

2019-2020

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Student Name: _____



YOUR SUCCESS OUR PRIDE

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YOUR SUCCESS OUR PRIDE

Message from Company Director

Dear _____, welcome to Oxbridge Guardians!

Oxbridge Guardians was founded in the belief that guardianship is not just a necessary administrative and legal requirement, but a crucial formula for a successful and enriching experience. We are not just guardians; we are **EDUCATIONAL GUARDIANS** and our job is to provide a safe and conducive environment for you to learn that complimentary to your school arrangements.

I have worked in the UK for over 13 years helping many students such as yourself and I understand both the opportunities and challenge of you will face during your education in the UK. This handbook gives you important information about our organisation, your school, and how we can help you achieve the potential you have inside.

As Director and founder of the company I am always here to help and you in every way possible. If you have any questions, please contact me personally at Helen.wu@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk. Further, I will be your Primary Support Officer so we will get to know each other much better as I try to help you however I can.

Thank you!

Helen Wu, Director



Arrival, Life and Study in the UK

Airport Pickup

A representative from Oxbridge Futures / Guardians will have contacted you about your pick up arrangements.

Under no circumstances should you leave the area before meeting your designated driver. You pay nothing to the driver. Be aware that illegal taxi drivers might offer to take you to your accommodation. **Do not take these taxis.**

If you cannot find your driver please call the number on your airport transfer confirmation letter, or our emergency number on + 44 7515 494 045

Bringing Food with You!

Please be aware that bringing any meat or dairy products to the UK is not allowed. For further information on restrictions please see the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/355730/bringing_food_leaflet_aug_2014_v4.pdf

Important Documents to Bring

You should bring:

- Your Passport (including any old passports used during your visa application)
- School Offer Letter
- BRP Collection Letter from Embassy (received with your visa)
- Flight confirmation
- Oxbridge airport transfer confirmation form
- Consent to Travel letter
- Health certificate and any medical information
- Travel Insurance
- Medical Insurance

Life in the UK

It's quite normal to take time to adapt to life in a new country, also if you're staying in boarding or homestay accommodation this may also take some getting used to. When you first arrive to the UK things may seem very different from your home

country. Don't worry, this is normal! There will be lots of chances to meet and make new friends. Your school will be very supportive in helping you to adapt to your new surroundings and your Primary Support Officer ("PSO") is always available to talk if you have any questions or concerns, so if you want to chat to her please just use the phone number on your contact sheet.

Living with a Host Family

If you are a day student, or during school holidays for boarding students, you will live with a host family who will take care of you. Please spend some time reading our host family guide later in this booklet.

Behaviour

We expect our students to be well behaved, when in school and when staying with host families. Please make sure that you spend some time talking to your PSO on their first visit about our **Student Behaviour Agreement** which you will be required to sign (In Student Welcome Pack).

Learning in the UK

Every country has its own educational culture. Studying in Britain is not just a question of what you will study but also how you will study it. British teachers expect learners to become responsible, independent, autonomous and self-motivated.

You should follow the course and complete your homework or assignments on time. You must attend your classes - full attendance is a condition of your visa and the school will have a duty to report you to the immigration authorities if you do not turn up for lessons.

It is very important that you must be willing to go to teachers and ask for their help and advice. If you do, teachers will be happy to help, but they expect you to do the work. British teachers like being asked questions. Your fellow students are glad if you ask questions because it helps them learn too.

Primary Support Officer

Allocated PSO: Helen Wu

Email: helen.wu@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk

Telephone: + 44 7515 494 045



It is the Primary Support Officer's duty to:

- liaise with you on personal matters
- help arrange all your half term or holiday accommodation and travel plans
- attend to your academic needs by going to parents evenings and speaking to your teachers.

Helen will also get to know you personally and give you lots of encouragement.

As the founder of Oxbridge Guardians, Helen still takes great delight in mentoring and being a Primary Support Officer for a select number of our students. Rest assured that you are in good hands as Helen has worked with international students for over 12 years and has a large amount of experience and knowledge about what it takes for a student to succeed, personally, academically and ultimately professionally in the UK.

Keeping You Safe

When you arrive to the UK, your PSO will help your School or Host Family to register you with the local council, police force (if applicable) and the doctor.

All the cities in which our schools and host families are based are generally safe and secure places for international students. It is extremely rare for any student to suffer serious problems. However, as in every city all over the world, it is important to follow some basic guidelines to ensure you do not put yourself at unnecessary risk. We suggest you follow these simple rules:

- Listen to your teacher, host family or PSO
- Observe the school and host family rules.
- Tell your host family/boarding master where you are going and when you expect to come back. Always follow curfew times
- Always try to go out with people you know and trust
- Use well-lit, busy roads and avoid short cuts through dark, quiet areas
- Stay alert — don't use headphones when out walking
- Never take money or gifts from people you don't know
- Don't carry a lot of money or valuables and never leave them unattended
- Don't carry your passport unless absolutely necessary
- Walk with friends wherever possible and don't walk around alone late at night
- Don't be afraid to ask for help if you're worried about anything
- Never tell anyone you don't know or trust any of your personal details.
- Late at night, take a taxi home. Use only licensed taxis displaying official local plates.
- Only share taxis with people you know.
- Always have the number of a friend, your host family, the school or your PSO to call in an emergency
- Remember, in Britain cars and buses travel on the left

UK Law

Whilst you are in the UK you are expected to behave according to the UK Laws. Many of these laws will be similar to those in your own country, such as those relating to physical violence, theft and weapons, and some laws are age specific within the UK.

UK laws include, but are not exclusive to:

- It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to buy alcohol in a pub, off-licence, supermarket, or other outlet.
- It is illegal for anyone to buy alcohol for someone under 18 to consume in a pub or a public place.
- It is illegal to carry a weapon.
- It is illegal to perpetrate a hate crime (crime against someone due to hatred of that persons gender, race, religion, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation)
- It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to purchase any form of tobacco
- It is illegal to possess, buy or sell drugs.
- The legal age of consent in the UK is 16.
- It is illegal to cause physical harm to someone
- It is illegal to take something which you have not purchased or does not belong to you (including travel tickets)

Health

When you arrive, we will help you to register with a local doctor as detailed above. If you feel unwell and need to see a doctor; ask your PSO, your school or host family to help you make an appointment. It doesn't cost you anything to see a doctor, but you will have to pay for prescriptions.

If you have any concerns about your health or you feel unwell please contact your school nurse or host family and explain your symptoms. They will seek medical attention for you. Please then instruct them to contact us as soon as possible.

Fire Safety

In the UK there are certain regulations regarding fire safety, management and regulations. At your school you will experience Fire Drills, which are reminders for what to do in the event of a fire. Normally these take place during the school day and involve filing out of the School in an orderly fashion with your teacher. Similarly, should you hear the fire alarm in your accommodation or host family you would be expected to follow a Fire Escape Plan. Your Housemaster or Host Family will explain what the smoke or fire alarm will sound like, and what to do in the event of an alarm. Generally this will include instructions to the nearest exit, away from any danger. To try and prevent any fire related issues, students are encouraged to be mindful of their use of electrical items, or other things which may cause a fire. Your host family or accommodation will advise you on good use of this, but good practise is to ensure that items are switched off when not in use, and everything is kept neatly away from anything that may cause an incident. Should you have any questions about Fire Safety or what to do in the event of a Fire, you should speak with your Housemaster or Host Family, or with Oxbridge Guardians.

Personal Hygiene

Personal Hygiene is incredibly important, not only for health reasons to prevent the spread of diseases or germs but also for social reasons such as preventing body odour and promoting dental hygiene. As a young person it is

essential to maintain good personal hygiene and establish a daily routine to combat some of the changes which may occur during this time in your life. You should ensure that you're able to upkeep your own levels of personal hygiene, inclusive but not limited to:

- Regular washing of your hands (particularly after use of the bathroom or before a meal)
- Regular brushing of your teeth (twice a day), floss and regular dentist visits
- Regular shower/bath
- Daily face washing
- Deodorant
- If you wear makeup removing it before bed
- Drink plenty of water and eating a balanced diet

If you are concerned about any aspects of personal hygiene please speak with your school nurse, GP or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

What do we do in a medical emergency?

We will try to make immediate contact with your parents in the case of a medical emergency. Where consent for a medical procedure is required and we cannot contact your parents then we will act in your best interests as advised by a medical professional.

Emergency Contact Numbers:

Police/Ambulance/Fire: **999**

Director – Helen Wu

From UK: **07515 494045** (English and Mandarin)

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Steph Gilbert

From UK: **07837778298** (English only)

Child Safeguarding

If at any time you think that anyone; be it an adult, teacher, host family member or another child is treating you inappropriately you should contact your PSO, or Steph Gilbert, our Designated Safeguarding Lead on **+44 7837778298**. It is very important to us that you're happy and safe in the UK. We work together with schools, host families and outside agencies to make sure that your needs are met and that you're not at risk of harm.

In the UK we have very strict laws on Safeguarding and keeping children and young people safe. In your Welcome Pack is a government document which explains what Safeguarding is and why it is so important. Should you have any questions at all please contact Steph – steph.gilbert@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk

We have policies (which you can read on our website www.oxbridgeguardians.co.uk/policies-and-procedures) about Safeguarding, Anti-radicalisation, Bullying and E-Safety. This Student Handbook and your Welcome Pack also contain information about each of these topics. If there is anything that you don't understand or you're not sure about you should speak with your PSO, or with Steph.

It is important for you to know that if you are unhappy, struggling to adapt to your new life, or if you have any concerns, that we are here to help you and support you in any way necessary. We will always promise to deal with issues or complaints you raise promptly and compassionately.

Your contacts within Oxbridge Guardians are: **Helen 07515494045** and **Steph 07837778298**

For further support, your Local Safeguarding Children's Board contact is:

Homesickness

Many students will experience homesickness of some form whilst staying away from their parents. Homesickness can take many forms, but some students may experience:

- Feeling lonely
- Withdrawing from social situations/not wanting to interact with people
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feeling sad

This is very normal and is not something to be worried about. If you're finding it very difficult being away from home, please speak with your PSO, Steph, your host family or houseparent as they will be able to offer you advice and support.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as behaviour that is:

- Repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

It can be seen in different ways such as:

- physical assault
- teasing
- making threats
- name calling
- cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger)

If you **See/Hear/Know/Are** someone being bullied you should follow the below steps:

1. Remember that you are not to blame, and you should not feel bad or guilty for telling someone that you trust.
2. Tell your **Primary Support Officer, Host Family/Housemistress/master, Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Parents**. We are here to help and support you should you feel uncomfortable, upset or worried at any time.
3. You are not alone! We are here to support you and make sure that you have the best possible experience. Please do not feel worried, ashamed or scared to speak with someone you trust to get support.
4. For further support, you can also phone Childline: 0800 111 which is 24hour support for children and young people.



Please remember that you can always contact Steph Gilbert, Designated Safeguarding Lead on: 07837778298 if you have any issues and want support.

E-Safety

Due to new technologies there are unfortunately many more opportunities for internet access to have a negative impact. To combat this, we ask that you make sure you follow the Acceptable Use of ICT Agreement in your Welcome Pack, and tell an adult that you trust (Host Family, House Parent, PSO or Steph) if you experience anything online which goes against our recommended interactions.

Anti-Radicalisation

Directly linked with the Safeguarding and E-Safety policy, all our staff and host families will be working with you to keep you safe from extreme views or radicalisation. If you have any questions about anti-radicalisation please speak with Steph (steph.gilbert@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk)

School Details

..... **(Would include full LSCB details again)**



Staying With a Host Family

For Day students you will stay with a host family during term time, and for boarding students sometimes during school holidays, when your boarding accommodation is closed you will be required to stay with a host family. We hope that you will feel part of the family and that you will feel welcomed into their home.

Accommodation

Unless you request to share a room with your friend, you will have your own room. The room will have a comfortable bed, clean bedding, somewhere to put belongings, and a table/desk and chair (with lighting) for working (for short term students this may be in another room, such as a dining room or study).

There will be access to a bathroom with a separate shower cubicle or a shower over the bath. Normally households have limited hot water and some hosts may ask for shower times to be kept to a reasonable period and/or to a particular time of the day.



Internet access

A wireless internet connection is normally available, but speeds can be slow in some parts of the UK, particularly in rural areas. Internet download is often limited and can be very expensive. You should NOT download large files, such as films, games and music unless this is acceptable to the Host family.

Oxbridge Guardians will advise Hosts to limit access time in your best interests, particularly overnight. Schools will have similar restrictions. You should not need to use the host's telephone or computers. You will be required to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT policy which details your agreement to the terms Oxbridge Guardians have provided to assist with internet safety and protecting yourself online. Should you have any questions about online safety, cyberbullying or personal information online please contact Steph Gilbert – 07837778298, steph.gilbert@oxbridguardians.co.uk

Laundry

Hosts will offer to wash clothes and explain when and where students can put their laundry. Laundry should be limited to a reasonable level for the length of stay (generally once per week).

Full Board Basis

- **Breakfast** - Cereal and toast is routinely offered, occasionally with bacon and/or eggs. Some families may have a late, cooked breakfast at weekends, combining breakfast and lunch (known as "brunch").
- **Lunch** (*excluded during half board periods*) is normally a light meal of soup and bread, or sandwiches, jacket potato, cheese on toast, or maybe pasta or noodles, with some salad, fruit or a yoghurt.
- **Dinner** consists of at least two courses, e.g. a main course of chicken, fish or red meat with vegetables and a dessert/fruit. Hosts may be able to cater for Chinese students with rice, noodles and pasta.
- **Snacks** students should not expect to help themselves and 'snack' in between meals. They should ask if hungry, and hosts may provide biscuits, cake or some fruit. A hot drink and a biscuit before going to bed is usually available.

House Rules

It is important that you understand any household rules that the host family give you. Please don't be afraid to ask them questions if you do not understand, and if you are still unsure please contact us or your PSO.

Emergency Plans

Your host family will give you information and advice on the emergency plans which you should follow when staying with the family. This will include what to do in the case of a fire and the emergency escape route. To prevent fire, we ask Oxbridge Guardians students to try and buy UK versions of phone/laptop chargers if possible, as using multiple adapters can cause a risk. If you have questions about this please speak with your PSO, or host family.

Things to remember when you stay with a Host Family

NOT ALLOWED:

1. Staying elsewhere overnight without prior permission from Oxbridge Guardians, agreed the week before the Exeat or Half Term break.
2. Inviting friends back to stay with your Host Family
3. Having any friends of the opposite sex in your bedroom
4. Paying the host directly or making your own arrangements with the host
5. Using the Host Family's phone or computer without their permission

PLEASE REMEMBER TO:

- Always show respect to the host family, their home and property
- Return promptly for meals
- Tell the family politely of any food you dislike
- Tell the family ONE DAY in advance if you wish to miss a meal and eat elsewhere
- Ask the family if you wish to go out and tell the host of your plans
- Return home promptly (see guidelines on curfew times Page 8)
- Keep your room clean and tidy especially when you leave the house
- Report any damage to the host and apologise for it
- Obey the "House Rules", for example:
 - When you should take a shower
 - If you can use the kitchen
 - If you can eat in your room
 - If you can use the computer and internet
- Always remember to say THANK YOU, especially when you leave

Important Rules

These policies affect you during the times you are in the UK.

Going out during the day and travelling

- Students **aged 17 or 18** may travel alone but should return home no later than 11.00pm, or at a time previously agreed with the Host Family.
- Students **aged 14 to 16** may travel alone, as long as plans are deemed safe and acceptable by a host family or Oxbridge staff. As a guideline, 16 year olds should be home by no later than 10pm. 14 or 15 year olds should be home no later than 9.30pm and/or during daylight, whichever is the earlier.

- Students **under the age of 14** should be accompanied by an adult at all times when away from home.

Staying elsewhere overnight

Students often wish to make alternative arrangements for one or more nights' accommodation. The following policy has been introduced to clarify what is needed from students and parents when Oxbridge staff considers a request from a student (or parent) regarding alternative care arrangements. Host families must refer a request to Oxbridge staff.

Students Aged 17 and 18 or over on start date of alternative care arrangement

Parents need to complete and sign a Consent Form, and return this to us by fax or verified email. The full address must be provided to comply with the rules for a UK Tier 4 (Child) VISA.

Students Aged 16 on start date of alternative care arrangement

As above PLUS we require a named adult, residing in the UK and over 25 years old, who will take responsibility for the student during the stay.

Students Aged 15 or under on start date of alternative care arrangement

As above PLUS we require full contact with the named adult and arrangement confirmed in writing. The adult will need to confirm that they will be taking full responsibility for the student during the stay.

An arrangement to stay away is subject to Oxbridge being satisfied that a child will be safe. We reserve the right to veto any arrangement if we feel it is unsatisfactory in anyway. We will evaluate requests to stay away based on our Safeguarding Policy, Risk Assessments and UK Safeguarding Law.

IMPORTANT – It is a compulsory UK law and VISA requirement that suitable living arrangements are in place for overseas students attending boarding schools. Oxbridge have a duty of care to schools and contract with parents to protect the students and to provide safe host family accommodation.

FAQ

Why do I need a Guardian?

Most schools in the UK require their students whose families live overseas to have a Guardian resident in the UK, normally aged over 25 years. Tier 4 visa rules state that children must have a UK Guardian. Whilst at a boarding school, your housemaster or housemistress will take responsibility for academic progress and welfare, but there are times during the term and more especially outside term time, when the school must be able to hand over these responsibilities to a properly appointed Guardian. These responsibilities include:

- acting on behalf of your parents in situations where they are unable to do so due to distance or timing;
- looking after your welfare in the UK when the school is closed for holidays;
- providing a host family for you to stay with during Half Term and fixed exeat weekends when the school is closed;
- assisting you with things you may need — school uniform, sports equipment, pocket money, phone cards, mobile phone, UK mobile sim card, etc.;
- helping you arrange your travel both in the UK (taxi, train or bus) and back home (flight bookings, transfers);
- helping you if things go wrong:

- if you get into trouble at school you may be suspended and asked to leave the school for a period, at short notice
- if you have problems with immigration or passports (for example, lost or stolen)
- if you get ill and need to go to hospital, or away from school
- being available for you anytime, particularly if you are worried about things like:
 - work
 - school
 - friends
 - your own family. It is not unusual to feel unhappy and maybe homesick when you first start at your school and do not know anyone. You can always contact us if you are feeling alone and isolated from your family.
 - the host family you stay with. Life in the UK is very different to your own country and we can give you some ideas and guidance to help you settle in more quickly and easily.

*Our carefully selected and inspected host families are fully checked and required to protect, care for and provide full board and lodging for you. PLEASE NOTE, however, guardianship remains with Oxbridge Guardians at all times.

Who are Host Families?

Oxbridge Guardians have a number of host families with whom we place our students, either long term for those attending Day School, or short term, during holidays and exeat weekends for students at Boarding Schools. We try to match you as closely as possible to the family in terms of their experience, interests, and location. We try where possible to place you in the same host family for all of your stays, but changes can occur, sometimes due to students making alternative arrangements (like returning home for Half Term) or when a Host goes on holiday.

You may find that there is more than one student staying with a host family at any one time. In our experience, this can work very well, as it offers you additional company and friendship during your stay.

Our host families can range from a man and wife with young children to retired grandparents, whose own children have grown up. They will all have a kind disposition toward you and are given guidelines and training from Oxbridge Guardians on the best practice when having an overseas student to stay. This includes advice on Health and Safety matters, Safeguarding and other practical issues. Should you have any concerns whilst staying with our host family, please let us know immediately. Students are expected to respect their host family's way of life in return for being accepted as a family member.

Please note, guardianship remains with Oxbridge Guardians during your stay with a Host Family, so you should speak to us about any concerns you may have or if you need to make any changes to the original arrangement. Hosts are encouraged to include you in family life and to arrange activities and excursions. The happiest students tend to be those who also make most effort with the Host Family, so don't stay in your room all day!

Parental Authority — Will Oxbridge Guardians sign on behalf of your parents?

Schools frequently need a parent or guardian to sign for parental permission for you to participate in school activities and excursions. Our policy is to forward these to your parents for approval if the cost is over GBP100, and / or if the activity is strenuous or potentially dangerous. Otherwise we will sign, unless your parents have indicated otherwise on the Application Form.

Visas and Passports — can you help with visa renewal or if I lose my passport?

We have contacts that are able to do this, and we can help put you in touch with agencies that specialise in UK Visa renewal, Schengen Visas and passport renewal.

Start and End of Terms

Please be aware that schools require students to conform to all school rules and to adhere to published school dates for the start and end of terms. Failure to do so can sometimes result in disciplinary action against the student and would almost certainly be marked down as an unauthorised absence.

Mobile Phones

Oxbridge Guardians will assist in arranging "Pay as you Go" mobile sim cards or phones, but we cannot enter into monthly contracts.

Useful Contacts

24 hour emergency phone number for Oxbridge Guardians: **07837778298**

PSO Phone Number (We Chat): **07515 494045**

Police/Fire Service/Ambulance (Emergency Services): **999/112**

Health Care Advice (Non-Emergency): **111**

Childline (Counselling and Support for Young People): **08001111**

Local Safeguarding Children Board: _____

Steph (Designated Safeguarding Lead): 07837778298