

# Bedales Schools' Educational and Legal Guardianship Policy

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Review body (individual or group)	Deputy Head (Pastoral) Bedales, Designated Safeguarding Lead (Bedales), Deputy Head of Dunhurst (Pastoral), Staff member i/c Sponsored Students, Head of Admissions
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For Pupils/Students		

# Bedales Schools' Educational and Legal Guardianship Policy

## Context

All pupils with parents living outside the UK are required to have an educational guardian while studying at Bedales Schools. Educational guardianship provides another means of support for such pupils while they are in the UK and allows them to have another adult outside of school who they can turn to for assistance and advice, and who will provide accommodation when the School is closed and it may be impractical to travel home.

It is important to recognise the distinction between 'Educational Guardians' and 'Legal Guardians'. Educational Guardian is not a legal term and should not be used interchangeably with the term 'Legal Guardian'. An educational guardian is someone who has been appointed to care for pupils whose parents are not based in the UK, when the pupil is not in school (e.g. exeat, half-terms, holidays, absence for illness or disciplinary reasons or if the School has had to close in an emergency).

As the person with shared delegated parental responsibility, the role of the educational guardian complements the requirement of Houseparents to act in 'loco parentis'. Effective partnership between staff concerned with pastoral care, parents and educational guardians will safeguard the welfare of pupils with parents living outside the UK. Some parents choose to appoint a relative or friend but, where this is not practical, professional educational guardians must be appointed using reputable and accredited educational guardianship agencies. If this latter option is chosen, it is important that the agency allocates one host family for the pupil; it is not appropriate to have an arrangement whereby the host family changes. Educational guardians (along with the pupil's parents or guardians) will meet their pupil's Houseparent on the pupil's first day at Bedales/Bedales Prep, Dunhurst in order to build a rapport to help everyone best support the pupil. If parents chose not to use a relative or a professional guardian then their chosen guardian must be appointed as the pupil's legal guardian.

## The purpose of an Educational Guardianship Policy

- To provide the parents of such pupils (and the educational and legal guardians they appoint) with a clear explanation of the School's expectations relating to educational guardianship.
- To provide parents with a clear explanation of the responsibilities of the educational or legal guardian they appoint.
- To make known to parents that the School will contact them if it has reason to believe the arrangements made for their child when they are residing out of school are of concern and will give a reasonable opportunity for parents to change the arrangements. The School will also comply with its Safeguarding Policy in this regard. This is available to read on our website.
- To provide a pro-forma for the registration of an educational guardian (Appendix to this Policy)
- To provide details on how communications between the School, parents and educational or legal guardians will operate.

## Educational Guardianship Requirements

- It is the primary responsibility of parents who live outside the UK to appoint an educational or legal guardian and the selection of the appropriate person or organisation rests with the parents.

It is a private arrangement and although Bedales Schools may be able to provide details of agencies which have acted as educational guardians for pupils from the School in the past, these in no way constitute a recommendation and we do not carry out any safeguarding checks. Parents must fully satisfy themselves as to the suitability of their chosen educational guardian.

- The appointed educational or legal guardian may be a nominated family friend or relative or may be employed by a professional educational guardianship agency.
- The designated UK educational guardian should be a 24-hour point of contact throughout the school year, have a permanent place of residence in the UK and must be able to be at the School within two hours if requested.
- The appointed person must be over 25 years of age and not a full-time student.
- They should be English speaking and able to provide a point of contact for the School at all times.
- They must liaise with the School over all travel arrangements for which they are responsible; this includes exeat weekends, half-terms and the beginning and end of terms as appropriate. This information must be provided to the School, in writing, at least two weeks prior to departure or arrival. This is particularly important in the case of sponsored students.
- They must provide accurate contact information to the Bedales Schools' Admissions Office prior to the pupil joining the School and keep this information updated via Houseparents once the pupil has joined. NB: Guardian details are able to be viewed in the Parents' Address Book on the School's secure Parent Portal. Once parents have joined the School, Guardian contact details appearing in the Parents' Address Book can be updated by parents/guardians online at any time via the Parent Portal.
- They must provide suitable and safe accommodation and appropriate care and supervision for pupils during periods when they cannot be accommodated at school. This includes periods of illness, absence for disciplinary reasons or any other reason a pupil is released from school. This means that educational guardians must be willing and able to collect a pupil from school and accommodate them at very short notice, hence being required to be at school within two hours.
- Regardless of the age of the child we do not consider unsupervised stays in hotels, bed and breakfast accommodation or university halls of residence as providing an appropriate level of accommodation or care. Neither is it appropriate for pupils to live in accommodation with more than two other pupils with the same status.
- If educational or legal guardians are away from the UK during term-time, for however short a time, they must notify the appropriate Houseparent and make suitable alternative arrangements. They must give full contact details for the period of absence and the details of the responsible person in the UK, fully authorised by parents to act on their behalf.
- Educational or legal guardians are expected to attend School events and parents' meetings – this is particularly important if the pupil's parents are unable to attend. They are encouraged to maintain regular contacts with their charges and are warmly welcomed to visit the School. (Please note that reviews and end of term reports will be sent to educational guardians and parents)
- They should be familiar with the School's rules and policies and support the aims and ethos of the School.
- They must ensure that all legal documents such as visas are kept up-to-date and are renewed/updated where necessary
- A change of educational guardian must be communicated promptly to the School in writing, providing all necessary details to facilitate continuous care.
- They should be prepared to liaise with the School over all matters relating to the pupil's welfare, including pastoral, academic or medical matters and they need to be able to act with delegated

parental authority in the case of an emergency or crisis and make appropriate arrangements for medical care when required.

*Sponsored student Guardians only*

Students under 18 who want to study at an independent school in the UK may be eligible for a Child Student visa. To enable a student to apply for the visa they must have been offered and accepted a place on a course at Bedales School, which is a licensed student sponsor.

Sponsored student Guardians must work with the School to ensure that sponsored students do not miss the start or end of term, or have any unusual absence without the School's knowledge and consent. The Guardians of sponsored students must inform Houseparents of travel plans for Long Leaves and Holidays, as well as any overnight stays at the weekend during term-time – in all cases a contact number, address and any travel details for the sponsored student must be shared with Houseparents in advance. We adhere to a Missing Child Policy (<https://www.bedales.org.uk/parents/policies>).

In addition, if a sponsored student is out of contact without permission, for more than 10 registrations (between 8.25am and 5.30pm) this could break the conditions of the pupil's licence to stay in the UK under a sponsored student visa. School may contact authorities to report a missing pupil according to the relevant school's policy.

Additional information about sponsored student guidelines can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>

Additional information can be found via AEGIS (The Association for the Education and Education guardianship of International Pupils), an organisation that inspects and accredits education guardianship providers in the UK and works to promote the welfare of international pupils. ([www.aegisuk.net](http://www.aegisuk.net))

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NB: All School policies are available to staff and can be found here:

[T:\ThreeSchools\Policies\\_Handbooks\\_Key\\_Documentation\Staff\\_viewable](T:\ThreeSchools\Policies_Handbooks_Key_Documentation\Staff_viewable)

### 3 Schools' Educational and Legal Guardianship Agreement for Parents of Overseas Boarders

Name of Pupil

Houseparent (at Bedales Schools)

\_\_\_\_\_

If using an educational or legal guardian please provide full details below:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

If using a guardianship agency please give full details below:

Name of agency \_\_\_\_\_

Individual contact \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm that I have read the Bedales Schools' Educational and Legal Guardianship Policy and agree to abide by the requirements outlined. I understand that failure to do so may result in the removal of the child from the School.

Signature of Parent

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Educational or Legal Guardian

Date

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