



**Guardianship Policy** - Summer Fields does not arrange or recommend guardians, but does require all parents living abroad or those who travel overseas extensively during term time to appoint one.

**OJSB**

Last updated September 2024

## Review and Amendment Record

Date	Person Conducting the Review	Changes Made
30/9/19	JERA	None
4/10/20	JERA	Addition of emergency situations where a guardian will be required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• satisfying requirements to quarantine on arrival in the UK</li> <li>• .... or changes to term time dates and timings</li> </ul> Addition of 'overseas' to include parts of the British Isles like Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man
3/9/21	JERA	No changes
12/9/22	OJSB	Following changes to NMS 2022; new line making clear that the school will take appropriate steps to ensure guardians are promoting the welfare of boarders (22.3) and will act on any concerns (22.4), and new line to make clear that staff cannot be guardians (22.5)
13/9/23	OJSB	No changes
14/9/24	OJSB	No changes

Summer Fields recognises the importance of successful relationships between all parties regarding Guardianship in order to care for all pupils who normally live abroad or whose parents spend a significant amount of their time overseas. As a result, Summer Fields requires all pupils who live overseas to have a UK-based guardian whilst they are studying at the school.

Overseas' pupils are looked after very well during term and have a number of people in school to care for them. However, during Long and Short Leaves and on some weekends during term-time or in emergencies the school will close. During these times, it is very important that someone responsible can look after every pupil. Parents should feel reassured that when they are overseas, their child has been placed with a caring Guardian who will help to support their educational and physical, as well as their emotional needs. The school will take steps to ensure the Guardian is promoting the welfare, physical wellbeing and emotional wellbeing of the pupil. If the school has any concerns about a Guardian the school will act immediately and refer it to the relevant agencies.

### **Guardianship for boarders who live overseas, including parts of the British Isles like Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man**

The welfare of pupils is extremely important to us and we believe the role of the guardian plays an essential part in the overall pastoral care of pupils from overseas. As well as looking after pupils in the holidays, the guardian will also be required to assume full responsibility and arrange accommodation for pupils in emergencies, including:

- medical emergencies
- long term illness
- satisfying requirements to quarantine on arrival in the UK
- suspension from school as a result of severe infringements of discipline
- any event causing unexpected closure of the school or changes to term time dates and timings

The guardian should be:

- over 25 years of age
- live in the UK – and ideally within two hours' travelling time from Oxford (i.e. close enough for travelling at Leave Outs or in an emergency)
- able to correspond with the school in English
- a friendly point of contact and someone who is capable of providing appropriate supervision and pastoral care
- help to make travel arrangements and provide accommodation at the start and end of terms to enable pupils to depart for leave outs and arrive back to school at the appropriate and published times. Pupils arriving at school before the published arrival time may find themselves unable to access school buildings.

A good guardian will also be a point of contact for the school regarding the general welfare and progress of the pupil and where necessary, and if able, they may also assist with communication between the school and parents if there is a language barrier or difficulties with time zones. Guardians may attend Parents' Receptions on behalf of the parents.

The Guardian must be someone who is not involved in travelling overseas during school term time. Guardians must inform the school if they are away from their usual address during term time for any length of time and let the school know how they may be contacted in an emergency.

### **How is a guardian appointed?**

Parents are responsible for appointing a guardian. This will mean that the parents are responsible for assessing whether the Guardian – be it a guardianship agency, family friend or other individual – is

suitable and that adequate safeguarding measures have been taken. The Guardian will be acting on the parents' behalf and the guardianship arrangement will not fall within the school's welfare responsibility for the child.

Summer Fields is not able to arrange or recommend particular guardians for pupils but advice about appointing one can be found at: [www.ukboardingschools.com/advice/getting-ready/uk-guardians](http://www.ukboardingschools.com/advice/getting-ready/uk-guardians)  
Details of accredited guardian organisations can be found at: <http://www.aegisuk.net>

Instead of using an agency, a parent living overseas may also nominate as a Guardian a close family relative or family friend who is resident in the UK. If selecting their own Guardian, it is recommended that parents request three references, verify these, and obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Clearance Certificate on all members of the household over the age of 16.

Under no circumstances should a member of Summer Fields staff be appointed as a guardian of a pupil at Summer Fields.

## **Communication with Summer Fields**

We welcome visits from all Guardians and would be happy to arrange a school tour, a lodge (boarding house) visit and a meeting with the lodge parents of the boarding house into which the child will be placed for their entry year.

Throughout their time at the school we continue to monitor the Guardianship of the children in our care. When a child is to stay with their Guardian, communication about travel and holiday arrangements are made between the School Office and the Guardian. Records will be kept to monitor pupils who leave the school with their Guardians and checks made to ensure children arrive at the home of their Guardian if travelling by an approved courier. No pupil will be allowed to travel independently other than with the recommended taxi services approved by the school, a chosen Guardian organisation or with an adult with whom the parent of the child has made an arrangement. In the last two cases, this must be communicated, in writing, to the School Office in advance of the child's departure from school.

We expect that all Guardians of overseas boarders feel able to communicate with the School as a parent would. The lodge parents, tutors and teachers all play a vital role in communicating with the Guardians and helping them to understand the pupil in their care.

The School will:

- Ensure that Guardians receive a school calendar
- Invite Guardians specifically to key school events.
- Liaise with Guardians to find out the plans for each Exeat/Leave Out in order to help explain to the child what they can expect and ensure that the child will cope.
- Encourage communication between the pupil and the Guardian through letter/email/phone calls

## **Guardianship for boarders who live in the UK**

If a parent of a boarder has a UK address but spends a significant amount of term time overseas, they too will be expected to appoint a Guardian. This is to cover any periods of time that the parents are outside the UK and will make sure that their son is properly represented at school in the event of an emergency, or for more routine matters such as attendance at school events, such as Parents' Receptions, that the parents are unable to attend. All parents must keep the school informed of periods when they are outside the UK.

The guardian will be required to assume full responsibility when the parents are not in the UK in order to arrange accommodation for pupils in emergencies, including:

- medical emergencies
- long term illness
- satisfying requirements to quarantine on arrival in the UK
- suspension from school as a result of severe infringements of discipline
- any event causing unexpected closure of the school or changes to term time dates and timings

Parents may nominate as a Guardian:

- a close relative who is resident in the UK during term time. We recommend they are over the age of 25.
- A person who is not a close family relative, but a friend of the family can be appointed, but we would recommend that if a parent does this, that the Guardian is someone who is already known by the child. It is recommended that parents request three references, verify these and obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Clearance Certificate on all members of the household over the age of 16.

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