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RISHWORTH SCHOOL

GUARDIANSHIP POLICY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Distribution: School website, Staff Policy Library

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy outlines the responsibilities of guardianship arrangements for international students under the age of 18 enrolled at Rishworth School on a Child Student Visa. It ensures compliance with UKVI requirements and safeguards the wellbeing of all students in our care.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all international students under the age of 18 enrolled at Rishworth School and holding a UK Child Student Visa, including both full-time boarders and those living with appointed guardians.

3. Definitions

- Appointed Guardian: A responsible UK-based adult who acts in loco parentis on behalf of the student's parents while the student is in the UK. Must be over 25 and British or settled in the UK.
- UKVI: UK Visas and Immigration, the authority responsible for managing the UK visa system.
- Safeguarding: Measures to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of children, especially those at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Private Fostering: An arrangement where a student under 18 stays with someone who is not a parent, a person with parental responsibility or a close relative (grandparent, sibling, aunt/ uncle or step-parent) for more than 28 days. Anyone outside of this list (i.e. family friend, cousin or host family), may be considered as private fostering.

4. UKVI Requirements for Guardianship

Rishworth School ensures:

- All Child Student visa holders under 18 have an appointed guardian in the UK.
- Guardians must:
    - Be over 25 years old.
    - Be British citizens or hold settled status (e.g., ILR, EU Settled Status).

    - Reside permanently in the UK and not hold a temporary visa (e.g., tourist, student, work visa).
    - Have no criminal convictions or safeguarding concerns (applies to all household members).
- Parents must provide all guardian details and documents before the student travels to the UK.
- The school keeps guardian contact details updated at all times.

Parent Visa Exemption: Where a student is accompanied full-time by a parent holding a valid "Parent of a Child Student" visa, no separate guardian is required. The school must receive evidence of the parent's visa status and UK residence.

5. Responsibilities of the Guardian

Appointed guardians must:

- Act in the student's best interests and provide emotional support.
- Be available 24/7 for emergencies.
- Provide safe, private, non-commercial accommodation during holidays or emergencies.
- Ensure adherence to immigration conditions and UK laws.
- Communicate regularly with the school and parents.
- Arrange and support travel and healthcare requirements as needed.

6. School's Role and Responsibilities

The school will:

- Monitor each student's welfare and academic progress.
- Maintain accurate guardian records including ID, proof of address, and immigration status.
- Train staff in safeguarding best practices.
- Liaise with guardians on welfare, medical, and logistical matters.

7. Safeguarding Protocols

- Guardians must be:
    - AEGIS or BSA accredited or
    - Subject to a criminality declaration
- All adults regularly in contact with students at guardian households must be free from convictions or safeguarding risks.
- Staff will receive up-to-date safeguarding training.

8. Guardian Approval Process

1. Submission: Parents provide full details and documents for proposed guardian.

1. Interview: Guardian attends a meeting with school staff (in person or virtually).
2. Reference Check: Two references are taken for all non-agency guardians.
3. Decision: Once approved, the school informs all parties in writing. Any changes must be reported immediately.

9. Private Fostering

If a student under 18 stays with a non-relative guardian for 28+ days, this constitutes a private fostering arrangement. The guardian and parents must notify their local authority and provide the school with confirmation of registration.

Failure to comply may result in referral to local authorities under the Children Act 2004.

10. Review of Guardianship Arrangements

The school reviews all guardianship arrangements annually or when changes in student circumstances arise, to ensure UKVI and safeguarding compliance.

11. Compliance with UKVI and Local Laws

Rishworth School fully complies with UKVI's Child Student sponsor duties and local safeguarding laws. Information will be shared with relevant authorities when required to ensure child protection.

12. Policy Review and Updates

This policy is reviewed bi-annually or when UKVI or safeguarding guidelines change.

Commented [JS1]: I believe this will be a new procedure but one I support