDIAN:

To assist the School in caring for the boys of parents living overseas, the School requires parents to nominate an Educational Guardian in the UK. Please refer to the Appointing an Educational Guardian Policy (above). Having a suitable Educational Guardian is a **condition of entry to the School** and we expect the Guardian you have nominated to formally accept their responsibilities for the duration of your boy's time at Tonbridge. Please ensure both you and the parents complete and return the forms below to the Admissions Department and School Administrator.

- I confirm that I have been appointed by the parents as this boy's Guardian / Educational Guardian and have read and understood the Appointing an Educational Guardian Policy and agree to abide by all of its terms and fulfil all aspects of the role and responsibilities of the Educational Guardian as outline in this policy. _____ (initials)
- I agree to meet a member of the Admissions Team or International Student Liaison Officer face-to-face or via a Zoom call before or shortly after the boy arrives at the school. _____ (initials)
- If I am unable to continue as Educational Guardian I will inform the school immediately and ensure the parents put alternative arrangements are in place. _____ (initials)
- I understand that outside term time, the boy is not the responsibility of the school and that I have full duty of care for the boy including their whereabouts, welfare, physical / emotional wellbeing and suitability of any appointed host families to provide this. _____ (initials)
- To provide or arrange accommodation (if required):
 - During school holidays, half-terms and Exeats and for every half-term; it is important that overseas boys have a guardian to stay with on such occasions _____ (initials)
 - In the unlikely event that the School has to close temporarily because of an emergency, e.g. fire or epidemic _____ (initials)
 - If your son has to be away from School on medical advice _____ (initials)
 - If your son is temporarily excluded from School _____ (initials)
 - The boy is cared for adequately in a secure home environment and that:
 - They have their own room
 - They are invited to join family activities / treated as part of a normal caring family and are not spending excessive amounts of time alone
 - They are able to enjoy an appropriate level of privacy e.g. locks on bathroom doors
 - They have a quiet place to study
 - They comply with the school rules and UK law at all times e.g. with regard to activities involving alcohol, drugs, relationships with others _____ (initials)
 - I understand that I am acting with the authority of the parents and take full responsibility for the child during published term dates and all times when the school is closed. _____ (initials)

As Educational Guardian I also agree to ensure:

1. To take decisions in emergencies on behalf of the parents in cases where the School is not empowered to do so _____ (initials)
2. To be available to attend parent meetings or certain School events (e.g. Novi Teas), if parents so wish _____ (initials)
3. There is suitable contingency back-up and provide a second person as a contact, verified by the parents, who are also resident in the UK in case of emergency _____ (initials)
4. To have access to the Parent Portal and Parent App _____ (initials)