

# FETTES COLLEGE

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT POLICY

### **International Students**

Fettes welcomes students from all over the world and is proud of its international outlook and diverse community.

### **Right to Study**

Irrespective of your child's nationality or place of residence, we require a copy of any prospective student's passport and visa (if applicable) to confirm their right to study in the UK. (If they do not have a passport we will require a copy of their Birth Certificate.) We will hold the copy (and any renewals you send us from time to time) for the duration of the child's time at Fettes. Please check the following link to see whether a visa to study in the UK is required: [www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa](http://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa).

In order to cope with the academic and social demands of Fettes College, however, students must be **fluent English speakers**. Normally students should have been educated in the English medium for at least 3 years before coming to Fettes. English is assessed as part of our Admissions process.

Additionally, Fettes expects overseas students to finish a complete course of study such as GCSE (up to and including 5<sup>th</sup> Form), or A Levels / IB (in the Lower and Upper 6<sup>th</sup> Forms).

Any student who does not hold a UK Passport or settled or pre-settled status in the UK must apply for a visa in order to study at Fettes College and Fettes College Prep School. The Admissions Team will assess the visa needs of each student entering Fettes College and Fettes Prep but there is also a facility for early notice to be provided by the parents in the application process, if they are aware their child will require sponsorship. Fettes College is a registered Student Sponsor (via the Home Office's UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) unit). Fettes College retains full discretion over any decision on whether to sponsor the child.

As a general rule, Fettes will only sponsor boarding students and will consider sponsoring applications for day students into the Prep School only by exception.

### **Visa Routes**

The two types of visa Fettes typically supports are Child Student Visa and Student Visa.

#### Child Student Visa

It is possible to apply for the Child Student (formerly Tier 4 Child) visa if aged between 4 and 17 and the student wishes to study at an independent school in the UK.

They must also:

- have a place on a course
- have the consent of their parent/s or guardian
- have enough money to cover their course fees and living costs
- meet the eligibility requirements.

## Student Visa

This visa is typically aimed at students over the age of 18 applying for their visa. In exceptional circumstances, however, Fettes may issue a Student CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study) to a student aged 16 or over.

## **Holmes & Partners**

As a registered Student Sponsor, Fettes College holds a Student Sponsor licence that allows us to sponsor international students to come and study in the UK. With this comes a wide range of sponsor duties and regulatory obligations that incur significant costs to Fettes College extending well beyond the student visa application process. International students are hugely important to the community at Fettes College so we take steps to ensure our Student Sponsor licence is protected and we can focus more on our true priorities as educators.

UK Visas and Immigration inspect sponsors on a regular basis and Fettes College must be able to demonstrate full compliance in order to continue to sponsor international students. Visa refusals for applications through either route and for whatever reason are monitored and recorded by UKVI so there is a vested interest in ensuring all compliance duties and student applications are supported by expert knowledge and guidance. The UKVI compliance regime is also becoming increasingly punitive, and a loss of the Student Sponsor licence would be highly detrimental to both Fettes College and a child's study in the UK.

For these reasons we have instructed Holmes & Partners to process all Child Student and Student applications for students attending Fettes College and Fettes Prep and to act as the custodians of Fettes College's Child Student Sponsor licence. This provides reassurance that the visa application process will not cause students unnecessary difficulty and that Fettes College is well placed to meet its legal obligations as a sponsor. We require parents of any child applying for a visa to work with the account management team at Holmes & Partners who will discuss their child's application and visa requirements and provide all relevant information and support.

## **Parent of a Child Student Visa**

Parents who wish to accompany their child/children to the UK can apply to do so under the Parent of a Child Student visa, so long as their child is under the age of 12: [www.gov.uk/parent-of-a-child-at-school-visa](http://www.gov.uk/parent-of-a-child-at-school-visa).

Children under the age of 12 can be accompanied by **one parent**, who will be responsible for the care of the child within the UK. This arrangement will cease when the child reaches their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Holmes & Partners will also need to process the Parent of a Child Student application as this can affect the outcome of the child's own application. For a Parent of a Child Student application, Holmes & Partners will make an additional charge directly to the parent which is in addition to the child's application fees and any health surcharge.

## **Early termination of Sponsorship**

If a student leaves Fettes before the natural end of an approved course of study or Fettes ceases its sponsorship of a student such that the student must leave the UK or obtain a new sponsor, we are required to collect the following data from the parent/s:

### Either:

Proof of departure from the UK, clearly identifying the child as the passenger.

For example:

- Flight Ticket - Scan/Photo/E-Ticket
- Boarding pass - Scan/Photo/E-Pass
- Entry stamp on passport confirming re-entry to the child's home country

Or:

For students moving to a new immigration category or sponsor, a copy of their new visa for our records. We will require a sharecode to view the e-visa.

### **Application Procedure**

To demonstrate Fettes College's role as sponsor, Fettes will issue a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Study) relevant to the visa route being applied for.

Please note, a CAS is valid for 6 months but may not be used more than 6 months before the course begins when applying from outside the UK, or 3 months before the course begins when applying from inside the UK.

The following key information is of note:

- 1) To allow a CAS to be issued, the process will begin with Fettes College preparing a CAS instruction. To allow Fettes College to prepare a CAS instruction Fettes will require parents to complete a Guardian Delegation Form and to provide a Letter of Undertaking from the Guardian. This will be sent to Holmes & Partners. The CAS will be issued only once an offer of a place has been made to a student and this offer has been accepted.
- 2) Holmes & Partners will issue to parents a pre-CAS questionnaire and a letter of parental consent, both of which will need to be completed and returned.
- 3) Parents will be required to provide evidence of funds sufficient to pay one year's fees at Fettes or the balance due if a deposit of a term's fees or more has been paid to Fettes.
  - a. *(Please note: an applicant who is offered and accepts a place at Fettes, and who has at least one parent residing overseas, is asked to pay an Additional Deposit equivalent to one term's boarding fees. This sum is payable on return of the completed acceptance form and is refunded in full on the final fees bill. A place is not guaranteed until the Additional Deposit is received.)*
- 4) Some visa routes require additional evidence of funds to support maintenance, or living costs, and this requirement will be made clear to you by Holmes & Partners if applicable.
- 5) Where a document is not in English, the document must be accompanied by a full translation that can be independently verified by the Home Office. The translation must contain confirmation from the translator/translation company that it is an accurate translation of the document, the date of the translation, the translator/an authorised official of the translation company's full name and signature, and the translator/translation company's contact details.
- 6) An international student moving from 5<sup>th</sup> Form, at Fettes, to Lower 6<sup>th</sup> will require to renew their visa as they will have completed one course (GCSE) with a view to commencing another (A Level / IB).
- 7) A visa administration charge is made in respect of all applications and renewals. This charge is added to the child's first, or next, school fee note.
- 8) Holmes & Partners will conduct a compliance check on all mandatory documents necessary for the visa application before producing a draft CAS which will be sent to the parent/s and/or agent to check the details, and confirm they are correct, prior to assignment. The application for the CAS is made on-line by Holmes & Partners and,

when approved, Holmes & Partners will add the CAS number to the on-line application. Holmes & Partners will then contact the parent/s and/or agent to assist them in making the relevant statutory payments on-line and booking the appointment for the visa (if applicable).

- 9) Parents are advised to not book flights before confirmation of the visa decision has been received.

Successful applications will result in the student being issued with an e-visa which is linked to the student's passport. It is, therefore, imperative that Fettes is alerted to any passport renewals or changes.

If a visa application is refused, a copy of the refusal letter must be sent to Fettes College prior to the issue of a new CAS. In line with our duties as a Student sponsor, we reserve the right to withdraw or refuse to issue a CAS.

### **Ongoing obligations**

- 1) Fettes College must keep independent visa files on each international student which may be inspected by the UKVI at any time; specifically, the Admissions Team will make copies of the passport and visa for the student's file and add the details to the Fettes College database in order to monitor passport and visa expiry dates. The Admissions Team also make copies of the main visa holder's documents for dependent visas or Parent of Child Student visas.
- 2) As a Student Sponsor, Fettes College has a duty to the Home Office to record all travel arrangements for each sponsored student and as such, parents/guardians have an ongoing obligation to ensure that Fettes has full details of travel at the beginning and end of each Term, as well as at Recommended Leave and Half Term. Parents must authorise travel arrangements using i-GTM. An Airport Guardian Service is available via i-GTM for International Students arriving or departing from Edinburgh Airport.
- 3) Unauthorised absence of more than 10 continuous days must be reported to UKVI.
- 4) Any change of status (e.g. from boarding to day) must be approved in writing beforehand by Fettes and subsequently reported to UKVI. (This would be approved only under exceptional circumstances and only whilst the child is in the Prep School).
- 5) When a student leaves Fettes before the scheduled end of course date, this will be reported to the UKVI and the information referred to above under 'Early Termination of Sponsorship' will be requested. We are not required to report to UKVI that a student has finished their course (e.g. at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> Form and at the end of Upper 6th) and the student may have a certain amount of time to stay in the UK after their course has finished and before their visa expires.
- 6) Fettes College must be notified if the student has obtained a new passport and a copy provided as soon as possible.
- 7) If a Child Student turns 18, they can carry on with their course until their permission to stay ends. If they want to do further study in the UK, they will have to apply under another category, for example the Student route.

### **Guardians**

All parents who live overseas or who are relatively inaccessible whilst their child/children are at school are required to name a UK guardian for their child. This is irrespective of the age of the child. The guardian's role is to support the child and to deputise for the parents when they are unavailable. A guardian can be a relative or a friend or a guardian appointed and monitored by a reputable guardianship agency. We recommend the guardian is 25 years of age or older. Parents

should satisfy themselves that the agency they use is run in a professional manner. Legislation requires that all guardians living in Scotland who are looking after children under the age of 16, and gaining financially from this arrangement, must be registered as Child Minders with SCWIS (Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland).

Whilst the School is unable to recommend a particular Guardian, a list of accredited Guardians can be found at either: [BSA Certified Guardian Scheme](#) or [The Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students](#).

Guardians receive all documentation from the School, including all safeguarding information. Houseparents will communicate relevant wellbeing concerns to guardians and will monitor the relationship between student and guardian and take appropriate action when/if required.

The School will monitor the success of the guardianship relationship and intervene if it appears that there are difficulties in the relationship. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) liaises regularly with any guardian agencies and follows up on any concerns from the students following Recommended Leave weekends or Half Terms.

In an emergency the School will always make every effort to contact parents by telephone or email. If it proves impossible to reach a parent, the School will contact the guardian for advice on action to be taken.

Guardians should communicate with the School through Houseparents who will pass on information and deal with issues as appropriate.

Fettes College must be promptly notified of any change of guardian or guardian's contact information.

The School's Guardianship Policy is available on request.

### **UK Passport Control: student arrival guide**

Guidance to help students understand what they need to do to make their journey through the UK border easier can be found here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-arrivals-10-top-tips](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-arrivals-10-top-tips)

### **International Student Induction Form**

Once leave to enter or remain within the Child Student or Student category has been granted, Holmes & Partners will provide an information sheet which confirms the conditions of the child's stay in the UK and their main ongoing responsibilities to the Home Office.

### **Request for Leave**

Unauthorised absence of more than 10 continuous days must be reported to UKVI. This includes students who arrive late at the beginning of term or leave early at the end of term. Parents are requested to adhere to the term dates when booking international flights.

### **Agent Feedback**

If an agent was used during the application process, parents are asked to provide feedback about the agent:

- Did the agent provide all the information needed in relation to Fettes College?
- Did the agent provide assistance with the visa application?
- Would the parent recommend the agent to other students considering Fettes College?

- Is there anything the agent did particularly well or could have done better?

### **Visa Expiry Monitoring**

International students are required to bring their original passport and visa (if applicable) to Fettes College on their first day of Fettes and we will take a copy if we don't already have one.

The passport must be checked to ensure the date of the student's entry to the UK is within the validity dates of their Entry Vignette (this is evidenced by the Immigration Officer's entry stamp in the passport). If the Immigration Officer's stamp is on a page other than the page with the Entry Vignette, a copy of this page must also be made. If a student has arrived and entered the UK using the e-gates, evidence of their flight itinerary must be provided.

Holmes & Partners are responsible for ensuring that all documents have valid expiry dates and will contact parents directly, if Holmes & Partners processed the visa, on Fettes College's behalf to obtain any further in date documentation required. Parents are asked to provide documents in a timely fashion.

**DCA**

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