

## **GUARDIANSHIP: NOTES FOR PARENTS**

Parents who live abroad, or who travel regularly out of the UK, are bound by school policy to appoint a guardian for their son(s). It is an essential part of safeguarding that parents, boys and the school authorities know who the guardian is. The guardian takes over various responsibilities from the parents, and this note sets out what those responsibilities are.

Education guardians are appointed to care for international pupils in the UK, typically for pupils aged under 18 studying at independent boarding schools. With UK Visas and Immigration introducing requirements for suitable care for international pupils, it is now more important than ever for parents and schools to insist that boarders have competent and properly appointed education guardians.

Education Guardian is not a legal term and should not be used interchangeably with Legal Guardian. An Education Guardian is someone who has been appointed to care for an international pupil in the UK and who has been delegated temporary Parental Responsibility by the parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s) residing overseas.

The Education Guardian's responsibilities include caring for the pupil as would a responsible and caring parent by, for example, being in regular contact with him or her and providing advice and support as needed. The Education Guardian will typically care and take responsibility for them if he or she is unwell, suspended or expelled. The role may also include being authorised to make certain decisions concerning the pupil on the parents' behalf, such as consenting to emergency medical and dental treatment and dealing with matters of a disciplinary nature. The Education Guardian may arrange travel for the pupil and provide or arrange accommodation. House Masters should, therefore, be clear about their expectations from such guardians and set these out clearly in their communication with parents and the guardians.

Due to the fundamental distinction between an Education Guardian and a Legal Guardian it is essential that where a parent or Legal Guardian is required to complete a form or sign an agreement (for example the school's parent contract or a Tier 4 visa application), the Education Guardian does not sign on behalf of a parent or Legal Guardian. This could lead to a visa refusal in the case of a Tier 4 application.

An Education Guardian may be a family member, a family friend, a guardianship agency, a host family, or other responsible UK-based adult. A university student resident in student accommodation or halls of residence would not usually be a suitable Education Guardian.

If necessary but not recommended, overseas parents may use a guardianship agency to appoint an Education Guardian on their behalf. Guardianship agencies usually offer a range of service levels and typically arrange holiday accommodation as well as acting as Education Guardian for their pupils. Guardianship agencies will usually arrange host families to provide accommodation for their pupils, although sometimes other accommodation options are available. Where host families are used, they will be responsible for providing the pupil with day-to-day care, accommodation and meals. In some cases, but not all, guardianship agencies will arrange for the host family to also act as Education Guardian for the pupil. If the guardianship agency arranges accommodation for the child or young person, the agency will be responsible for ensuring the quality and safety of the accommodation including the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

Parents are responsible for appointing an Education Guardian for their child and both the parents and Educational Guardian appointed must agree to these conditions below:

**WE [names of parents] appoint xxx (you) to act as the Educational Guardian for YYY. In consideration of this appointment:**

1. You must be capable of responding immediately to situations that arise at school i.e. you must be contactable by telephone and/or email, and be in a position to travel to Eton at any time.
2. It is a requirement that you should be introduced to our son's house master before he arrives in the school, or on the first day of his first half. If guardianship arrangements change at any time during our son's time in the school, the new Education Guardian must arrange immediately on appointment meet the house master. If the house master changes over, you must arrange immediately to meet the new house master.
3. At the first meeting, you will need to be informed about arrangements for gaining access to houses, door codes and the route to our son's room.
4. You will also need to be briefed about drop-off and pick-up times at the start and end of halves, leaves, and on Sundays or other days when our son may wish to spend time away from school.
5. You may represent us at parents' meetings if authorized to do so, but you are required to notify the house master in advance of such a visit, and may be asked to make yourself identifiable (i.e. by carrying a visitor's pass) when you do so.
6. You are required to take our son away from school, and look after him, in the event of disciplinary action by the school that results in rustication, suspension or expulsion.
7. You are required to take our son away from school, and look after him, if the school were to be closed, or if groups of boys within the school were required to leave its premises for a while, in the event of epidemic illness. You will also look after our son if he falls ill while under your care during school leaves, returning him to school once he has recovered.
8. You may be required to be take our son away from school, and look after him, over school leave periods and at the end of halves if and when travel services are for any reason restricted or cancelled.
9. You are required to have read and understood the Parent Contract.
10. You are required to provide a postal address, an email address and a telephone number for contact at any time. Your address will appear on school mailing lists as the third address, after the parents' main address, and secondary address.
11. You will receive invitations to school and house functions if we request this.
12. It is to be noted that guardianship does not replace parental responsibility. It will still be necessary for us to authorize leave out on Sundays and at weekends to other families or persons. We may devolve this responsibility to you, but only after notice is given by email or in writing to our son's house master.
13. Once boarding houses close at the start of leaves and school holidays, at the times published in Fixtures, parents and Education Guardians take over legal responsibility for the boy in their care.