

## GUARDIANSHIP POLICY INTERNATIONAL BOARDERS

Parents/carers of boarders at The Mount School (including students over the age of 18 and regardless of their nationality) who do not live in the UK must appoint a UK-based educational guardian to act on their behalf.

**It is the parents' responsibility to appoint an educational guardian in whom they have confidence to provide for and safeguard the very best interests of their child.** The Mount School does not appoint educational guardians.

For the duration of their attendance at the school there must always be an educational guardian appointed who resides in the UK who can take responsibility for the child and provide them with care and support when they are not in the care of school.

**An offer of a place to study at The Mount School is conditional of an approved educational guardian being in place.**

### I. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy outlines the responsibilities of guardianship arrangements for international students enrolled at The Mount School on a Child Student or Student Visa, or for boarders whose parents do not live in the UK.

It ensures compliance with UKVI requirements and safeguards the wellbeing of all students in our care. This policy applies to all international students (including students over the age of 18 and regardless of their nationality) enrolled at The Mount School and holding a UK Child Student Visa, including both full-time boarders and those living with appointed guardians.

This policy refers to the Educational Guardianship Form, which all parents/carers to whom this policy applies to are required to complete before the student joins the school or immediately upon a change of Education Guardian.

*Students who submitted visa applications before 28 May 2025 remain subject to the guardianship arrangements detailed in the 2024 Guardianship Policy which is available upon request. However, these students must transition to the updated Guardianship Policy 2026 upon the earliest of the following milestones: the start of a new key stage, the appointment of a new guardian, or their next visa renewal.*

### 2. DEFINITIONS

- Educational Guardian / Guardian: A responsible UK-based adult who acts in loco parentis on behalf of the student's parents while the student is in the UK. Must be over 25, British or settled status in the UK.

An 'Educational Guardian' is not a 'Legal Guardian'; Parents do not surrender their parental responsibility, instead they arrange for some or all of it to be met by an 'Educational Guardian' acting on their behalf.

- UKVI: UK Visas and Immigration, the authority responsible for managing the UK visa system.

- Safeguarding: Measures to protect the health, wellbeing, and human rights of children, especially those at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Guardianship Organisation: An organisation that provides Educational Guardians. A professional agency appointed by the parents of an international student to identify a Educational Gurdian and arrange holiday accomodation.

### 3. UKVI REQUIREMENTS FOR GUARDIANSHIP

The Mount School ensures:

- All Child Student visa holders have an appointed educational guardian in the UK.
- Guardians must:
  - Be over 25 years old.
  - Be British citizens or hold settled status (e.g., ILR, EU Settled Status).
  - Reside permanently in the UK and not hold a temporary visa (e.g., tourist, student, work visa).
  - Provide proof of nationality, identity and home address.
  - Have no criminal convictions or safeguarding concerns (applies to all household members) Guardians are required to complete a criminality declaration. Complete a letter of undertaking ahead of a CAS being issued. Provide written confirmation of their responsibilities.
- Parents must provide all guardian details and documents before the CAS is issued and the student travels to the UK.
- Individual guardians must also provide details of all others over the age of 10 residing at the home address and give details of other adults who regularly reside at the property whose primary address is elsewhere.
- Guardianship organisations are required to provide their registered office address, company number, and the name of the designated responsible person. Furthermore, they must certify that all personnel and homestay providers have undergone comprehensive criminal background checks to ensure their suitability for working with children.

The school keeps guardian contact details updated at all times.

Parent Visa Exemption: Where a student is accompanied full-time by a parent holding a valid "Parent of a Child Student" visa, no separate guardian is required. The school must receive evidence of the parent's visa status and UK residence.

### 4. APPOINTMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL GUARDIAN

The responsibility for choosing an appropriate Educational 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 Mount School cannot arrange the appointment of an Educational Guardian** and is not able to arrange any accommodation for any students (except for when they are boarding or on residential trips.)

The Mount School strongly recommends parents use the service of AEGIS or the BSA for appointment of guardians. AEGIS is the association for inspecting and accrediting guardianship agencies in the UK.

The Mount School is a member of AEGIS and they can be contacted via their website: [www.aegisuk.net](http://www.aegisuk.net)

The Boarding School Association also has an accredited guardianship scheme: <https://www.boarding.org.uk/bsa-initiatives/bsa-certified-guardian-scheme/>

Parents must complete the 'Educational Guardian Nomination Form' to appoint the student's Guardian. On receipt of the Educational Guardian Nomination form, the guardian must complete a Letter of Undertaking. This should be returned to the school along with a copy of the guardian's passport, proof of identity and proof of address.

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 are suitable and promote the welfare, physical wellbeing and emotional wellbeing of their child. Guardians must be able to carry out their duties as outlined. It is the responsibility of the parents to share this policy and the expectations of being a guardian with the appointed guardian.

## **5. Duties / Responsibilities of the Guardian**

An educational guardian acts as the overseas parents' representative in the UK and is independent of the school. The Educational Guardian's responsibilities include caring for the student as would a responsible and caring parent by, for example being in regular contact with the student, providing support and advice as necessary and providing accommodation during holidays and emergencies.

Appointed guardians must:

- Have UK residency and live within 3 hours travelling distance from The Mount School.
- Act in the student's best interests and provide emotional support.
- Be available 24/7 for emergencies.
- Provide safe, private, non-commercial accommodation during holidays or emergencies.
- Ensure adherence to immigration conditions and UK laws.
- Be English speaking (it is not necessary for English to be the first language, but a minimum level of fluency is required to ensure communications are understood.)
- Communicate regularly with the school and parents.
- Arrange and support travel and healthcare requirements as needed.
- Respect the rights, religions and customs of a student in their care.
- Be aware and fully accepting of the requirement that The Mount has of guardians acting on behalf of students.
- Report any changes in the status of members of the household including new members joining the household, new criminal convictions or change of address.

Guardians must not:

- Be a member of The Mount School's staff
- Be a full-time student living in student accommodation.
- Live in shared accommodation with adults under the age of 25.
- Travel abroad for extended periods of time.

Guardian responsibilities/duties include:

- Provide a 'home from home' during the times when the student is not at school but cannot travel home.
- Provide a 24-hour point of contact for parents, student and school.
- Liaise with the school and parents over holiday accommodation (at least 7 days in advance.) The school must know all accommodation arrangements.
- The Mount School does not organise accommodation for pupils during the school holidays.
- Any accommodation arranged by the educational guardian must be safe, appropriately supervised, and of a good standard. Unsupervised hotel, B&B, hostel, shared student halls of residence, or rental accommodation is not considered acceptable regardless of a pupil's age.

- Inform the school in writing at least 7 days in advance, with details of travel arrangements made prior to the student leaving school for any weekend or longer holiday period. The school must know the exact details of a student's methods of transport.
- Provide details on student's airport transfers – this may include meeting students at the airport.
- Provide advanced written consent for students to go on trips or visits. These may include visits to university open days, day trips to other cities and trips made to visit friends not in locality of the school.
- Act with delegated parental authority in the case of an emergency or crisis and in other matters agreed by parents.
- Make proper arrangements for medical care in cases of illness requiring the departure from School. Educational Guardians may be required to meet school staff at hospital and take over care of the students.
- Support the boarder by attending Parents' Evenings and to provide advice and to offer support when required.
- To communicate with Boarding Staff on a regular basis regarding welfare of the student.
- An educational guardian must be prepared to support the renewal and validity of all legal documents (e.g passport, visa) so they are valid.
- If necessary, act as translator for communications between parents and school staff.
- **Guardians (or parents) must give at least 24 hours' notice if visiting or taking pupil off site.**
- **Guardians (or parents) must give at least 48 hours' notice if visiting or taking pupil off site overnight.**

If an educational guardian goes on holiday during term time, the school will require advance warning and emergency contact numbers.

If a student does not have a guardian when required by the school, or the appointed guardian is considered unsuitable by the school, the school will invite parents to find a new guardian. Should parents fail to do so they will be required to make adequate temporary arrangements in the case of an emergency.

In exceptional circumstances, where no timely alternative arrangement can be found, the school will explore options with a student's parents. Any decisions will be formally recorded.

Please note that **the choice of an educational guardian is entirely the responsibility of the parent, and the school accepts no legal responsibility for any guardianship arrangements.** The school does however expect the guardianship arrangements to be satisfactory and to meet the expectations outlined in this document.

## **6. THE MOUNT SCHOOL'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Mount School will:

- Monitor each student's welfare and academic progress.
- Maintain accurate guardian records including ID, proof of address, and immigration status.
- Train staff in safeguarding best practices.
- Liaise with guardians on welfare, medical, and logistical matters.

## **7. SAFEGUARDING PROTOCOLS**

- Guardians are required to complete a criminality declaration.

- All adults regularly in contact with students at guardian households must be free from convictions or safeguarding risks.
- The school will conduct safeguarding audits and maintain a 24-hour emergency protocol.
- Any concerns about an Educational Guardianship arrangement will be acted upon immediately and referred to the relevant agencies.
- Staff will receive up-to-date safeguarding training.

#### **8. GUARDIAN APPROVAL PROCESS (from January 2026)**

1. Interview: Guardian attends a meeting with school staff (in person or virtually).
2. Reference Check: Two references are taken for all non-organisational guardians
3. Decision: Once approved, the school informs all parties in writing. Any changes must be reported immediately.

#### **9. REVIEW OF GUARDIANSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

The school reviews all guardianship arrangements annually or when changes in student circumstances arise, to ensure UKVI and safeguarding compliance.

#### **10. COMPLIANCE WITH UKVI AND LOCAL LAWS**

The Mount School York fully complies with UKVI's Child Student and Student sponsor duties and local safeguarding laws. Information will be shared with relevant authorities when required to ensure child protection.

#### **11. POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES**

This policy is reviewed annually or when UKVI or safeguarding guidelines change. Updates will be shared with parents, students, guardians, and staff.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- Please ensure that the **NOMINATION OF EDUCATIONAL GUARDIAN** Form is completed and signed by the Boarders parent(s)
- The nominated guardian then completes the **LETTER OF UNDERTAKING** and returns with the necessary supporting documents.