

Queenswood



Guardianship Policy

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GUARDIANSHIP POLICY

Policy Statement

Following the Children Act (1989), the Protection of Children Act (1999) and the Care Standards Act (2000), Queenswood School, in promoting and safeguarding the welfare of every student, requires parents who do not live in the United Kingdom to appoint a guardian to act on their behalf.

The above legislation protects the rights of children and makes ‘proper and appropriate care’ a compulsory requirement.

It is a condition of entry to Queenswood that all students whose parents live overseas have a mature and responsible guardian who has permanent residence rights to live in the UK. This requirement applies to all girls throughout their education at Queenswood, regardless of age, including all Sixth Form girls.

During the term time the School is legally responsible for each student’s welfare, and undertakes delegated parental responsibilities. However, there are times (eg exeat/home weekends, flexi weekends, half term breaks, or when a child is unwell, suspended or expelled by the School etc) when the School must be able to hand over these parental responsibilities to another adult – a properly appointed guardian.

As a school we take the appointment by our parents of a suitable guardian for all our international students extremely seriously but it is of particular importance for the students who we sponsor under the Points Based System of the Home Office, since we have additional compliance regulations to adhere to with respect to the care of these students while they are in the UK and ensuring that suitable care arrangements are in place for them all at all times.

For Boarders whose parents are UK based but occasionally have to travel, we require that a temporary guardian is appointed and details are provided to the School.

It is the parents’, not the School’s responsibility, to select a guardian, bearing in mind the paramount importance of the welfare of their child when choosing an appropriate guardian.

Ideally the guardian should live as close to the school as possible but they must live within a maximum of a 50-mile radius or two-hour journey of the school – bearing in mind that Queenswood is located in an area which experiences a very high density of traffic and major congestion often occurs in the local area due to our close vicinity to the M25, M1 and A1.

A student’s guardian must be appointed before she commences her studies at Queenswood and if the student requires a visa, the visa application cannot be submitted until an appropriate guardian has been appointed.

Guardians may be a close family relative who is over 25 years of age and who is not a full time student, but is permanently resident in the UK, and has appropriate facilities in their home to accommodate the student. They must also speak a suitable level of English.

Guardian Agency

In the absence of a relative living in the UK, parents must choose an AEGIS accredited guardian. AEGIS is an independent organisation that sets standards for guardianship within the UK and accredits those guardianship organisations that pass a rigorous inspection process. Queenswood has school membership of AEGIS.

The UK has some of the best legislation and guidance to safeguard and protect children in the world. Queenswood takes its safeguarding responsibilities incredibly seriously (we refer you to our Safeguarding policy on our website <https://www.queenswood.org/explore/policies/>). It is equally important for safeguarding to be at the heart of any guardianship organisation.

Proactive guardianship can enhance the pastoral and compliment the academic experience of international students coming to schools in the UK, while AEGIS accreditation gives parents and schools confidence that the care will be of the highest quality and value. AEGIS is a registered charity and offers an accreditation and inspection service for Guardians and therefore there is peace of mind that AEGIS 'approved' Guardianships will offer high-quality care. AEGIS inspections are led by independent, experienced inspectors who will scrutinise practices, interview staff and students in the care of the guardianship company. If the guardianship organisation meets the requirements it becomes a fully accredited member of AEGIS and is re-inspected every four years across a thorough accreditation process and assessment framework.

Further information about this organisation is provided below.

AEGIS

<http://www.aegisuk.net/index.php>

https://aegisuk.net/organisations/?college=Guardianship&org_type=gold-standard

In exceptional circumstances, a close personal friend can be appointed as a guardian but this must be discussed in advance by the school before approval can be given.

An appointed guardian will:

1. Collect the student from the airport and she will stay with them until Induction Day if the student is travelling alone because her parents cannot accompany her on her first arrival in the UK.
2. Attend the Induction Day if at all possible with the student if her parent(s) are unable to attend.
3. Provide a 24-hour point of contact throughout the school term and to be ready to accommodate the student at short notice in case of an emergency, illness or crisis, either in their own home (if a private guardian) or at a suitable host family.
4. For any girls with ongoing or long-term serious medical conditions, the guardian must be available to accompany the student to any planned and/or emergency medical appointments, if the medical or House staff are not able to do so. They must also be willing to take oversight of hospital stays, including any aftercare that is necessary which precludes an immediate return to school.
5. If the student is taken ill for example with an infectious tummy or sickness bug and the School Doctor/Nurse requires them to be nursed away from the School, the guardian should be able to provide such care in their home as per the advice of our medical staff. This includes the requirement to isolate away from school for 48 hours in the case of sickness such as vomiting and diarrhoea.
6. If medication is required by the student during their stay with the guardian, it is the guardian's responsibility to ensure the student takes their medication.
7. Register the student with their own GP as a temporary resident so medical appointments can be booked if necessary while resident with their guardian.
8. Act with delegated parental authority in the case of an emergency or crisis.
9. Provide suitable accommodation for the student and an appropriate degree of care and supervision during home weekends and/or exeats, half term breaks and longer holidays and to collect and return the student themselves at times recommended by the school or make suitable travel arrangements.
10. Make suitable alternative arrangements, (with parental permission) if the guardian is unable to

accommodate the student due to their own holiday or travel commitments, and to inform the Housemistress/ Houseparent of any such arrangements with as much notice as possible.

11. Be involved in each and every arrangement for the student when residing away from school, for example when visiting the family of another pupil or friend, which includes the booking of taxis etc.
12. Be ready to liaise with the Housemistress/Houseparent on behalf of the parents and in any matters relating to the student's welfare.
13. Act as an escort to and from the airport check-in, if the student is travelling as an unaccompanied minor.
14. Inform the school in writing about all travel arrangements and to provide all the necessary details prior to the student leaving the school for a weekend or a longer holiday period, providing the exact details of where the student will be staying and with whom.
15. Attend important parent/teacher meetings or any other special meeting at the school on the parents' behalf if at all possible or required.
16. Assist the student in opening a bank account.
17. Assist the student in renewing her passport if necessary.
18. Assist the student in arranging any relevant visas for private overseas trips that are not linked to school activities
19. Assist the student in arranging any relevant Schengen visas for school trips to Europe

Guardians should also respect the rights, religion and customs of a child, and adhere to what is commonly regarded as best practice in the guardianship and hosting of international students. This includes having in place a proper agreement with the student's parents as to what the guardian's responsibilities are.

Queenswood always endeavours to give as much care, attention and support to each student as possible, but a guardian is in a position to centre his/her attention exclusively on their ward, thus providing extra emotional reassurance.

During a student's time at Queenswood, if the appointed guardian is considered to be unsatisfactory, the school will invite parents to find a new guardian who is AEGIS accredited.

As a last resort, the school may revoke a girl's place if an appropriate guardian isn't appointed.

Related Policies

Safeguarding Children Policy – see link below

<https://www.queenswood.org/explore/policies/>

ADDENDUM

COVID 19

Queenswood School follows the UK government guidelines on managing suspected or confirmed cases of Covid. Please see the latest Government guidelines here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>