

GUARDIANSHIP POLICY

FOR INTERNATIONAL PUPILS

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy outlines the responsibilities of guardianship arrangements for international pupils enrolled at **St George's**. It is a legal requirement for international boarding pupils to have an educational guardian when living in the UK. Parents who do not reside in the UK (or who may be abroad for a period of extended time on business or holiday), with children in British boarding schools, are required to appoint an educational guardian. This person must respond to the needs of both the child **and** the School. This policy is designed to ensure compliance with UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) requirements and safeguard the wellbeing of all students in our care.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all international pupils enrolled at **St George's** and who hold a Child Student Visa, including both full-time boarders and those who live part-time with appointed educational guardians. Whilst this is specifically intended for pupils holding a Child Student Visa, this policy also provides best practice for international pupils who are Subject to other Immigration Control (SUIC).

3. Definitions

Appointed Educational Guardian: A responsible adult appointed by the pupil's parents, who lives in the UK and is either British or has settled status (that is not time-limited). The guardian is a point of contact for the pupil, acting in loco parentis when the parents are not in the UK.

Independent School: A school that operates independently of the state system and provides education for students in the UK.

UKVI: UK Visas and Immigration, the Home Office organisation which regulates visa policies, including Child Student Visas.

SUIC: Pupils who are not British citizens, nor do they hold Child Student Visas, but are Subject to other Immigration Control (e.g Pre/Settled status, Dependent Visa, BNO Visa, etc)

Safeguarding: The duty of care ensuring that children and young people are safe from harm, neglect, and abuse while in the care of the School or their appointed guardians.

4. UKVI Requirements for Guardianship

As part of our compliance with UKVI regulations, **St George's** ensures that all international pupils under the age of 18 have a suitable educational guardian living in the UK. **This guardian must be selected by the parents and approved by the School.**

They must also:

- Be over the age of 25 and not in full time education
- Have a clean safeguarding and criminal record (both in the UK and overseas). This also applies to anyone who regularly lives with the appointed educational guardian
- Not hold temporary or time-limited visas (such as visitor, student, or work visas). **Only** individuals with Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), Settled Status, or British/Irish citizenship are eligible
- Live within a 2 hour drive of the School and not travelling abroad for long periods of time
- Be a responsible adult who has adequate experience and ability to provide care and support to the pupil
- Provide written confirmation to the School of their willingness and ability to act as a guardian (through a Guardianship Agreement provided by the School)
- Be either a close family friend, relative, educational agent, or from an accredited guardianship agency
- Be able to speak sufficient English to communicate adequately with the School
- Have authority to act on behalf of the parents in all respects
- Provide suitable accommodation for a pupil, but not student/university accommodation
- Be willing to receive pupil reports and other communications from the School if requested by the pupil's parents, acting as an intermediary and attending parents' meetings and other School events in the absence of the pupil's parents

5. Responsibilities of the Parents

- It is the responsibility of the parents to select a suitable educational guardian and to approach them to make them aware of the scope of their role, including seeking their consent to take on the role.
- It is important that the parents discuss Point 6 (Responsibilities of the Guardian) of this policy with the suggested guardian to ensure full awareness and understanding of the role

- Parents must provide details of the appointed educational guardian to the School (name, nationality, immigration status, contact phone number, email address and home address) and to UKVI (for Child Student Visa holders) before the pupil's arrival in the UK.
- The guardian's contact information must be kept up to date with the School at all times - **this is the responsibility of the parent.**

6. Responsibilities of the Guardian

In consenting to act as an appointed educational guardian, the guardian agrees to:

- Act in the best interest of the student, providing emotional support, and ensuring the pupil's welfare
- Be available to the pupil in case of emergencies, including medical or personal matters, or where the pupil is required to leave the boarding house (for illness or a disciplinary issue)
- Provide appropriate accommodation or supervision when the School is not in session, such as during exeat weekends, holidays or half-terms, if applicable
- Ensure that the pupil adheres to UK immigration regulations, including maintaining their Child Student Visa status and attending school regularly
- Confirm that neither they nor any other adult residing in or regularly present at their address has any criminal convictions, is under any investigation, or is subject to safeguarding concerns in the UK or overseas.
- Communicate regularly with the School regarding the pupil's academic progress, health, and welfare, if acting on behalf of the parents
- Ensure that the pupil understands and adheres to UK laws, especially those concerning safety and welfare
- Help the pupil arrange travel both in the UK (taxi, train or bus) and back home (flight booking and transfers) as required by the parents. This includes collecting the pupil from an airport and returning them to the guardian's home in case of cancelled flights

7. Responsibilities of the School

St George's is committed to:

- Ensuring the pupil's welfare by regularly monitoring their progress, wellbeing, and conduct while at the School
- Providing training for staff on safeguarding and ensuring the school environment is safe and supportive

- Ensuring that parents are provided with regular updates on their child's progress, including information about their academic, emotional, and social development
- Keeping an up-to-date record of each pupil's guardian, including contact details, identity documents, proof of address, and ensuring that communication channels always remain open
- Collaborating with guardians to ensure a seamless experience for pupils, particularly when it comes to holidays, medical needs, and other welfare concerns

8. Safeguarding Protocols

In line with our safeguarding policy, the following guidelines must be followed:

- BSA Certified guardian, AEGIS Certified guardian OR Enhanced DBS Checks (if required by the Home Office) carried out by the parent
- All guardians and those in regular contact with pupils must be regulated or have an enhanced DBS check before being appointed or before any interaction with the pupil.
- Regular Safeguarding Audits: The School will carry out regular checks to ensure that guardianship arrangements comply with safeguarding standards.
- Emergency Contact: A 24-hour emergency contact should be provided for both the guardian and the School, in case of urgent situations.
- Safeguarding Training: All School staff involved with the care and supervision of pupils must undergo safeguarding training in line with the UK government's guidance and best practices.

9. Guardian Selection and Approval Process

It is the parent's responsibility to select an appropriate educational guardian. If a pupil's parents do not know a suitable person to nominate, the School can supply details of professional guardianship organisations which have been formally inspected and accredited by AEGIS (the Association for the Education & Guardianship of International Students www.aegisuk.net) or the BSA (Boarding Schools' Association www.boarding.org.uk).

A guardian must be fully aware of the role that the School expects them to take. If a parent chooses not to appoint an accredited guardian, then the School will require further information about the proposed guardian (see below) and it is the duty of the parent to perform their own checks to ensure they are satisfied that the chosen guardian holds a clean safeguarding and criminal record.

Please note that members of School staff are **not** permitted to act as guardians under any circumstances, in order to maintain appropriate safeguarding boundaries.

The process therefore includes the following steps:

1. Parents select an educational guardian and complete the parent portion of the Guardianship Agreement, acknowledging that they have read and agree to the Guardianship Policy, signing and dating their consent (physical ink signature), and confirming that they have discussed the responsibilities involved with the selected educational guardian
2. The School sends this on to the appointed educational guardian to further confirm and sign (physical ink signature), acknowledging that they too have read and agree to the Guardianship Policy. The guardian then returns this to the School along with any required documentation (see 9.1)
3. Guardian Appointment: The guardian must attend an appointment (in person or virtually) with a designated school representative to confirm their identity, verify documentation, and explain safeguarding expectations
4. The School then uploads the required documents to the pupil's secure file
5. Once approved, the School will notify the parents and guardian in writing. Any changes in guardianship must be reported to the School immediately.
6. Should the appointed educational guardian change, then a new form will be issued to both parents and the new guardian to complete and return to the School

9.1 Non-Accredited Educational Guardians

If a parent chooses not to appoint an accredited educational guardian, then the School will require copies of the following documents to retain on file for their chosen guardian:

- Valid photo ID – passport or driving licence
- Proof of address, dated within the last 3 months (e.g a utility bill)
- Proof of the right to live in the UK for guardians who are not British citizens (e.g Share Code)

The Guardian should provide these to the School on completion of the Guardianship Agreement, sending scanned copies of original documents to admissions@stgeorges-ascot.org.uk

Before final approval, the School will complete an ID check either as an online call or in-person appointment to confirm their identity, verify documentation, and explain safeguarding expectations.

10. Review of Guardianship Arrangements

The School will review guardianship arrangements at least annually or in response to any changes in the pupil's welfare or academic needs. This review process ensures that the arrangements remain in the best interest of the pupil and in compliance with UKVI regulations and National Minimum Standards for Boarding (NMS).

11. Compliance with UKVI and Local Laws

St George's is committed to fully complying with UKVI's Child Student Visa regulations, including the specific conditions for under-18 students. The School will cooperate with any regulatory or legal requirements, including information-sharing with authorities, when necessary, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

12. Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed biennially or in response to any significant changes in UKVI regulations, safeguarding legislation and boarding standards. Any amendments will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders, including parents, pupils, guardians, and staff.