



Educational Guardianship Policy

This policy applies to:

Senior School parents of overseas pupils

Persons responsible for the policy:

Deputy Head (Pastoral and Co-curricular) and Head of Admissions

Review dates:

Last review June 2025

Next review Sept 2026

Ardingly College is an independent day and boarding School in West Sussex for children aged between 2 and 18 and welcomes students from all over the world. It is a condition of entry to Ardingly College that parents based overseas appoint a UK based guardian to support their child at the College. The appointed guardian must be prepared to undertake the responsibilities detailed in this policy.

While UKVI does not require a UK-based guardian for students who are in full boarding during term time, Ardingly College requires all international students to have a nominated guardian in the UK to support emergency or out-of-term care, and to meet safeguarding expectations outlined in the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.”

An educational guardian is distinctly different from a legal guardian. The duty of the educational guardian is to act on behalf of the parent when the parent cannot be present and where the parent has agreed to delegate specific parental roles and responsibilities, however, the parent(s) will remain legally responsible for the student. The role of the educational guardian is to support the family and the College in the absence of the parent. Hereafter in this policy ‘guardian’ shall refer to the educational guardian as outlined above. ‘Parent’ shall be used to refer to the adult with legal responsibility for the child.

Guardians can be a close relative, close family friend, or be appointed from a guardianship agency who are accredited. When researching guardianship companies, parents should ensure that the agencies standards of safeguarding and data protection arrangements are at an acceptable level. We would therefore suggest that you research this fully; a good place to start would be the AEGIS website (<https://aegisuk.net/>). Please be aware that the responsibility for selection of a suitable guardian lies with the parent, the College does not provide its own guardianship service and cannot recommend any one individual company. Please note a member of Ardingly College Staff cannot be appointed as a guardian. **Non-accredited guardians must provide additional evidence and undergo direct verification by the school.**

The College requests that all guardians must be over the age of 25 years, and the guardian should:

- Be an adult who is not a student.
- Be fluent in English.
- Be a British citizen or have Settled Status in the UK.
- Have a permanent place of residence in the UK, which is a private address and not operated as a commercial enterprise, such as a hotel or youth hostel.
- Be easily contactable by mobile telephone and email as a 24/7 emergency contact and support.
- Live not more the 90 mins away from Ardingly.
- Should be available to collect the student from a UK airport/College in the event of travel plans being disrupted or cancelled.
- Cannot have any criminal convictions, be subject to any ongoing safeguarding concerns or criminal investigations or pose a safeguarding risk to the pupil. This also applies to any adult residing at the guardian’s address

Whilst the appointment of the guardian is the responsibility of the parents, the College must approve the appointment and request all individual guardians provide a copy of their current passport and a **‘letter of undertaking’** to the school as set out by the UKVI. If at any point you change the guardian of your child, you must inform the Head of Admissions immediately via email registration@ardingly.com All guardian-related documentation, including copies of identification, proof of settled status, and the letter of undertaking, will be retained by the College as required by UKVI sponsor duties.

Information

A guardian may become the primary point of contact for the College, where there is no immediate access to the parent, or the urgency of a situation requires it. The College must at all times have accurate contact information for the guardian (including telephone/mobile, email and postal address). It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the College with accurate contact information for the guardian. The College will then write to the guardian to confirm these details.

A guardian should inform parents of any College concerns at the earliest opportunity. A guardian may be required and should be prepared to convey/translate personal information to the parent about their child.

A guardian may receive copies of all College correspondence including reports if the parent wishes/agrees.

Safeguarding

If the College believes that the guardian appointed by the parent does not promote the welfare, physical welfare and emotional wellbeing of the child, the College will insist upon a change to the named guardian. If the College becomes aware of any safeguarding concern in relation to the arrangements being put in place by the parent or guardian, the College will contact the relevant agencies immediately.

The College must be satisfied that the care arrangements are satisfactory. For this reason, the College has designed a **Guide to Guardianship Standards** which establishes the minimum standards the College would expect from a guardian, and which will be used as a “bench-mark” to assess whether or not the out of College care arrangements are satisfactory.

A copy of the **Guide to Guardianship Standards** is available from the registrar and will be reviewed in line with this policy.

All guardians will be provided with a copy of the **Guide to Guardianship Standards**. Agreeing to act as a guardian to a student of the College will imply that the terms of the Guide are accepted.

Guide to Guardianship Standards

What we expect of a Guardian:

- Provide emotional and practical support for the student.
- To provide a safe, clean and welcoming environment for the student when needed, for example when the school is closed, or international travel is not possible.
- To be in touch with the student on a regular basis.
- To be a point of contact with the College if for any reason the parents are not available.
- To be a source of security, handle, and exchange sensitive and urgent information.
- To help a student adapt to their new environment, appreciating that they may be homesick or experiencing a change of culture.
- To seek advice from the College if they are concerned about the student.
- To discuss all serious decisions with the College if for any reason the parents are not available.
- To be available for consultation over medical or other emergencies and to make decisions in the unlikely event that the parents are not available to do so.
- Provide accommodation when the student, for any reason, needs to be cared for away from school:
- To support College discipline and to accommodate a suspended student.

- If appropriate, to give consent to a Child Protection Investigation and to be present.
- To contact the parents and the College if there is a serious emergency while the student is staying with them.
- To understand that students may well need to stay with the Guardian at the end and start of terms to facilitate international travel plans.
- To live within a 90 mins travelling distance of the College so that their duties as a Guardian can be fulfilled and students can be collected from the College in good time, if any emergencies occur.

The College can accept no responsibility during exeat weekends, half terms, or holidays for students whose parents are resident abroad, nor during any period for which a student has received an external suspension. The parents and guardians of such students must make holiday arrangements including travel to and from the College well in advance. We do not consider unsupervised stays in hotels, Airbnb, bed and breakfast premises or university halls of residence to provide an adequate level of accommodation or care.

Parents and guardians must advise the student's Housemaster/Housemistress of the guardianship arrangements for each exeat, half-term and holiday.

Should the College deem that the care arrangements are unsuitable, the College will:

- Contact the parents and guardian in writing, setting out the College's concerns and reasons why the College deems the care inappropriate.
- Give parents 72 hours to agree with the College's proposed changes to the out of College care arrangements;
- Take immediate action if the changes are not made in the appropriate timeframe. In these circumstances the student would be asked to leave College forthwith and the College's sponsorship of the student would be withdrawn with immediate effect.