



Parent Handbook

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1. Welcome and Introduction

Dear Parent,

Thank you for your interest in My Guardians educational guardianship services!

At My Guardians we have many years of experience in guardianship and offer a full range of services to assist your child while he or she is studying in the UK and act as a link between you, as a parent living abroad, and

your child's school.

We keep in regular contact with our students during term time and assist with any problems that may arise. We arrange host families for them to stay during exehats and half-term breaks, transport to and from school, host family or airport at the beginning and end of holidays.

2. Role of the Guardian, Homestay & School

Role of the Guardian

It is recommended that students who study in boarding schools and whose parents resign abroad should have an Educational Guardian.

My Guardians personnel have many years of experience in educational guardianship and will be happy to become your child's guardian.

Who is my child's Guardian?

Irina Bowman, Director of My Guardians, will be nominated and registered with school as your child's Educational Guardian. She will handle all communication between you, your child's school and your child's host family.

Irina Bowman is an experienced Educational Guardian. Over the past 20 years she has been focusing on school placement and guardianship and established close connections with many boarding schools. She works with a team of host families, and between them they have an extensive knowledge of boarding schools and guardianship.

My Guardians personnel will ensure all necessary arrangements are in place for your child, and confirmations sent to all parties, including you and your child's school. You and your child will have regular contact with My Guardians by emails and phone calls.

Irina Bowman or another representative from My Guardians will visit your child at school on a regular basis. We can also visit parents meetings and other important school events. We will visit host family where your child will be staying; we inspect and re-inspect them regularly.

Role of the Homestay

My Guardians is experienced in selecting host families for international students attending boarding schools. We have host families in Kent and they who take good care of our students attending schools nearby. We have regular contact with our families and value our relations.

We take great care to ensure that your child will be placed with somewhere they will feel at home and are treated as a member of the family. We ask our host families to include our students into outings and activities, and treat him or her as a member of their family. We explain to our students what to expect from host families. Relations between students and host families are a very important part of their life in the UK. Students in our guardianship are placed with specially selected host families whom are known personally to us and have undergone DBS security checks.

Role of the School

When your child is at school, your house-parents will take responsibility for day-to-day academic progress and welfare of your son or daughter. We will stay in regular contact with them to make sure we are updated on your child wellbeing and progress.

Soon after your child's arrival to school we will contact the house-parents to discuss how your child settled into his or her new life at school. During the year we will attend parents' meeting and report back to you on the academic progress of your child.

Boarding staff at school will have our contact details, including our emergency phone line. We will speak with house staff on a regular basis and will visit them at school when there is a reason for meeting and discussion. We will support your son or daughter while he or she is at school and respond to any concern you or school arise.

3. Our Commitment to Safeguarding and Child Protection - please find copy of our policy included

My Guardians recognises its responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection. We have Safeguarding Policy in place and we promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We have duty of care to keep children safe and to look after the child's best interests. We undertake rigorous checks on all who work with us, all our personnel are DBS checked.

My Guardians widely promote this policy and procedures; it applies to all our personnel, including hosts and all members of their families, guardianship students and their parents and everyone else who comes into contact with My Guardians students. The policy reflects My Guardians position on safeguarding and what we

do to keep our students safe. We expect that everyone who is working with My Guardians and involve with our students will follow the principals of this policy.

Purpose of our Safeguarding Policy

- To provide protection for students who receive My Guardians services.
- To provide My Guardians personnel with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a student may be at risk of harm.

With this Parent Handbook we will send you a copy of our Safeguarding Policy for you to read.

4. Missing Student policy - please find copy of our policy included

My Guardians is committed to safeguarding and promoting the health and welfare of its guardianship students. The Missing Student Policy is part of our Safeguarding Policy and guidance for this policy is based on recommendations taken from DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018, Working together to Safeguard Children 2018 and DfE: Children Missing in Education, September 2016. This Policy is available to all our guardianship students, parents, partner schools and guardianship personnel.

My Guardians could be contacted by schools, host families, taxi companies or other members of its personnel, if your child and our guardianship student is missing. Immediate actions will be taken when My Guardians is notified that a child is lost or has gone missing.

With this Parent Handbook we will send you a copy of our Missing Student Policy (Appendix 4 to our Safeguarding Policy) for you to read.

5. Prevent / Anti-Radicalisation – please find copy of our policy included

Since 1 July 2015, it is the responsibility of all schools and guardianship organisations to be cognisant of the statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

The main aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Protecting Vulnerable People from being drawn into Terrorism is part of the Prevent strategy.

Safeguarding children and providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into extremist activity is at the heart of the revised Prevent strategy and My Guardians personnel must also be aware of how to identify vulnerability and assess risk.

With this Parent Handbook we will send you a copy of our Anti-Radicalisation – Prevent Duty Policy (Appendix 6 to our Safeguarding Policy) for you to read.

6. Statement of Services in line with Parent Contract

My Guardians Statement of Services

Emergency Services

- ✚ 24 hour on call emergency service during term time, exeats and half terms for boarding schools, to our guardianship students, parents and homestay families
- ✚ Emergency medical sickness arrangements
- ✚ School suspension or expulsion arrangements.

Host Families

- ✚ Finding an approved Homestay family for our guardianship student
- ✚ Ensuring suitable checks are performed on the Homestay family, including DBS check
- ✚ Regular monitoring of the student whilst in the care of the host family
- ✚ Ensuring the host families is monitored and has all the necessary paperwork from us.

Transport

- ✚ Transport arrangements to and from our Homestay family during exeats, half terms and end of term or, as necessary
- ✚ Airport transfer arrangements for exeats, half terms and end of term during school holidays
- ✚ Coordinate ticket booking for planes, trains and coach, as required.

Wellbeing & Academic Support

- ✚ Regular liaison with the school and the parents
- ✚ Personal advice and support for our guardianship student
- ✚ Visiting the student at school and parents evening attendance.

General Assistance

- ✚ Mobile phone top-ups or SIM card purchases
- ✚ Purchasing of school uniform.

7. Contact Details and Who to Contact if Emergency or Problem

In case of emergency please contact Mrs Irina Bowman, who will be nominated as Educational Guardian of your son or daughter. Telephone +44 (0) 7919425660, anytime, 24 hours line for emergencies.

Email info@myguardians.co.uk.

8. Transport arrangements

- Who will meet your son or daughter at the airport?

My Guardians can make all transport arrangements for your child. We will collect your child from the airport at the start of terms and collect from school to take to the airports at the end of terms. If your child is travelling back home for half terms then we arrange airport travel too. If you are arriving to UK with your child or prefer to make your own travel arrangements please inform us and we will leave this with you. Otherwise we are always happy to meet and greet your child at the airport or arrange for our driver to pick up your child and safely deliver to school.

- Use of our drivers or taxis

For transporting our guardianship students we only use drivers who are DBS checked. Our driver will be meeting your child in the arrival lounge holding a board with your child's name and name of our child's school. We always inform parents in advance of the name of the driver. All drivers have ID with them to identify themselves.

We book our drivers well in advance and send a copy of confirmation to you, your child and to school.

- Use of trains or coaches

If you require your child to return to school or travel to the airport by train or coach and you want them to travel independently, you will ask you to sign our **Parents Permissions for Independent Travel Form** so that you take responsibility for your child once they left school, airport or host family. It is acceptable for older students to travel with friends or on their own once they are 16 years old.

- Who is responsible for organising transport at different times, e.g. start & end of terms, half terms, exeats?

Should you wish us to arrange transport for your child, please send your request to our email at least 3 weeks in advance. We will book the transport and send a copy of booking to you, your child, host family (if required) and school. We will make sure that your child will be collected and returned to boarding house at appropriate times as recommended by school.

- What information is needed from parents and to whom should it be sent and by what deadlines?

We will need full details of your child flight, including airline name and flight number, departure/arrival time and airport and terminal details. Please send all details to info@myguardians.co.uk

9. Instructions on the procedure for requesting and arranging or changing exeat, half term, holiday or other periods of homestay

If your child is staying with one of our host family during exeats or half term then we will arrange either for the host family to collect and return your child to school or My Guardians personnel will be responsible for organising this. You will be make the arrangements and confirm to you, your child and school.

Our host families have appropriate car insurance for transporting students.

Host family stay must be booked well in advance and in case of cancellation a 3-week notice is required.

Cancellation of a host family stay more than 7 days and up to 3 weeks is subject to 50% charge and less than 7 days 100 % charge.

10. Arrangements for Homestay in Emergency e.g. medical issue or suspension

In case of emergency, such as medical issue or suspension due to child's misbehaviours we have emergency host families where we would place your child. As in emergencies not all host families can be available at such a short notice. Your child will then be transferred to another host family where he or she will stay until allowed to return to school.

If there is a medical issue then we will discuss with you at the time if it is safe to place a child with a host family. There might be a risk to the host family if your child's illness is contagious.

During current pandemic many schools agree that boarding students should remain at school, if they

become unwell. They will be isolated there from other children and looked after medical staff. Some schools would prefer host families to look after them. This puts the health of homestays at risk and is not within Government guidelines. We have Emergency Contingency Plan in place and will review the situation as new recommendation from government comes out. We will do everything we can to support your child, but we have to follow Government recommendations.

11. Information on the type of accommodation offered and facilities available for the student

Host family is required to ensure a comfortable living environment for your child. Most of the accommodations will be single room or single room on suite, twin or double room for one or for two to share. Host family will arrange for your child to have access to a private or shared bathroom with a lock, a private space to study with a suitable desk, chair and lamp, as well as hanging and drawer space for clothing. Host will let your child access to a kitchen storage area to keep snacks and food properly. My Guardians will ensure that no more than 3 students are placed with the same homestay at any one time, unless in exceptional circumstances.

12. Complaints procedure for parents and to whom these should be addressed

My Guardians and its personnel always promptly respond to any problems arise and will try to solve them in a professional and friendly manner. Please let us know at once by phone or email if there is anything you are concerned about and we try to solve the situation. Sometimes problems arise due to misunderstanding and can be easily solved.

In the unlikely event that the problem has not been solved, please write to us formally. In first instance please write to Mrs Irina, Director of My Guardians, email info@myguardians.co.uk

We have Complaints Policy in place for such cases – a copy of our Complain Policy will be attached.

In the unlikely event that If you are not fully satisfied with how My Guardians dealt with your complain you may refer the matter to AEGIS for further investigation.

13. Arrangements for the provision of pastoral & academic updates on the student's welfare and progress at school and with the homestay in line with service provided where appropriate

We will have regular correspondence and meetings with the Boarding House personnel and Tutors by visiting school or over the phone discussions. During such meetings and conversations we will ask house parents and tutors for pastoral and academic updates on your child. We will enquire about your child welfare and progress on a regular basis and also during parents' meeting once a year, which we will attend. We will send you a full report after our conversations and after attending such meeting. If there are any concerns from you or your child about life or academic progress at school we will organise unplanned visit to school to discuss the problem. We will report back to you about such visit.

14. Arrangement for expenses

Your child deposit for the amount of £1,000 (one thousand) will be used for your child's expenses, e.g. stay with our host family, transport booked by us for your child and our transport expenses for visits to school. All expenses will be discussed with you in advance. We will send you statement of your deposit account at the end of each term and ask to top it up if necessary. Deposit usually topped up by parents once a term or during the term time if required when deposit falls below £300 (three hundred).

Our registration fees of £150 (one hundred) are payable by all new student once upon registration and are non-refundable.

Full details of our fees have been sent to you separately with information on our guardianship services. Please contact us if you need any further questions.

15. Advice on life in the UK

British life and customs might differ from customs in your country and here are just some useful tips we give our students for to follow:

- ✚ Being polite – British people say “please” and “thank you” a lot, and you should too when you are in the UK. We like to say “sorry” too – sometimes even when it's not our fault!
- ✚ Food – In the UK, people usually eat a light lunch around midday and have the main meal in the evening about 6-7pm. Do tell your host family if you really don't like something or you are hungry.
- ✚ Travel - We would always recommend that your child does not travel alone. We are always happy to book a driver from a taxi company known to us and DBS checked by police. All children under the age

of 16 years should not be travelling independently by public transport or book taxi themselves.

16. What parents can expect from a homestay

We can reassure you that your child will be welcomed by our host family and enjoy homestay during exeat and half terms.

At My Guardians before we place children with host families we make sure that all members of the host families over the age of 16 has been DBS checked. We visit their homes and make sure the homestay complies with all AEGIS requirements to ensure a high standard and level of safety and security. We re-visit and re-inspect our host families on a regular basis. We also make sure that the host family has all necessary information about your child, e.g. allergies or medical needs, if any. This information we will ask you to give us during guardianship registration process.

We will send you Host Family Profile where you find some information about hosts, their family and home. We have full information in our Student Handbook on what your child can expect from host family during homestay. Please read it with your child before his or hers arrival to UK, it has many useful information and tips on rules and expectation during homestay.

17. Details on cancelling the agreement

My Guardians or the parents may cancel this agreement by giving to the other party at least one full term's notice in writing. If such notice is given during term time or during holidays the termination of the contract will be at the end of the following term. The parents will be liable for one-term guardianship fees in case if one term notice is not given. More information can be found in Parent Contract.

18. Arrangements for involvement with AEGIS questionnaires

From time to time and especially during the process of My Guardians accreditation and re-inspection AEGIS will send to parents' questionnaires. We kindly ask our students' parents replay to such requests from AEGIS and complete information as required.

19. Advice for helping students to deal with homesickness

We understand that it can be difficult to be away from home, especially if it is for the first time for your child. It may take some time to feel at home here in the UK, this is natural because a lot of things are happening – your child will have a new place to live, will be meeting new people and learning about a new culture and language! We will advise your child to relax, especially when staying with host family and take some time; your child should feel better after a few weeks. If your child or you would like to speak to us, please contact us and we will be happy to listen and give some advice and support.

Some children will become homesick; most will cope with these feelings. Your child should try to join clubs or get involved in activities early on before isolation or loneliness sets in.

Going to a new country and being part of a new culture can be confusing and difficult. Encourage your child to learn as much about the British culture, customs and behaviour as possible. People will be more helpful and much kinder if you are polite and show respect for others.

20. List of useful contact details including 24/7 emergency contact at the organisation

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Irina Bowman, Director of My Guardians, she will also be nominated as your child's Educational Guardian.

Telephone: +44 (0) 7919425660, email: info@myguardians.co.uk

21. Arrangement and advice on student finances, e.g. pocket money / bank accounts / credit cards / mobile phones

We can help your child to open an account with a UK based bank, if this is required. Most banks agree to open accounts for older international students. We can arrange a letter to be issued by school for the bank and collect other documents. We will be happy to give you further details if you require this support from us. We can accompany your child to the bank. If your child already has a credit or debit card from your local bank then this will work well in UK. We always advise our students to look after their cards and have only small amount of cash with them.

End of Parents Handbook

Tel: +44(0) 7919425660, email: info@myguardians.co.uk

My Guardians Ltd is registered in England & Wales, Registration Number: 8920466
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