

OXFORD INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE BRIGHTON

Close Relative and Nominated Guardianship Policy

POLICY INTENDED FOR:	Students, Parents, Guardians
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students have safe and appropriate close relative and/or guardianship support while enrolled at Oxford International College Brighton (OICB). It sets out the standards and responsibilities for parents, close relatives or nominated guardians and OICB to safeguard student welfare in line with statutory requirements and best practice including the UKVI Child Student Sponsor Guidance and OICB's obligations under UK safeguarding regulations.

2. Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to any student whose parent or legal guardian does not provide permanent care during term time. It covers situations where:

1. Parents or legal guardians live outside the United Kingdom; or
2. Parents or legal guardians live in the UK but more than 3 hours' drive from OICB; or
3. Parents or legal guardians will be away for more than one (1) week during term time.
4. Parents or legal guardians reside in the UK on a temporary status (other than Parent of a Child Student visa).

These requirements apply regardless of the student's nationality, age, or visa status and are designed to ensure appropriate care and safeguarding in line with UKVI requirements and UK safeguarding legislation.

While all students are subject to OICB's safeguarding standards, OICB may apply discretion in certain administrative elements for students who are *not* sponsored under the Child Student route, providing the overall arrangements remain safe and appropriate, and are approved by OICB. All requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. OICB retains sole discretion to make the final decision.

3. Safeguarding Commitment

We are committed to:

- Protecting the welfare of all students through clear safeguarding procedures – <https://www.oicbrighton.com/parent-essentials/policies>
- Ensuring guardianship arrangements meet statutory requirements and OICB's standards.
- Checking student wellbeing after staying with their Nominated Guardians or relatives.
- Ensuring that all living arrangements comply with UKVI requirements and UK safeguarding legislation.
- Ensuring that for Child Student visa holders, suitable care arrangements have and must be confirmed before a CAS is assigned.
- Act immediately on any concerns and report externally as required.

4. Parental Consent and Confirmation of Arrangements

Parents must confirm **one of the following arrangements** for their child's care during term time:

- **Close Relative** – a family member who meets the criteria outlined in Section 5.1; or
- **Nominated Guardian** – an individual (such as a family friend) or an agency who meets the criteria outlined in Section 5.2; and is approved by OICB.

Parents must provide **written consent** confirming which option they have chosen (Close Relative or Nominated Guardian). This consent must be kept up to date and renewed immediately whenever arrangements change, and OICB may request documentary evidence of the relationship or legal authority to act.

Failure to provide accurate and timely consent may result in OICB taking steps to appoint a suitable guardian on behalf of the family (at the family's cost) to ensure compliance with UKVI requirements and UK safeguarding legislation.

OICB recommends that all students obtain personal belongings insurance, that includes periods when they are staying outside college accommodation. Any individual item valued at £2,000 or more must be listed separately in your policy.

4.1 Deadline for Selecting Guardianship Options

Families choosing a Close Relative, Family Friend, or Non-Accredited Guardianship Agency must confirm this arrangement no later than six (6) weeks prior to the course start date.

- After this deadline, **only** fully accredited guardianship agencies (accredited by AEGIS or fully accredited by the BSA) may be appointed.
- This requirement ensures sufficient time for vetting, safeguarding checks, and compliance with UKVI Child Student Sponsor Guidance before the student begins their course.
- If arrangements are not confirmed by this deadline, OICB may appoint a suitable accredited guardian on behalf of the family (at the family's cost) to ensure compliance.

School's Right to Appoint an Accredited Guardianship Provider

OICB has an agreement in place with a fully accredited, gold-standard AEGIS guardianship company. Where a student does not have suitable guardianship arrangements in place at the point they are required, or where existing arrangements are deemed unsuitable, unavailable, or have failed, OICB reserves the right to appoint this accredited provider at the full cost to the family. This measure ensures compliance with UKVI Child Student Sponsor Guidance and our safeguarding obligations.

5. Responsibilities of a Close Relative/Nominated Guardian

The Close Relative/Nominated Guardian must:

- Be able to provide the student with a suitable private bedroom in the event of an emergency.
- Provide care during holidays or when boarding is closed and the student is staying in the UK.
- Promote the student's wellbeing and respect their rights and customs.
- Maintain regular communication with OICB and parents.
- Ensure the student attends OICB and complies with OICB rules.
- Provide a safe and supportive home environment.
- Respond promptly to any concerns raised by OICB.

- Notify OICB immediately of any change in household members or any circumstances relevant to safeguarding (including travel plans involving periods of time outside the UK).
- Complete all required vetting processes (where applicable) before the student's course start date.

5.1 Close Relative Option (Alternative to Nominated Guardian)

Close Relative Definition:

A Close Relative is defined by UKVI as: A grandparent, brother, sister, step-parent, uncle (brother or half-brother of a parent) or aunt (sister or half-sister of a parent). This definition does not include parents. A Close Relative is a separate care option permitted by UKVI.

Please note that additional vetting (at the cost of the family) is required to ensure safeguarding standards and appropriate living arrangements are met. If this option is being selected by a student who is not sponsored, an Enhanced DBS check for the nominated guardian and all individuals aged 16 or above who reside in the guardian's household are also required (at the cost of the family).

Additional requirements:

- They are a British Citizen or have settled status.
- They live within 3 hours' travel of OICB.
- They are 25 years old or older, and not in full-time education.
- They confirm that they and any adults frequently staying in the household have no criminal convictions. OICB may also require a Basic DBS check or other suitability checks, depending on the role performed.
- They do **not** reside in university halls, hostels, hotels, guest houses, or shared accommodation (HMOs).
- They understand and agree to complete the vetting process, including a Household Visit to ensure a suitable home environment.
- Be available and contactable at all times, and able to respond within 60 minutes.
- They work with OICB to understand how best to support the student's wellbeing and safety.
- They sign the Letter of Undertaking provided by OICB.

5.2 Nominated Guardian Option

A Nominated Guardian is someone chosen by the family to care for the students while they are in the UK.

Option A: Accredited Guardianship Company

This includes agencies accredited by AEGIS or fully accredited by the BSA. Provisional accreditation is not accepted by OICB. OICB strongly recommends this option because it provides high safeguarding assurance, qualified and trained staff, and thoroughly vetted host families, ensuring reliable support in all situations. Many families choose this option for its proven safety, strong safeguarding reassurance, and overall peace of mind. OICB works with a panel of four accredited companies and encourages families to select from this panel. No additional OICB vetting is normally required where accreditation is verified.

Option B: Family Friend

Families may choose this option where the individual is already known to the child and provides continuity of care. This allows the student to receive familiar, personal support from someone they trust.

Please note that additional vetting (at the cost of the family) is required to ensure safeguarding and living standards are met. If this option is being selected by a student who is not sponsored, an **Enhanced DBS check** for the nominated guardian and all individuals aged 16 or above who reside in the guardian's household are also required.

A Family Friend may act as a guardian if:

- They are a British Citizen or have settled status.
- They live within 3 hours' travel of OICB.
- They are 25 years old or older and not in full-time education.
- They confirm that they and any adults frequently staying in the household have no criminal convictions.
- They do **not** reside in university halls, hostels, hotels, guest houses, or shared accommodation (HMOs).
- They understand and agree to complete the vetting process, including a Household Visit to ensure a suitable home environment.
- Be available and contactable at all times, and able to respond within 60 minutes.
- They work with OICB to understand how best to support the student's wellbeing and safety.
- They sign the Letter of Undertaking provided by OICB.

Option C: Non-Accredited Guardianship Agency

A non-accredited agency may also be selected. However, when an agency does not hold accreditation, standards and safeguarding approaches can vary, therefore an enhanced suitability and home environment vetting process will be required for the agency and any host it intends to provide (this additional vetting is at the cost of the family). To act as a Nominated Guardian, the agency must:

- Have settled status or British Citizenship.
- Be located and or ensure any host family is located within 3 hours' travel of OICB.
- Be 25 years old or older and not in full-time education.
- Confirm that they and adults frequently staying in the household have no criminal convictions.
- **Not** make arrangements for students to reside in university halls, hostels, hotels, guest houses or shared accommodation (HMOs).
- Undergo an enhanced suitability and environment vetting process.
- Be available and contactable at all times, and able to respond within 60 minutes.
- Work with OICB to understand how best to support the student's wellbeing and safety.
- Sign a Letter of Undertaking provided by OICB.

6. Compliance

Parents and guardians must comply with this policy to ensure the safety and welfare of the child. The safeguarding obligations in this policy apply to all students. For Child Student visa holders. OICB must ensure compliance with UKVI sponsorship requirements, including reporting duties.

Compliance includes:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date details of guardianship.
- Completing all required vetting and household checks before the student joins or returns to OICB.
- Update OICB immediately if arrangements change.
- Ensuring that the nominated guardian or close relative meets all stated criteria.
- For Child Student visa holders, OICB may request updated evidence at any time in order to meet UKVI sponsorship duties.

Monitoring:

OICB will review guardianship arrangements for all students requiring a guardian annually and may conduct spot checks to confirm ongoing suitability.

Non-Compliance:

Systems and processes are in place to ensure that guardianship arrangements are compliant with UKVI regulations. Where guardianship arrangements are found to be non-compliant, parents are reminded of their obligations.

For safeguarding reasons, no child is released to a non-compliant guardianship arrangement; approved emergency guardians may be used at the cost to the family.

Failure to comply may result in:

- OICB appointing a suitable guardian on behalf of the family (at the family's cost);
- For Child Student visa holders, OICB will report to UKVI within 10 working days where a student no longer has suitable care arrangements, as required by sponsorship duties.
- Referral to local safeguarding authorities if we believe or know a child's welfare is at risk.

Delays or non-compliance with the school's systems and processes may jeopardise the student's place at OICB, and lead to their visa sponsorship being withdrawn.