



Villiers School Guardianship Policy

2023-2024



Introduction

At Villiers School we welcome students from all over the world. Our international students are part of a diverse community of people who care for each other and flourish as individuals, celebrating diversity and forging lifelong friendships. Living in an overseas country, often in unfamiliar surroundings, away from the comforts of home and perhaps, having to communicate in a different language, can be challenging for our international students.

Our pastoral care team works to ensure all international students are effectively supported as they integrate into school life. During term time, the school is legally responsible for each student's welfare and undertakes parentally delegated responsibilities. However, there are times (e.g. during exeats, illness, midterm holidays, disciplinary procedures, etc.) when the school must be able to hand over these responsibilities to a properly appointed guardian. In short, we must ensure that each student whose parents are domiciled overseas has a competent and caring guardian who fully understands their legal and pastoral duties. We must also be prepared to act in advocacy for the student if we feel that the nominated educational guardian does not meet our exacting standards.

All international students are required to have an Irish resident educational guardian whilst studying at Villiers. This includes both boarders and day students. Guardianship provides an additional level of support for international students whilst they are in Ireland and allows them to have another adult outside of the school to whom they can turn for assistance, advocacy or advice, and who will provide or arrange accommodation when the School is closed, and at times when it may be impractical to travel home.

As the person with shared delegated parental responsibility, the role of educational guardian complements the requirement of boarding house parents to act 'in loco parentis' for boarding students. Effective partnership between staff concerned with pastoral care, parents and educational guardians will safeguard the welfare of international students. Some parents may choose to appoint a family friend or relative, but where this is not practicable, professional guardians can be appointed using reputable, and ideally accredited, educational guardianship agencies.

The purpose of a Guardianship Policy

- To provide the parents of international students (and the guardians they appoint) with a clear explanation of the school's expectations relating to educational guardianship and the responsibilities of the educational guardian they appoint.
- To make known to the parents of international students that the school reserves the right to determine the acceptability of arrangements made for their student when they are residing out of school. Should the arrangements prove unacceptable, parents and educational guardians will be advised and given reasonable opportunity to change the arrangements.
- To provide details on how communications between the school, international parents and educational guardians will operate.



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If a student does not have a guardian, when required to by the school, or the appointed guardian is considered to be unsuitable by the school, the school will invite parents to find a new educational guardian. Should parents fail to do so within an acceptable period of time, the school may have no alternative than to ask the parent to withdraw the student until suitable arrangements are in place.

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

NB. Parents should complete and return the Villiers School Educational Guardianship Details Form on their online checklist prior to the student commencing tuition at Villiers School. Nominated guardians will also be asked to sign the form confirming their role as guardian.

NB. Any change of guardian must be communicated promptly to the school office in writing, providing all necessary details to facilitate continuous care.

It is the primary responsibility of the student's parents to appoint an educational guardian and the selection of the appropriate person (or organisation) rests with the parents. Villiers School is able to provide details of agencies or individuals who have acted as guardians to students from the school in the past, but parents must fully satisfy themselves as to the suitability of their chosen education guardian. Please note that the school supplies this information for ease of reference only. The school is not the agent of any of the agencies provided and accepts no liability whatsoever in connection with parents' appointment of any agency used.

Guardian agencies are self-regulating. Please note also that the choice of guardian is entirely the responsibility of the parent and the school accepts no legal responsibility or liability for any guardianship arrangements. The School does, however, expect the guardianship arrangements to be satisfactory and to meet the expectations outlined in this document.



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Guardianship Requirements

1. The appointed guardian may be a nominated friend of the family or another family member, or may be employed by a professional educational guardianship agency.
2. The appointed guardian must be a proficient English speaker and be able to provide a trustworthy and consistent point of contact for the school at all times.
3. The appointed person must be over 25 years of age. Older brothers and sisters who are undergraduates at university, for example, are not accepted.
4. The designated guardian must have a permanent or semi-permanent place of residence in Ireland and ideally should reside within two hours travelling distance from the school, by either car or public transport.
5. The guardian may be called upon in an emergency, e.g. medical, disciplinary, or emergency closure of Villiers School, for example during inclement weather, and must be prepared to respond promptly and professionally to such a call.
6. The guardian must liaise with the school in communicating arrangements for school closures, including mid-term breaks and school holidays. Details on any travel arrangements for overseas travel must be provided in writing to the School Office, at least one week prior to departure or arrival.
7. The guardian must assist the student to arrange airport transfers for overseas travel, and it is the responsibility of the guardian to ensure that the student reaches their destination safely, and accompanied where possible.
8. The guardian must provide accurate contact information (including telephone/mobile, email and full address contact details) to the Villiers School Admissions Office, and update this information as necessary by notifying the School Office.
9. If guardians are going to be away from their Irish home, for however short a time, they must notify the School office. They must give full contact details for the period of absence and the name and address of a responsible person in Ireland, fully authorised by the students' parents to act on their behalf.
10. The guardian must be prepared to act 'in loco parentis'; to be available for the student. Both parents and educational guardians are encouraged to attend parent-teacher meetings and other school events, where possible. They are encouraged to maintain regular contact and are warmly welcomed to visit the school.
11. The guardian must be familiar with the school's rules, regulations and policies and to support Villiers School's aims and values.
12. The guardian must ensure that legal documents such as visas and registration documents are kept up-to-date and renewed/updated when necessary.



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13. The guardian must provide safe and suitable accommodation and appropriate care and supervision for the student during periods when they cannot be accommodated at the School (including periods of illness and disciplinary measures).
14. In the case of a student falling ill while in school, for example, a member of the School's pastoral care team will contact the student's educational guardian to arrange for the student to be collected and cared for outside of school. It is imperative that parents ensure that their choice of educational guardian can accommodate this requirement.
15. In the case where a student is attending Villiers School as a day student, the guardian must arrange for safe and suitable host family accommodation for the student.
16. It is neither permitted nor appropriate for international students to reside without parental supervision in a hotel or private apartment on a long-term or short-term basis while enrolled in Villiers School.
17. It is neither permitted nor appropriate for international students to stay overnight in a hotel or private apartment or home, unaccompanied by their parent or guardian, while enrolled in Villiers School.
18. Please note, that this guardianship policy applies to all international students enrolled in Villiers School, regardless of the student's age. In particular, it is a condition of enrollment in Villiers School that students over the age of 18 continue to be bound by the terms of this policy while they continue to be enrolled in Villiers School.