



External Education Guardianship Policy

Last updated by senior leaders

March 2026

**Last reviewed by advisory
board**

March 2026

Next review due

August 2026

Purpose of this Policy

This policy outlines the school's requirements for the appointment, role, and legal status of an **external educational guardian** for international pupils, who are attending **St. John's Prep and Senior School**, and who are not living with their parents in the United Kingdom.

The policy ensures that all international pupils have a responsible adult based in the U.K. who can act in the **best interests of the child**, providing appropriate oversight, support, and safeguarding in accordance with U.K. legal requirements and statutory safeguarding guidance, including **Keeping Children Safe in Education**.

The policy also clarifies the expectations placed on guardians and guardianship organisation to ensure that pupils are appropriately safeguarded and supported while studying away from their parents.

Which Pupils Require an External Educational Guardian

An external educational guardian is mandatory for:

- All international pupils who are:
 - Under the age of **18**, and
 - Not living with a parent or legal guardian in the U.K or
 - Whose parents' visa status is not **Settled Status or a valid U.K work visa**.
- Pupils living with **host families or accommodation arranged by parents overseas**
- Pupils studying in the UK under a **Student Visa**

The school reserves the right to require the appointment of an external educational guardian **in any situation where it is considered necessary to safeguard the pupil's welfare and best interests**.

Legal Status, Age and Qualification of the Guardian

The external educational guardian must:

- Have legal status in the United Kingdom, either as a **resident individual** or as a **representative of a guardianship organisation**
- Be **at least 30 years of age** at the time of appointment
- Have relevant experience supporting young people and working with international families
- Demonstrate maturity, responsibility, reliability, and the ability to respond appropriately in emergency situations
- Be able to communicate effectively with both the school and parents overseas

Where the guardian is part of a **guardianship organisation**, the organisation is responsible for ensuring compliance with **Safer Recruitment procedures**, including all appropriate safeguarding and vetting checks.

The school will request evidence of:

- Identity
- Age
- Legal status in the UK
- Accreditation and/or professional affiliation

The external guardian will act **in loco parentis** while the pupil is in the U.K and may be required to:

- Receive communications from the school
- Attend meetings on behalf of parents where necessary
- Support decision-making in emergency situations, including medical care, travel disruption, or safeguarding concerns.

However, the guardian **does not replace parental responsibility**, which remains with the pupil's parents or legal guardians overseas.

Accreditation Requirement

To ensure high safeguarding standards, the school requires that any external educational guardian or guardianship organisation must hold recognised accreditation from:

- Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS)
or
- Boarding Schools' Association (BSA)

Accreditation requirements include:

- Current and valid prior to pupil enrolment
- Annual verification by the school.

The school strongly encourages parents to appoint a **professional guardianship organisation rather than a private individual**, as these organisations operate within established safeguarding frameworks.

Guardians who are **not accredited through AEGIS or the BSA will normally not be accepted**.

DBS Requirements for Host Families

The guardianship company must ensure that **Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks** are completed for **all individuals** living in the host household where the student will reside.

This includes:

- The host parent(s)
- Any partner, husband, or wife living in the household
- Any child or young person **aged 13 or over** living in the home

Where the host family has children studying at **university who return to the family home during holidays or other periods**, these individuals must also have an **Enhanced DBS check in place**.

No student may be placed in a host household until all required DBS checks have been completed and verified by the guardianship company.

Responsibilities of the External Guardian

The external guardian is expected to:

- Maintain **accurate and up-to-date contact details** with the school
- Be available **24 hours a day in case of emergency**
- Attend meetings with the school when required
- Support the pupil's **welfare, behaviour, attendance, and overall wellbeing**.

The guardian may also assist with:

- Medical appointments
- Travel arrangements during school holidays
- Accommodation or host family issues
- Pastoral and emotional support
- Communication between the school and parents overseas

The guardian must maintain **regular communication with both the school and parents**.

Where a guardian is unable to fulfil these responsibilities adequately, the school reserves the right to request that **an alternative guardian be appointed**.

Attendance Requirements for International Pupils

All international pupils at **St. John's Prep and Senior School** are subject to the school's **Attendance Policy** and are expected to attend regularly and punctually. Attendance is monitored as part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

If a pupil is absent without prior notification, the school will contact the **guardian the same day** to establish the reason for absence, as for all pupils. If contact cannot be

made, further attempts will be made using emergency contact details and the **guardianship company** may also be contacted. Where concerns remain, safeguarding procedures may be followed.

Where attendance falls below **95%**, or lateness becomes a concern, the school will contact the guardian and may implement further monitoring or meetings. Persistent absence or significant concerns will be escalated to **senior leaders and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and, where appropriate, external support services.

Attendance concerns may also be shared with the pupil's **educational guardian and parents overseas** to ensure appropriate support and safeguarding oversight.

Please note: Schools are obligated to monitor attendance and report prolonged absences to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

For further information concerning attendance, please see St. John's Prep. and Senior School Attendance Policy.

Safeguarding and Compliance

St. John's Prep. and Senior School are committed to **safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils**.

External guardians must:

- Support and comply with the school's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- Follow all relevant UK safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance
- Cooperate fully with the school's safeguarding procedures
- Work collaboratively with the school, parents, and external agencies where required.

For further information on safeguarding, please see St. John's Prep. and Senior School Safeguarding Policy.

Private Fostering Regulations

Where pupils are under the age of **16** and living with a host family for more than **28 days**, the arrangement will fall under **Private Fostering regulations**.

In these circumstances the guardianship company must notify:

- The local authority
- The hosting arrangement may be subject to monitoring by children's services

Guardians are responsible for ensuring that the Local Authority's private fostering regulations are complied with, as follows:

- https://www.enfield.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/27402/Private-fostering-leaflet-Fostering-and-permanence.pdf

- <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/childrens-services/fostering/an-adults-guide-to-private-fostering.pdf>

School's Right to Refuse or Remove a Guardian

St. John's Prep and Senior School reserves the right to:

- Refuse the appointment of a guardian who does not meet the requirements outlined in this policy
- Request a change of guardian if there are concerns regarding safeguarding, availability, or suitability
- Require parents to appoint an alternative accredited guardian if the current arrangement is deemed inappropriate.

In circumstances where a compliant guardian is **not in place**, the school reserves the right to:

- Refuse admission
- Suspend the pupil's place
- Terminate enrolment if safeguarding requirements cannot be met.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually by the school leadership team and safeguarding leads**, or sooner if:

- UK legislation or safeguarding guidance changes
- Updates are made to statutory safeguarding frameworks
- School procedures or guardianship requirements change