

Education Guardianship Policy

This policy is written in fulfillment of the following National Minimum Standard Regulations:

Part I: Staffing, guardians and prefects

Standard 22 – Educational Guardians

22.1 All educational guardians appointed by the school 45 are subject to the same safer recruitment procedures as staff.

22.2 Where the school is responsible for appointing educational guardians it regularly monitors the suitability of its arrangements.

22.3 Whether an educational guardian is appointed by the school or a parent/carer the school takes appropriate steps to ensure that the guardianship arrangement is promoting the welfare, physical wellbeing and emotional wellbeing of the boarder.

22.4 Any concerns about an educational guardianship arrangement should be acted upon immediately and referred to any relevant agencies

22.5 Under no circumstances should school staff be appointed as an educational guardian for boarders47.

Requirement to Appoint Education Guardian

Parents of every boarding pupil at Queen Margaret's (including pupils over the age of 18 and regardless of their nationality) who do not live in the United Kingdom must appoint an Education Guardian to act on their behalf whilst their daughter is in the UK. Such guardians must be appointed by the pupil's parents and may not be appointed by the School.

This policy provides information on education guardianship and refers to the education guardianship form, which all parents to whom this policy applies are required to complete (via the School's online parent portal) before their daughter joins the School or immediately upon a change of Education Guardian.

Definitions

The following definitions of key terms may be useful:

Guardian: The technical meaning of guardian refers to a person who is appointed to care for a child because her parents have died, or to a person acting as a testamentary guardian or a guardian of the child's estate. We refer to this type of guardian as a Legal Guardian. The second, informal meaning arises where there is simply a delegation of parental responsibility and we refer to this as an **Education Guardian**.

Parental Responsibility: This expression means the whole raft of rights and duties which a parent has in relation to their child. Married parents, Legal Guardians and those with court orders have parental responsibility. Unmarried fathers may acquire parental responsibility. A number of people can have parental responsibility at the same time.

Delegating Parental Responsibility: A person who has parental responsibility may arrange for some or all of it to be met by one or more persons acting on their behalf, such as a nanny, Education Guardian or a boarding school.

Who can be an Education Guardian?

For all non-UK based families, the School expects that parents will appoint either an Education Guardian to support their daughter whilst she is studying at Queen Margaret's School. It is strongly recommended that this guardian is appointed from a highly reputable organisation such as AEGIS (the Association of Educational Guardians for International Students) or is a BSA Certified Guardian Scheme. The Education Guardian must be aged 25 or older, unless a brother or sister of the Child, when they must be over 21 years of age. The Guardian cannot live in university halls or shared accommodation with any other adult under 25 years of age.

An Education Guardian must be resident in the UK. Commercial Guardians, i.e. those who are not family members or close family friends must have their base within reasonable proximity to Queen Margaret's School, preferably within 90 minutes travel, but no more than two hours, (given rail travel times on the East Coast main line this includes London) and be capable of providing care for a child in a happy home environment as would a reasonable and responsible parent. It is important that the Education Guardian lives in proximity to the school which enables them to fulfill their duties to the pupil whenever necessary.

Responsibilities of an Education Guardian

The Education Guardian's responsibilities usually include caring for the pupil as would a responsible and caring parent by, for example, being in regular contact with the student and providing advice and support as necessary. The Education Guardian will need to care for the student and take responsibility for the pupil if she is unwell, suspended or otherwise released from School. Pupils are not permitted to remain in residence at School during school holidays (except for Leave-Out weekends when the School's Stay in for Leave Out scheme is in operation), as published in the School Calendar, as there is no provision for appropriate supervision during school holidays.

Most overseas parents use a guardianship agency to act as Education Guardian. Guardianship agencies typically arrange accommodation as well as acting as Educational Guardian for their students. Guardianship agencies will usually arrange accommodation for their students through host families, although sometimes other accommodation options will be used. Host families will then be responsible for providing the day to day care of the student, accommodation and meals. If the guardianship agency arranges accommodation for the child or young person, the agency will be responsible for ensuring the quality and safety of the accommodation including the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

The Education Guardian will have access to the parent portal in relation to the pupil which will permit the Education Guardian to see and respond to a wide range of information about the pupil.

If parents do not appoint an AEGIS accredited Educational Guardianship Organisation or one accredited by the BSA it is their responsibility to check that the Educational Guardian is suitable and that adequate safeguarding measures have been taken which meet the requirements of Tier 4 sponsorship and the standards outlined in this policy.

The School will review the guardianship arrangements for all overseas girls and reserves the right to refuse entry to girls if their guardianship arrangements are cause for concern.

Appointment of an Education Guardian

The responsibility for choosing an appropriate Education Guardian rests solely with the parents. The parents are responsible in each case for satisfying themselves as to the suitability of an Education Guardian. The School is not able to arrange the appointment of an Education Guardian and is not able to arrange accommodation for any pupils (except when they are boarding at School).

Queen Margaret's School recommends parents use the service of AEGIS or the BSA for appointment of guardians. These are accredited organisations with high expectations of their guardians. AEGIS is the authoritative association for inspecting and accrediting guardianship agencies in the UK. AEGIS can be contacted via their website:

www.aegisuk.net.

The Boarding School Association also has an accredited guardianship scheme:

<https://www.ukbsa.com/bsa-certified-guardian-scheme/>

Parents must complete the 'Education Guardian Form' on the Parent Portal form to appoint the guardian for your daughter.

On some occasions parents wish to appoint UK based family or friends to act as a guardian to their child. Whilst this is possible, it must be noted that it is the parents responsibility to ensure that the arrangements is suitable and promotes the welfare, physical wellbeing and emotional wellbeing of their daughter. Guardians must be in a position to carry out their duties as outlined below. It is the responsibility of the parents to share this policy and the expectations of being a guardian with the appointed guardian.

Duties of an Education Guardian

- Be aware of all travel arrangements of the Pupil at the beginnings and ends of term, each Half Term and each Leave Out and ensure that the Housemistress has full and correct details of these
- Be available to host the Pupil in any planned or emergency situation in which the Pupil will return to School later than 22:00 on any of the start of term, return from Half Term, return from a Leave Out or from an extraordinary time away from School (such as at a weekend, university visit, etc.)
- Collect, if required, and accommodate the Pupil in their home at Half Term, at Leave Outs and at the beginning and end of term, if the Pupil is unable to travel home and, if necessary, for the School holidays for the same reason or for other exceptional reasons;
- Collect and accommodate the Pupil in their home in the event that the Pupil is excluded or suspended or withdrawn from the School for disciplinary or other reasons; · Ensure the Pupil returns to School punctually and in line with the School's timetable whenever the Pupil stays with the Guardian, whether during the weekend or midweek; · Liaise with the Housemistress, Senior Sister or other senior

member of the School staff in connection with matters related to the health, welfare, travel plans and education of the Pupil.

- Attend the School premises or any other location in case of emergency or if the Pupil is unwell and if deemed necessary by the School, provided that the Education Guardian immediately informs the Parent(s) of what has happened;
- Collect and accommodate the Pupil in their home in the event that the Pupil is unwell and unable to attend School;
- Attend medical appointments with the Pupil, if requested by the parent(s) to do so;
 - Access the parent portal and provide consents on behalf of the parent(s)
 - Provide consent for the Pupil to receive emergency medical treatment if necessary and only if the School is unable to contact the parent(s);
- Should the parent(s) request, the Guardian is welcome to attend, as appropriate, School events such as Parents' Meetings, Speech Day, Carol Service, Sports Fixtures, Concerts and other instances in which the Pupil is participating. In such circumstances, the Guardian is requested to inform the Housemistress in advance.

Informing the School of a change of Education Guardian

Parents MUST inform the School as soon as possible if there are any changes to any details relating to the Education Guardian, including any change in Guardian.

Education Guardianship Agreement

Parents who reside outside the UK are expected to complete an education guardianship form on the parent portal which provides the School with full details of the Education Guardian and the consent of the Parents to the Education Guardian exercising the responsibilities which the Parents have delegated to them.

Monitoring of the Guardianship Arrangement

It is the responsibility of the parents to monitor the guardianship arrangement and to ensure it continues to meet the needs of their daughter at all times. Should the guardian arrangement prove to be unsuitable then parents should inform the school immediately and seek alternative arrangements.

Queen Margaret's School will monitor the guardianship arrangements by discussing with the pupil the arrangements to also ensure they are suitable. Queen Margaret's school will act upon any concerns by either contacting parents or the guardian agency, if required.

For non-accredited guardians, Queen Margaret's school will make contact with the appointed guardians and ensure they are familiar with the required duties, as well as how to contact school if there are any concerns about the pupil. Queen Margaret's School will share this policy with non-accredited guardians.

January 2025

Review Date: January 2027