



Guardianship Policy

Mission Statement

'To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full and to live the values of Christ's Gospel'

Here at Thornton College, we value the diversity and enrichment that international students bring to our community. Our Pastoral Staff and Boarding Team provide vital support to international students, aiding integration and helping students get the most out of their time in the UK.

Educational guardianships provide extra support for students, ensuring their welfare in and out of Thornton College. An educational guardian acts as the overseas parents' representative in the UK and is independent of Thornton College. The types of services they offer include; arranging homestay accommodation and airport transfers, attending parents' evenings, accommodation during mild student illness and supporting the student during their stay in the UK.

Aims and Objectives

Educational Guardian Requirements

- It is the overseas parents' responsibility to appoint an educational guardian for their child. It is important that the parents choose a responsible adult and one they feel confident will support their child in day-to-day circumstances, as well as in emergencies. If the child requires a visa under the Student Visa Route, the intended carer in the UK must also meet the requirements set by the Home Office. It is advisable that a contract is in place between the parent and guardian. The parents should also consider the support the guardian will provide to the child in the absence of the parents such as emotional, academic and, if applicable, religious guidance.
- Parents may appoint a close friend or family member (see below note on UK residency), or alternatively an AEGIS accredited guardian, www.aegisuk.net.
- An educational guardian must be independent of the school/college, as per NMS 22.5.
- The guardianship arrangement must promote the welfare, and physical and emotional wellbeing of the child.
- The educational guardian should be at least 25 years old to ensure emotional maturity.
- The educational guardian should have UK residency and live within a reasonable travelling distance from Thornton College.
- The educational guardian should be English speaking (it is not necessary for English to be a first language, but a minimum level of fluency can be required) to ensure effective communication with Thornton College.
- The educational guardian must provide their full contact details to the school/college and agree to keep the school/college informed of any changes immediately. If the guardian is out of the country, or unavailable for any period, an alternative UK contact must be arranged, and details communicated to the school/college.
- The educational guardian must be available 24 hours a day in case of emergency.

- Excellent communication is required of the educational guardian, keeping Thornton College informed of all travel and accommodation arrangements, in writing, with at least one week's notice (email is preferred).
- Any homestay accommodation arranged by the educational guardian must be safe, appropriately supervised, and of a good standard. Unsupervised hotel, B & B, hostel, or rental accommodation will not be considered acceptable. The school/college needs to be aware of arrangements to ensure that they comply with requirements under the Student Sponsor Route.
- An educational guardian is welcome to attend parents' evenings and is also encouraged to visit Thornton College by appointment to stay in contact with their student.
- An educational guardian is expected to respect and support the rights, religion, and customs of the international student.
- An educational guardian must be prepared to support the renewal and validity of all legal documents (e.g., passport, visa) so that they are valid.
- If there is a change in educational guardian and an alternative appointed, Thornton College must be informed in writing immediately.
- The guardian should undertake safeguarding training, at their own cost or at the guardian's cost to ensure that they are aware of potential safeguarding risks.
- If Thornton College has any concerns about an educational guardianship arrangement, then we will act on this immediately and refer to the relevant agencies, as per NMS standard 22.

Visa Requirements

As a Student Route sponsor, Thornton College has certain responsibilities it must meet. Appointing a reliable educational guardian is one way of ensuring that suitable care arrangements are in place. The required CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study) may not be issued until Thornton College is satisfied with the guardianship arrangements and that confirmation has been obtained that the educational guardian meets the Home Office requirements.

Information Sharing between Thornton College and Guardians

UK Government guidance emphasises that information sharing is essential for the effective safeguarding of students, and that 'the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe' (Information Sharing, Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents or carers, July 2018). Thornton College may share personal or sensitive information about a student with the nominated guardian, where this is deemed to be vital for the health, welfare and/or safeguarding of the child in question. Keeping the guardian updated about any changes to a student's circumstances helps to ensure appropriate arrangements are made.