



St. Francis' College

Guardianship Policy

Introduction

The 'College' refers to all the staff and pupils of the Prep Department and Senior School which includes Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Pre-Prep (Key Stage 1), Prep (Key Stage 2), and Senior School (Key Stages 3-5).

This policy has been written in line with Part F (Boarders' rights, advocacy and complaints) Standard 11 (Boarders' induction and individual support) and Part I (Staffing, guardians and prefects) Standard 22 (Educational guardians) of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (5 September 2022).

Guardianship Arrangements

The College recognises that the provision of suitable educational guardianship arrangements is an essential part of pastoral care. Each boarder must have a suitable educational guardian before taking up their place at St Francis' College. This is a contractual condition and part of the College admission process. An educational 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.

Where a boarder has come to the UK on a child student visa, the UK Visas and Immigration organisation (UKVI) requires the College to ensure that care arrangements are suitable for pupils under eighteen at the time when they are in the UK and not just when in the care of the school. The College will record where the boarders are residing, who is responsible for them and what the care arrangements are during weekends and holidays throughout the sponsorship period.

The College will insist that the boarders have competent and properly appointed educational guardians. The appointment of these guardians is the responsibility of the parents. However, the College will take appropriate steps to ensure that the guardianship arrangement is promoting the welfare, physical wellbeing and emotional wellbeing of the boarder (NMS 22.3).

It is expected that the educational guardian keeps in regular contact, providing advice and support as needed. Any concerns about an educational guardian arrangement will be acted upon immediately and referred to the relevant agencies (NMS 22.4).

Under no circumstances can a member of the College staff be appointed as an educational guardian for boarders (NMS 22.5).

Information for parents

- Every full time boarder **must** have a suitable educational guardian **before** taking up their place at the College. The parent must choose and appoint a suitable educational guardian and it is then the parent and not the school who is responsible for the welfare of their child while staying with the appointed educational guardian. The parents are responsible for carrying out appropriate safeguarding checks on the educational guardian. Each boarder must continue to have a guardian while they are in attendance at the College, even after they have turned eighteen.
- The College recommends that parents use only AEGIS (The Association of Education and Guardianship of International Pupils - <https://aegisuk.net>) accredited guardianship agencies. AEGIS is an authoritative association for inspecting and accrediting guardianship organisations.
- A suitable educational guardian would preferably be a responsible adult over twenty five, but must be at least twenty-one years of age. A university student resident in student accommodation or halls of residence would not be considered a suitable educational guardian by the College.
- An educational guardian must be resident in the UK and be in close enough proximity to the pupil and the College to provide care in a happy home environment. They may be a family member, a family friend, a guardianship agency, a host family, or other responsible UK-based adult. They must be able to offer to arrange accommodation for the boarder during mid-term breaks and school holidays, as the College and Boarding House are closed during these periods. Hostels for students in Further or Higher Education are neither suitable nor acceptable accommodation for boarders who are pupils at the College.
- In order that a boarder is able to become proficient in the use of English at the earliest opportunity, it is preferred that English is the language spoken in the home where the boarder will be staying. It is essential, at the very least, that the guardian has sufficient English to be able to converse easily with the College.

Duties of a Guardian

- An educational guardian's responsibilities for a boarder under the age of eighteen should include being in regular contact to provide advice and support, take responsibility for the boarder if they are unwell, suspended or expelled, or in the unlikely event that the College has to close for any reason. **If a boarder shows signs of a serious infectious disease, such as flu, Coronavirus (COVID-19), or diarrhoea or vomiting, they will be required to take leave from the school for a minimum of 48 hours after symptoms have ceased.** For Boarders this means that their parents/guardians will be contacted if they are unwell and they will be required to be collected and cared for at home until they are 48 hours free of symptoms and are well enough to return.

- Guardians are expected to attend parents' evenings and other important occasions, and therefore it is preferable that their place of residence is not more than one-to-one-and-a-half hours travelling time away from the College. Boarders who are eighteen still need an educational guardian whilst they are registered with the College.
- Guardians must inform the College if they are going to be away from home, e.g. on holiday or travelling on business, and are not able to fulfil their guardianship responsibilities. If they leave the UK for any reason, a deputy or stand in guardian must be appointed and the College notified of their contact details.
- **Parents and guardians are responsible for the collection and transport of boarders at the start and end of each half term, or for any temporary absence from College.** Where the College has provided assistance, e.g. by booking taxi services to the airport, for reasons of good safeguarding practice, the Boarding House will undertake to be on call to the boarder and their parents or guardian, until they reach their destination (NMS 11.2).
- If requested, the College will arrange for boarders to travel with a reputable taxi firm on the official arrival and departure dates. Educational guardians are expected to make all other necessary travel arrangements, including, if necessary, visas for overseas holidays and visits.
- Parents and guardians must adhere to specified term dates. The Boarding House is open from 12 noon on the day prior to the start of term to facilitate travel arrangements. At the end of each term the Boarding House will close at 12:30pm, and at 5:30pm if it is half term. Educational guardians will be responsible for accommodation outside these times should early arrival or late departure be deemed unavoidable.
- A Guardian must assist with the removal and storage of personal belongings at the end of each academic term. Boarders who are not returning to continue their studies at the College must remove all their personal belongings on the date of their departure. The College will not provide any storage facility after this date. Boarders who are returning to continue their studies at the College may leave two suitcases or two boxes only, during the period of school closure. These limits will be not be negotiable.

Duties of the College

- The College reserves the right to refuse to accept the nomination for a guardian for whatever reason it deems suitable. Any change of educational guardians during a boarder's residence at St. Francis' College must be notified in writing to the College and must be acceptable to them.
- The College will undertake to liaise with nominated educational guardians and keep them informed of the educational progress of boarders, including the forwarding of reports, tracking and invitations to attend parents' evenings.

- The College will undertake to liaise with nominated educational guardians and keep them informed at all times about the welfare, physical wellbeing and emotional wellbeing of boarders (NMS22.3).
- If the College has any concerns about an educational guardian arrangement, the concern will be acted upon immediately and referred to any relevant agencies. The steps that will be taken should the concern related to the harm (or likely harm) of a boarder are set out in Part 1 of Keeping children Safe in Education (2022) (NMS 22.4).
- Whilst College staff cannot be appointed as educational guardians for boarders, this does not prevent College staff supporting a boarder in an emergency situation where that support has been risk assessed through consultation with the Senior Leadership Team or Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL) (NMS 22.5).

Related policies:

Boarding Infectious Diseases Policy

Boarding Care of Boarders who are Unwell Policy

College Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

College Behaviour and Discipline Policy

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022)

Websites:

<https://aegisuk.net>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

Reviewed By	Head of Boarding
Authorised By	Head
Effective From	January 2023
Next Review Due	January 2025

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Appendix A

The attached guardianship agreement form must be signed and returned to the College by the parent, prior to their child taking up their place at the College. A copy of the agreement should be retained by the parents and the appointed guardian. To The Head, St. Francis' College, Letchworth, Hertfordshire SG6 3PJ, UK.

I, _____ , parent of _____
(Name of Parent) (Name of Child)

Nominate the following person to be the educational guardian of my child, while she is a full time boarding student at St Francis' College:

Please fill in all answers using block capitals.

Name of proposed Educational Guardian: _____

Address of proposed Educational Guardian: _____

Telephone (Home/Mobile): _____

Telephone (Work, if applicable): _____

E- Mail: _____

I understand that the College's policy and guidelines are for the safety of my child and that the College reserves the right to refuse a nominee for guardianship. I also understand that the responsibility is my own for the final choice and vetting of the suitability of the Guardian, whom the College has accepted as my proposal.

I have read and understood the document concerning the duties of guardianship and state that I believe the nominee to meet these requirements.

Signed _____
(Signature of parent)

Date _____

This page must be signed and returned to the College by the **proposed educational guardian**, who should also keep a copy.

To The Head, St. Francis' College, Letchworth, Hertfordshire SG6 3PJ, UK.

Full Name:

_____ (Block Capitals)

Address:

Date of Birth:

Telephone (Home/Mobile):

Telephone (Work, if applicable):

E- Mail:

Is there any reason in law, or in any other way, which makes you, or anyone in your household, unsuited to care for a young person in your home?	Yes / No Please delete as necessary
Type of accommodation where you live and where your ward would be, when staying with you e.g. private house, flat etc.	
Would your ward have a separate bedroom? If no, please state with whom she would be sharing.	
Others in the household	
Your employment	
Are you English-speaking?	Yes / No Please delete as necessary

I, the undersigned, state that the information which I have given here is correct and that I have read and understood the document concerning the duties of educational guardianship and agree to accept responsibility for _____ while they are a student boarding full time at St Francis' College.

Signed

Date
