



Culford

Guardianship Policy

Introduction

Culford welcomes pupils from all over the world; our international pupils are part of a diverse community of young people who care for each other and grow as individuals. Our pastoral, tutorial and boarding systems are designed to ensure that all pupils, from across the UK and from overseas, are effectively supported throughout their time at Culford.

An Educational Guardian must be appointed for pupils whose parents live outside the UK, either as expatriates or as overseas nationals, prior to the child entering Culford.

All boarding pupils whose parents do not live in the UK are required to have an Educational Guardian. Parents are required to sign an agreement with the school that requires them to collect their child within 24 hours, in the event of exceptional circumstances when a child cannot remain at school.

The Boarding Schools' Association summarises the role of the educational guardian as follows:

For many from abroad, their Educational Guardian is the parents' representative in this country, essential in times of crisis or need for support and advice, available not only to the pupil but also to the School as a proxy for the parents who cannot be contacted for whatever reason. For others, their guardian is the person with whom they stay during school holidays when it is not practicable to return home. The educational guardian has a clear pupil welfare role, bridging between parents, pupil and school.

Note that an Educational Guardian is not a child's legal guardian in the sense of a 'parent or guardian'.

Appointing a Guardian

It is the primary responsibility of the parents to appoint an Educational Guardian, and the selection of an appropriate person or organisation rests with the parents. Parents must fully satisfy themselves as to the suitability of their chosen Guardian.

- The appointed Guardian must be over 25 years of age and may not be a student living in accommodation provided by another educational institution. An older brother or sister who is studying in the UK cannot be a Guardian.
- The appointed Guardian may be a nominated friend, must be a permanent resident in the UK and must send his/her passport and visa documentation (if applicable) with the School.
- Culford staff are not permitted to be a guardian of a pupil in the school.
- If a family does not have a suitable contact in the UK, then it is expected that the parents will appoint a Guardian via a reputable professional organisation. It is important to note that the School does not recommend any specific agency or organisation but would encourage parents to ensure that the agency is an accredited member of the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS). Further details can be found on the AEGIS website: <https://aegisuk.net/parents-agents>
- The appointed Guardian should be a permanent resident in the UK.
- An appointed Guardian should be fluent in the English language and be able to provide a point of contact for the School at all times.
- The School reserves the right to contest (and reject if necessary) the appointment of any guardian that it deems inappropriate under the conditions set out above.
- Where international pupils need to apply for a student visa in order to study in the UK, the required CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study) will not be issued until the School is satisfied that appropriate Guardian arrangements are in place.

- If, at any point, during the pupil's time at Culford, the School has concerns about the suitability of a Guardian or a guardianship arrangement, the parents will be informed. The School may request a change of Guardian or a revision of the arrangement. If the School continues to have concerns about the pupil's guardianship arrangements, the pupil could be asked to leave the School. It should be noted, for example, that the School does not consider unsupervised stays in hotels or bed and breakfast accommodation, to be an adequate level of accommodation or care.

Responsibilities of a Guardian

All Guardians must be prepared to undertake, where necessary, the following responsibilities:

- To provide a 24hr point of contact throughout the School year.
- To be ready to accommodate and take responsibility for the pupil at short notice in case of emergency or crisis.
- To provide safe and suitable accommodation for the pupil with an appropriate degree of care and supervision when they cannot be accommodated at School, and to liaise with the Housemaster/mistress regarding these arrangements. Occasions are likely to include, but are not restricted to:
 - Home Weekends
 - Half Term breaks and longer holidays
 - Days at the start and end of term when a pupil's flights do not coincide with term dates
 - If a pupil is ill or injured and needs to recuperate away from School
 - If the School requires a pupil to leave for disciplinary reasons or because the School determines it to be in the pupil's best interests

Any other occasion when the pupil is released from the School

- To make suitable alternative arrangements if they are unable to accommodate the pupil themselves, and to inform both Housemaster/mistress and parents of the arrangements.
- To liaise with the School over all matters relating to the pupil's welfare, including pastoral, academic and medical care.
- To act with delegated parental authority in the case of an emergency or crisis and to make appropriate arrangements for medical care.
- To attend important parent and teacher meetings or any other important meetings at the School on behalf of the parents.
- Guardians should be familiar with the School Rules, regulations, and policies, and support the School's aims and values.
- Guardians must be familiar with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- If the Guardian is going to be away from their UK home, for however short a time, they must notify the Housemaster/mistress. They must give full contact details for their period of absence and the name and address of a responsible person in the UK, fully authorised by the parents to act on their behalf.
- Guardians must ensure that legal documents such as visas and registration documents are kept up to date and renewed/updated as necessary.
- A change of Guardian must be communicated promptly to the School in writing, providing all necessary details in order to facilitate continuous care.

Responsibility of School

For the children under their care Housemasters/mistresses should:

- treat the routine handover of care to the Educational Guardian no differently to that of a child with domicile parents/guardians.
- ensure, within 5 days of the start of the academic year, that they are satisfied that an appropriate Educational Guardian has been appointed.
- provide feedback to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) should they have cause for concern.
- ensure that the current Educational Guardians details are continuously updated when changes occur.
- ensure that each child is aware of who their Educational Guardian is and what their Guardian's responsibilities are.

The School carries out spot checks on educational guardianship arrangements and Boarders staying in the UK with an Educational Guardian are given the contact information of the Designated Safeguarding Lead,

Assistant Head (Pastoral) and Head of Boarding should they have any issue regarding welfare, physical wellbeing and emotional wellbeing.

Short Term Parent/Guardian Absence Abroad

Should a boarding child's parent/guardian go abroad for any duration longer than 24 hours, the parent/guardian must ensure that suitable guardianship arrangements are in place to cover their absence, and that these details are known by the School. These arrangements need not be as formal as those of an appointed educational guardian, but telephone and address details of the selected temporary guardian must be known by the School prior to the commencement of the absence.

