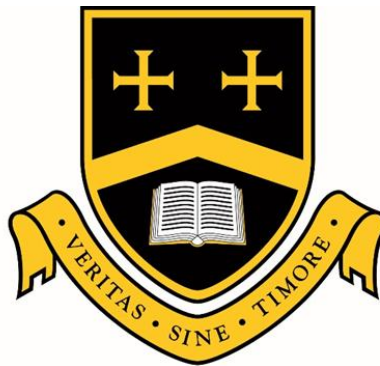


Educational Guardianship Policy (Senior School)



CATERHAM
SCHOOL

Policy Author: Matthew Wood, Deputy Head (Admissions and Partnerships)

Date Reviewed by Author: August 2026

Next Review: August 2027

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, including Part 9 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (the version in force from 1 September 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (May 2026), Standards 22 and 23
- UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) Appendix Child Student
- Student Sponsor Guidance (UKVI), Document 2: Sponsorship Duties
- 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, communicating concerns to the school at the earliest opportunity
- 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 (by car or public transport) of the School**
- are available as a **24-hour emergency contact**
- are able to respond promptly if required
- disclose all adults regularly living or regularly staying in the household, and notify the School immediately of any changes

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 all of the requirements above.

Members of School staff must not be appointed as educational guardians for pupils at the School. This reflects National Minimum Standard 22.5 and, for pupils sponsored under the Child Student visa route, the requirement in the Immigration Rules that a nominated guardian must not be a member of staff at the sponsoring school. This does not prevent staff from supporting a pupil in an emergency, where that support has been risk assessed and agreed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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 (aged 18 or over) who regularly live at, or regularly stay at, the address, including those whose primary residence may be elsewhere but who spend a significant amount of time at the property
- for each such adult, the name, date of birth, address, contact details and, where they have one, National Insurance number required for the Letter of Undertaking
- 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. Approval may be refused or withdrawn where safeguarding concerns exist even without a criminal conviction.

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 jeopardise the pupil's visa status.

Travel Arrangements

Where a Child Student has a nominated guardian, Caterham School will make reasonable endeavours to obtain and retain details of:

- the pupil's arrival date and travel arrangements to the UK
- the identity and contact details of the person collecting the pupil on arrival
- the address where the pupil will be staying if they are not proceeding directly to School
- departure arrangements when the pupil leaves School care

Where such information is unavailable, the School will retain a record of reasonable attempts made to obtain it.

Private Fostering

Caterham School does not approve guardianship arrangements that would constitute private fostering. A private fostering arrangement arises where a pupil under the age of 16 (or under 18 where the pupil has a disability) is cared for and accommodated for 28 days or more by someone who is not a parent or close relative. A close relative here means a grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle, or step-parent; a cousin, more distant relative or family friend is not.

Parents must tell the School before putting in place any arrangement that may fall within this definition. This obligation applies whether or not the School has approved the arrangement, and disclosure will never of itself count against a family. Where such an arrangement nonetheless arises or comes to light, both the parent and the carer are required by law to notify the local authority in whose area the pupil is living, and the School will alert that authority as required by the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. For pupils sponsored under the Child Student visa route, the School must also give that authority the carer's name and the address at which the pupil is living as soon as it becomes aware, and will keep a record of having done so.

Holiday arrangements for pupils under 16

In practice this matters most over the summer. The School's expectation is that pupils under 16 return home to their families for the main summer holiday. Where that is not possible, arrangements must be structured so that no single continuous stay with a guardian or host family approaches 28 days. Acceptable alternatives include:

- returning home overseas, or staying with parents who are visiting the UK
- staying with a close relative, as defined above
- a supervised holiday or study programme, with parental consent and the School's prior agreement
- a series of shorter stays arranged through an AEGIS or BSA accredited organisation, each declared to the School as it is arranged, none of which approaches 28 continuous days

A brief absence does not necessarily interrupt continuity for these purposes, so summer arrangements for pupils under 16 must be discussed with the Admissions and Compliance Team and confirmed before the end of the Summer Term.

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.

In practice, this includes confirming with parents at regular intervals that the guardianship arrangement remains in place and unchanged; checking the accreditation status of any guardianship organisation; and seeking pupils' views on their experience following periods spent in a guardian's care. Any concerns arising are referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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.