

EDUCATIONAL GUARDIANSHIP POLICY

Rooted in Christ and Catholic tradition and under the guidance of its patron, St Edmund's aims to realise the God-given potential, in body, mind and spirit, of all members of its community through service and leadership.

Avita Pro Fide

St Edmund's is committed to ensuring the welfare and protection of children in their care and this commitment is a fundamental part of the role of every employee.

1. Background

St Edmund's believes it is essential to have effective arrangements for educational guardianship for any of our boarders whose families reside outside of the UK. As the Boarding School Association states:

'For many from abroad, their guardian is their 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.'

It is therefore a condition of acceptance to St Edmund's College that, if a parent is resident outside the United Kingdom, they must appoint an educational guardian. Parents must make arrangements for guardianship before their child arrives in the UK and, for those travelling on a student visa, before a CAS will be issued.

2. Who can be a guardian?

We strongly recommend that you use an accredited Guardianship Agency to undertake this responsibility for you. St Edmund's College is a member of AEGIS (Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students) (www.aegisuk.net). They maintain a list of Guardianship Agencies whom they monitor for compliance, safeguarding practices and reliability. They also regularly inspect their guardians to ensure there is no drop in their standard of care. The BSA (Boarding Schools Association) also has an accreditation for guardianships that puts providers through similar and rigorous processes.

There may be times where parents request a family friend or relative to be the nominated Educational Guardian. Although the nomination of a child's Educational Guardian is the responsibility of the parent, the College does have a statutory responsibility to ensure that arrangements that have been made are 'suitable'. For that reason, if a family is hoping to use a friend or relative as the Educational Guardian, the family must contact the school in advance to discuss the circumstances of the friend or relative. The friend or relative in question must be at least 25 years of age and they cannot be a full-time student living in accommodation provided by another educational institution. They must also reside within a reasonable radius of the College and understand that they may have to drive to the school, in the case of an emergency, on any given day. In this context, a relative is defined in the Children Act 1989 as being a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt'. Where the Educational Guardian is a friend or relative, it is also critical that they fully understand all of the duties that guardianship entails.

3. The role of a guardian

The normal expectation of someone, whether it be an agency, friend or relative, undertaking the role of an Educational Guardian is to:

- provide a 24-hour point of contact for parents, pupil, school (and host family if applicable). (Any out of hours contact would only be in the case of an emergency)
- act with delegated parental authority in the case of an emergency or crisis and in other matters agreed by parents
- provide pastoral and educational support
- liaise with the school and parents over holiday arrangements as required
- inform the school in writing about all details of travel arrangements made prior to the pupil leaving school for any weekend or for a longer holiday period. The school must know the exact details of pupil's accommodation and the methods of transportation if staying in the United Kingdom during a holiday period – this is a visa requirement
- communicate with Housemaster/Housemistress on a regular basis regarding the welfare of the pupil
- be willing to take oversight of hospital stays and aftercare in the case of illness or emergency
- to attend parent teacher evenings, or other school information evenings relevant to the pupil in question, if the parents are unable to attend

4. Changing Educational Guardian

In the event that a family needs to change the guardian of their child, they must inform their Housemaster/Housemistress immediately. If the new guardian is a friend or relative, there will need to be the same conversation regarding suitability as outlined above so that the College's safeguarding requirements are satisfied.

5. Absence of a required guardian

If a pupil does not have a guardian when required to by the school, or the appointed guardian is considered to be unsuitable by the school, the school will invite the parents to find a new guardian.

In the situation that a guardian is required in an emergency capacity, and the required guardian is unavailable, the school reserves the right to invoke temporary guardianship, via an AEGIS or BSA accredited agency with the costs being passed onto parents. When the emergency situation is resolved, there will need to be a parent-appointed guardianship in place or the pupil in question will be sent home with any associated costs being the responsibility of the parents.

6. Host Families & Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them, or a close relative (as defined in section 2) in their own home for 28 consecutive days or more. Anyone passing the 28 day threshold must register the arrangements with their Local Authority. The travel restrictions during the COVID restrictions highlighted this requirement. Any parents and/or Educational Guardians organising longer-term accommodation for their children, outside of term time, should be aware of this requirement.

Owner of policy:	Deputy Head Pastoral		
Reviewed by:	Head of Boarding	Director of Admissions & Marketing	
Frequency of review:	Annually		
Policy last reviewed:	Michaelmas	2022	
Next review date:	Michaelmas	2023	
Sub-Committee reviewed at:	Academic Sub-Committee		

Appendix 1 – Guardianship Registration Process

The process of registering your chosen Educational Guardian is different depending on what visa you are travelling into the country with.

- **Student Visa:** if you are travelling to St Edmund's College on a student visa, sponsored by us, you will register your chosen Educational Guardian's detail as part of the visa process with our partners Newland Chase. They will then inform the school of the details. It is, however, imperative that your nominated Educational Guardian is fully aware of all the requirements of this policy and the duties they are taking on. If you are using a friend or relative, you must have discussed your selection with us for the reasons outlined in section 2 of the above policy.
- **Travelling without a visa:** You may travel to and stay in the UK for up to six months without a visa, provided you meet the Standard Visitor eligibility requirements. If you are travelling to St Edmund's College in these circumstances, please email the details of your chosen guardian to admissions@stedmundscollege.org. We will then follow up with any discussions required, in line with section 2 of the above policy. When informing us of the details, please include full name, address, all contact numbers and e-mail address.

Appendix 2 – Educational Guardianship FAQs

Why do I need a guardian?

As part of their application, visa nationals must nominate a responsible adult as their guardian if they are under 18 years old. Many parents will choose a guardianship agency to fulfil this duty. Most UK schools and Universities will insist that a guardian is appointed to act on their parent's behalf to ensure their well-being in the UK.

What are the Guardian's responsibilities?

The primary responsibilities of the Education Guardian are outlined above in section 3 of the policy. Other responsibilities may include, on agreement between parents and guardian, tasks such as helping the child open a bank account and more regular "hands-on" pastoral support outside school to help them settle into the boarding environment. This can be particularly relevant with younger boarders.

When will I need my guardian?

Guardians should be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist students in the case of an emergency. Outside of emergency situations, they should always be on hand for a discussion as a parent would their own child. Parents and students should have the confidence to rely on their Guardian for anything they need.

Does the College recommend any Guardianships or guardians?

We do not specifically recommend a guardianship, but we would strongly recommend that parents chose an agency that is approved by AEGIS and/or BSA.

Is the school responsible for the appointment of a guardian for my son/daughter?

Absolutely not. This must be done by the parent(s).

How do I know if I have chosen a Guardianship or guardian that I can trust?

Look for one that has been accredited by AEGIS/BSA.

How much does it cost to have a Guardian in the UK?

This will vary between different Guardianship providers.

Can I arrange for a family member or friend to act as my son or daughter's guardian?

Yes, although it is important that the College is informed of the details of this individual. Full details of the requirements of a friend or relative as Educational Guardian are outlined in section 2 of the policy above.