



SHERBORNE SCHOOLS GROUP

Education Guardianship Policy

Approving body: Executive Committee

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Executive Summary

This policy sets out the Sherborne Schools Group's requirements and expectations for the appointment and responsibilities of Education Guardians for pupils whose parents reside outside the United Kingdom, or who are otherwise unable to fulfil their parental responsibilities while their child is boarding at a School within the Group.

The policy ensures compliance with:

- Children Act 1989
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Boarding Schools: National Minimum Standards (DfE, 2025)
- Home Office Child Student Sponsor Guidance (2025)
- AEGIS Guidance for Guardianship Organisations and Schools (2024)

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Scope

This policy applies to all parents or legal guardians of pupils within the Sherborne Schools Group¹ (the Group) who are normally resident outside mainland UK or who, for any reason, are unable to be routinely available in the UK to exercise their parental responsibilities.

References

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Group's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the relevant School's:

- Admissions Policy
- Standard Terms and Conditions
- Medical Policy

Education Guardianship

Parents or legal guardians of pupils within the Group who are resident outside the UK must appoint an Education Guardian for their child. This applies to all pupils, regardless of age.

The Group requires assurance that there is always a responsible adult in the UK who can act on behalf of parents in all matters relating to the welfare, care, and discipline of the pupil when the School is closed or when the pupil is not under the School's direct supervision.

Employees of the Group must not act as either guardians or host families to pupils within Sherborne Schools Group.

Failure to nominate a suitable guardian may result in the pupil being temporarily excluded until appropriate arrangements are in place.

¹ The Sherborne Schools Group includes Sherborne Boys, Sherborne Girls, Sherborne Prep and Hanford Prep.

Definitions

Legal Guardian:

A person formally appointed by a court to care for a child in the absence of a parent or through testamentary appointment.

Education Guardian:

An adult in the UK to whom parents delegate aspects of their parental responsibility to act on their behalf. The Education Guardian may be an individual or a representative of a professional guardianship agency.

Parental Responsibility:

All rights, duties, powers, and responsibilities a parent has in relation to their child. Parents retain parental responsibility even when delegating specific duties to others.

Delegating Parental Responsibility:

A parent may arrange for an Education Guardian, boarding school, or other responsible adult to act on their behalf for specific purposes (e.g. medical, welfare, or travel arrangements).

Why must an Education Guardian be appointed?

Independent boarding schools are required to ensure that suitable guardianship arrangements are in place for pupils whose parents reside overseas or are otherwise unavailable.

An Education Guardian provides:

- Care and supervision for the pupil during School holidays, exeat weekends, or in emergencies (e.g. illness, suspension, travel disruption).
- Authority to make necessary decisions on behalf of parents, including in medical, educational, or disciplinary matters, where the School cannot contact parents promptly.
- Practical assistance with travel, visa issues, and communication between parents and the School.

Pupils are not normally permitted to remain at School during holidays or exeat weekends, as the School does not provide accommodation or supervision at these times. Exceptions may apply for authorised School activities, such as pre-season training or rehearsals, when supervision is provided. In addition, overseas pupils may be able to stay at the Newell Grange Campus (part of Sherborne International) during certain holiday periods, subject to availability and prior arrangement.

Who can be an Education Guardian?

An Education Guardian must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a British citizen or hold settled status in the UK.
- Be at least 25 years old.
- Live within approximately 2.5 hours' travel of the School.
- Be ordinarily resident in the UK and available to act promptly if required.
- Be fluent in spoken and written English and capable of liaising with School staff and healthcare professionals.
- Have no criminal convictions, and confirm that no person living in their household has any convictions in the UK or overseas.
- Not be a resident student at university.

- Be a householder.

Where parents do not have a known and trusted relative or friend in the UK, they must appoint a guardian through a reputable guardianship organisation accredited by either the Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) or the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS). See www.boarding.org.uk or www.aegisuk.net

Accredited agencies are required to carry out full safeguarding checks (including Enhanced DBS and reference checks) on their host families.

The Role of an Education Guardian

The Education Guardian is expected to take responsibility for the pupil's welfare, care, and progress, including:

- Providing advice and guidance on academic, personal, or disciplinary matters, as needed.
- Providing care and supervision during School holidays, exeat weekends, or emergencies (e.g., illness, suspension, travel disruption).
- Taking temporary care of the pupil if travel plans are disrupted or cancelled at short notice.
- Arranging travel, passports, visas, or overnight accommodation when necessary.
- Informing House staff and parents in advance, of a pupil's travel plans and accommodation arrangements for all exeat weekends and holidays; and specifically, who will be accommodating the pupil should the guardian be unavailable to ensure they meet the conditions above.
- Informing the School and the pupil's parents if they plan to go away during term time.
- Liaising with School staff, healthcare professionals, and parents regarding the pupil's welfare.
- Supporting the pupil's academic and pastoral needs, including attending School events if parents cannot be present.
- Receiving copies of grades and reports, where the School holds consent from both parents and the pupil.
- Confirming acceptance of the Guardianship Policy and understanding of their responsibilities.

How is an Education Guardian appointed?

The appointment of an Education Guardian is the responsibility of the parents. Parents must:

- Provide full contact details of the appointed guardian to the School prior to admission.
- Notify the School immediately of any change in guardian details.
- Ensure the guardian has a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the School's expectations.

The Group does not make guardianship recommendations.

Education Guardian Agreement

Parents who live outside the UK are required to complete an Education Guardianship Form, providing the Group with:

- Full contact details of the appointed Education Guardian;

- Confirmation of delegated parental responsibilities; and
- Signed agreement that the Education Guardian will comply with Group expectations and UK safeguarding regulations.

The Group reserves the right to decline acceptance of a guardian if it believes that the arrangements do not meet the required safeguarding or welfare standards.

Lodgings and Monitoring

If the Group arranges lodging for pupils as part of a School trip, visit, pre-season activity, or exeat provision, it will ensure that all accommodation provides appropriate standards of safety and supervision.

The School takes appropriate steps to ensure that the guardianship arrangement is promoting the welfare, physical wellbeing, and emotional wellbeing of the boarder. A member of staff will speak with pupils who stay with their Education Guardian during holidays or exeats after each stay, to ensure that arrangements remain suitable. Any concerns will be recorded and followed up by the relevant School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Private Fostering

Private fostering occurs when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) lives with someone who is not a parent, legal guardian, or close relative (brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparent, or step-parent) for 28 days or more under a private arrangement.

The Parent/s (or those with Parental Responsibility) and the private foster carer have a duty to notify the local authority of the name and address of the private foster carer six weeks prior the start of the private fostering arrangement. If the arrangement is already in place, they must notify the local authority at once. If the arrangement is made in an emergency and is intended to last more than 28 days, this information should be provided within 48 hours of the child being placed.

A social worker will visit the child and guardian to ensure safety and proper care. Appropriate background checks on the guardian will be carried out, and support provided if necessary.

For Dorset, information is available via:

[Private Fostering - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Appendix 1: Summary of Changes

- This is the first issue of this policy for the Sherborne Schools Group and supersedes the relevant individual pre-existing policies.