

# Educational Guardianship Policy



CATERHAM  
SCHOOL

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## Purpose of this Policy

Caterham School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils. This Educational Guardianship Policy sets out the School's expectations and requirements for guardianship arrangements for pupils whose parents or legal guardians reside outside the United Kingdom.

This policy applies to all pupils under the age of 18, including those sponsored under the **Child Student visa route**, and should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Boarding Policies, and UKVI sponsor duties.

## Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by, and operates in accordance with, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Care Standards Act 2000
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2022), Standard 22
- UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) Appendix Child Student
- Student Sponsor Guidance (UKVI)
- AEGIS and BSA guidance on educational guardianship

## Responsibility for Appointing a Guardian

Caterham School **does not appoint educational guardians** on behalf of parents. It is the responsibility of parents or legal guardians who live outside the UK to appoint a suitable educational guardian or guardianship organisation that meets the requirements set out in this policy and, where applicable, UKVI regulations.

The School reserves the right to approve or reject any proposed guardianship arrangement on safeguarding grounds.

## Role of the Educational Guardian

An Educational Guardian acts on behalf of parents during periods when the School is not responsible for the pupil, including (but not limited to):

- exeat weekends
- half-term and holiday periods
- emergencies
- illness, suspension or exclusion

During term time, Caterham School assumes parental responsibility for pupils while they are resident at school. At all other times, responsibility must be transferred to a suitable adult guardian.

Educational Guardians are expected to:

- act in the pupil's best interests at all times
- provide appropriate care, supervision and accommodation
- act with delegated parental authority in emergencies
- support pupils pastorally and practically
- liaise with the School regarding travel, leave and accommodation arrangements
- ensure that safeguarding and welfare standards are upheld

### **School Expectations for Educational Guardians**

Whether an individual guardian or a guardianship organisation is appointed, Caterham School requires that guardians:

- are **aged 25 or over** (school safeguarding requirement)
- are **British citizens or hold settled status in the UK**
- reside **within approximately two hours' travel of the School**
- are available as a **24-hour emergency contact**
- are able to respond promptly if required. Guardians must reside within a two-hour travel distance (by car or public transport) of Caterham School to ensure they can respond promptly to emergencies or school requests.

While UKVI does not specify a proximity requirement, the School considers this to be best practice in safeguarding and pupil welfare.

Where a private individual is appointed as a guardian, and that guardian is temporarily unavailable, the School will require the nomination of a UK-based contact who also meets the all requirements above.

### **Accredited Guardianship Organisations**

Caterham School strongly recommends that parents appoint a guardianship organisation accredited by **AEGIS** or certified by the **Boarding Schools' Association (BSA)**.

Accredited guardianship organisations:

- operate in line with recognised sector best practice
- are subject to regular external inspection
- carry out enhanced DBS checks on all adults in host households
- provide safeguarding training and ongoing monitoring
- conduct welfare visits and maintain regular contact with pupils

From experience, visa applications supported by accredited organisations are more straightforward and less likely to be delayed, as safeguarding arrangements are clearly documented and understood by UKVI.

The School expects parents to give serious consideration to using an accredited organisation before proposing a private guardianship arrangement.

### **Private Guardians**

The School recognises that some families may wish to nominate a private guardian, such as a close relative or trusted family friend.

Where a private guardian is proposed, the School requires:

- completion of the School's **Guardian Agreement Form**
- a signed **Letter of Undertaking** (UKVI requirement)
- proof of British citizenship or settled status
- copies of passports for **all adults living in the household**
- proof of address
- confirmation of all adults regularly living at the address
- additional safeguarding documentation as requested

UKVI may refuse a Child Student visa where they are not satisfied that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place, including where any adult in the household has a relevant criminal conviction, presents a safeguarding risk, or any offences overseas that would be considered relevant under UK safeguarding law.

The School reserves the right to request an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check or equivalent overseas criminal record check for any private guardian. Guardians are under a continuous obligation to inform the School immediately of any future criminal conviction, caution, or offence overseas pertaining to any adult in their household; failure to do so may result in the immediate withdrawal of the School's approval of the guardianship arrangement.

### **UKVI Child Student Visa Requirements**

For pupils sponsored under the **Child Student visa route**, Caterham School has additional statutory duties, including:

- confirming that pupils are entering a **permitted living arrangement**
- holding a valid **Letter of Undertaking** where required
- retaining accurate records of pupils' contact details and whereabouts
- making reasonable endeavours to collect travel and arrival information where a nominated guardian is used

The School will not issue the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), which is required to support a Child Student visa application, until appropriate guardianship arrangements have been approved and all required documentation has been received.

Where an AEGIS/BSA-accredited agency is used, the School accepts that specific homestay details may be finalised after the visa application, provided the agency confirms it assumes responsibility for the vetting and suitability of the placement.

Parents and guardians are under a strict statutory obligation to notify the School's Admissions and Compliance Team immediately—and in any event within 24 hours—of any change to the pupil's UK residential address or the guardian's contact details. This is essential to ensure the School remains compliant with UKVI reporting duties; failure to provide accurate address details may jeopardize the pupil's visa status.

### **Monitoring and Safeguarding Oversight**

In accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding, Caterham School will take reasonable steps to satisfy itself that guardianship arrangements promote the welfare, physical wellbeing and emotional wellbeing of pupils.

If concerns arise regarding a guardianship arrangement, the School will:

- act immediately to safeguard the pupil
- refer concerns to relevant agencies where appropriate
- require parents to make alternative arrangements if necessary

### **Failure to Meet Requirements**

If at any time a guardianship arrangement no longer meets the School's requirements, Caterham School reserves the right to:

- require parents to appoint an accredited guardianship organisation
- refuse to allow the pupil to leave School care
- suspend or exclude the pupil until suitable arrangements are in place

These measures will only be taken where necessary to protect pupil welfare and meet safeguarding or regulatory obligations.

### **Review of Policy**

This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with safeguarding standards and UKVI requirements.