

2020-2021

HOMESTAY HANDBOOK



YOUR SUCCESS OUR PRIDE

YOUR SUCCESS, OUR PRIDE

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Message from Helen Wu, Director

Dear Hosts, welcome to Oxbridge Guardians!

Oxbridge Guardians was founded in the belief that guardianship and hosting is part of a crucial formula for a successful and enriching educational experience for foreign students. As **EDUCATIONAL GUARDIANS** in collaboration with our host families, our job is to provide a safe and conducive environment for learning that compliments the student's school arrangements.

I have worked in the UK education market for over 13 years and I understand both the pitfalls and opportunities for students taking on the challenge of a foreign education in the UK. It is certainly a challenge which some children adapt to faster than others, but the rewards are considerable. Children become confident, educated and have a broader perspective of the world. Being one of our Host Families makes a meaningful contribution to our student's futures.

This handbook gives you important information about our organisation, policies, students, schools and other information and is reviewed and updated annually. Our priority is for you to know that all our stakeholders are very important to us.

As Director and founder of the company I am always here to help and assist host families in every way possible. If you have any questions please contact us on homestay@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk, or if you would like to contact me personally, please do so at Helen.wu@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk

Thank you!

Helen Wu, Director



How do we work?

Management

Oxbridge Guardians (“**Oxbridge** ”), and the Lead Director of the company, **Helen Wu**, act as the educational guardian to all registered students.

Helen Wu, as Director of the company, has ultimate management oversight and is assisted in the management function by **Steph Gilbert**, our Designated Safeguarding Officer. Steph is a qualified child safeguarding professional, and is responsible for ensuring all safe guarding and child protection policies and procedures are appropriate and adhered to by all relevant parties.

Communication

Oxbridge believes that the clearest way for communication is through a standard route. In this way, should host families have an issues, concerns or questions the first point of contact should be with Steph as the Host Family Manager, and secondly through the Primary Support Officer. Students will be allocated a Primary Support Officer and are advised to seek attention from this contact should they come across any issues.

Oxbridge Guardians retain ultimate responsibility for ensuring our students’ pastoral and academic happiness. They are also responsible for ensuring all our Host Families meet the standards required in our Host Family Policy

Primary Support Officer (“PSO”)

To ensure that we understand the needs of all students fully, each will be allocated a bi-lingual PSO (Primary Support Officer) who will have experience in working with International Students. Our PSO’s are allocated a small number of students each year to mentor whilst providing welfare support. The PSO will visit your family in the presence of the student on a regular basis (at least once per year) and provide follow up reports to the office to ensure our records are kept fully up to date.

Private Fostering Arrangements

Students under the age of 16 who stay with a host family for more than 28 days would have to apply for a Private Fostering Arrangement with the family due to their age for safeguarding reasons. Should this be the case with your student, Oxbridge Guardians would assist you in the process of this, but it may mean that someone from Local Children Safeguarding team come to visit your home, in addition to visits from Oxbridge Guardians.

Cancellation

Terms for cancellation for a student are detailed in your Host Family Agreement, along with payment schedules, terms and conditions and confirmation of your students dates with you.

Direct contact with *Oxbridge Guardians* for host families should be through the Host Family Manager.

Steph Gilbert
Designated Safeguarding Lead
 Host Family Manager
 T: 07837778298
 E: steph.gilbert@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk

Host Family Policy

Oxbridge has a network of Host Families with whom we place our students either for the whole academic year as a homestay arrangement or when schools are closed for Half Terms and Exeat weekends. It is our aim to arrange for our students to return to the same host family for all their stays, as this gives students a “home from home” experience. Changes however may occur, especially where requested by the parent, student or the family.

Students are expected to respect their host family's home and way of life in return for being accepted as a family member. Some hosts will apply house rules to help understanding of routines etc.

Host Families can range from a couple or single parent with young children to retired grandparents, whose own children have grown up. All have a kind and caring disposition toward children from overseas, offering a “home away from home”.

According to our Safe Recruitment policy (See Policy Link) all Host Families are inspected at least once a year, when advice and training on best practice will be given and checks are made on the accommodation. Oxbridge also undertakes rigorous checks on each family member over the age of 16, including a DBS check (Disclosure and Barring System – includes checks on the police and social services databases).

Hosts formally undertake to protect and care for the students in their charge, but please remember that educational guardianship of the student remains with Oxbridge during a host family stay. Oxbridge Guardians provide each Host Family with training in Safeguarding and Prevent and in turn expect Host Families to uphold the values discussed and taught

during the training. We ask for termly reports on students but please do contact us at any time to offer further information. Training on Safeguarding, Prevent and other updates are annually revised, both at the re-inspection with Oxbridge staff face to face, and also through an email update from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Hosts are encouraged to include students in family life and to offer activities and excursions. If additional costs are incurred receipts are required and, if claimed by the host, this expense will be added to the parent's Student Expenses Deposit (Please see our Host Family Expenses Policy).

Please note, the booking of host family stays MUST be made via the office and not directly with the family.

Please note that short term students (Exeat Weekends and Half Terms) would receive full board (including lunch) and generally would be boarding at the schools they attend during the term time. Day students require host family throughout the entire academic year (long term students) and would generally receive half board during weekdays as they would have their lunch at the school.

Should there be any changes within the host family you should let the Host Family Manager know immediately so that she can update your record or do a visit as needed. Hosts should be aware that as a part of our ongoing commitment to best practice AEGIS accreditation visits may be arranged to host families and questionnaires sent to gather feedback.

Students are made aware of their commitments to the Host family in the Student Handbook.

Understanding and Overcoming Cultural Differences

Introduction

For many students this may be their first time away from home. Their backgrounds will vary and they will have very different ideas about home-life. That's why it's so important that hosts are able to anticipate problems and respond with practical measures to ensure things run smoothly. We'll give you all the help and advice you need to manage the transition into a new culture. Differences in culture can give rise to misunderstandings for host families as well as their students. We can often feel offended when things are said in the wrong way. We expect our guests to use 'please', 'thank you' and 'pardon' as we do. The way we use these social skills may seem like common politeness but different cultures express social skills in very different ways.

In many cultures requests are expressed much more directly than British people are accustomed to. A student who says, "give me the salt" at the dinner table may not be disrespectful, merely lacking in English vocabulary or unaware of what is polite and impolite language. We also express ourselves through body language and tone of voice which can also vary from culture to culture. Many languages do not have such a wide range of intonation as English so foreign learners can sound gruff and unfriendly when in fact they are not. Similarly, students may have difficulty coping if their English is very elementary; they may also interpret certain British traits (such as a reluctance to speak to strangers) as unfriendliness. These feelings of alienation can be caused by relatively 'minor' things such as unfamiliar food; differences in routine; differences in travel arrangements and unfamiliar official procedures. They can be exacerbated by the deeper cultural differences in family life or language.

The best way to deal with these issues is to anticipate them, and where necessary to address them in an atmosphere of mutual understanding. Recognising difficulties while at the same time gently explaining how things are done in your house will get you both

off on the right foot. Over time, misunderstandings will fade away.

Dealing with homesickness

Students thousands of miles from home may well be suffering from feelings of mild alienation or even culture shock. Providing a friendly and secure 'base' is a vital part of helping them overcome these feelings. Culture shock is similar to the feelings we have when we are adapting to a new job or other environment, only more so. When people are surrounded by a different culture where everything (including the language) is new and potentially confusing, they go through changes of mood and attitude before coming to terms with their new environment.

Your students will be initially very excited and positive about their new culture. But as the reality of deeper cultural differences sinks in, this excitement can wear off. Students may then start to miss friends, family and places as they begin to have doubts about themselves and their new environment. Culture shock may manifest itself in a wide range of behaviour, including confusion, withdrawal, tiredness and anxiety. Providing a comfortable and welcoming home will go a long way to overcoming such culture shock.

Once this negative phase is past, the vast majority of students settle into their new life until the final phase occurs, which is often a feeling of sadness and loss as they approach the end of their time in the UK. The pattern to these feelings is normal and common. Most students navigate through them perfectly well. However, in certain circumstances, failure to adjust can bring serious problems for the student if they are not recognised and dealt with in good time. If you have a homesick student, alert us and ask us for support. Also ask your student to talk to you about home, and get them to show you photographs of their family. Alternatively, you may have a shy student, in which case try to anticipate their needs — they may be too shy to ask for anything!

Helping students to practise English

Conversation is a very important part of the student's learning process. Spending time each day in conversation with your student is a valuable way of helping them improve their English and learn about the British way of life. Most students love to talk about their homeland and families. It will be very valuable too if you show an interest in their progress at school and even help out with their homework!

It's essential that as a host you help and encourage them to communicate in English. Patience and understanding will be appreciated, as students are often at low levels of English when they first arrive. When talking with your student, try to speak slowly, simply and clearly.

Most students like watching some television. It provides entertainment and improves their English. The student may expect to be able to watch

television with you. Bear in mind that certain programmes may be more interesting to the student than to members of your family!

Personal relationships

International students may find attitudes to men, women and relationships very different from what they are used to at home. Some may not be accustomed to public displays of affection between couples or even a friendly hug or kiss. Others may regard British people as unusually reserved and lacking in warmth. Men from some cultures may have problems accepting authority from females as it is highly unusual in their own country. Women may feel uncomfortable complaining about something as they are afraid that it may be taken as an insult. The key to overcoming all of this is, as before, to maintain an open mind, a mutually respectful stance and a determination to communicate. If you can bring this to your role as a host, you should have no problems.



What our host families provide for our students

Accommodation

Host Families may only accommodate students provided by Oxbridge Guardians where one of our students is resident. Each student will have his or her own room (unless otherwise agreed). The room will have a comfortable bed, clean bedding, a wardrobe to put clothes in, somewhere to put belongings, and a table/desk and chair (with lighting) for working (this may be in another room, such as a dining room or study). There will be good access to a bathroom with a separate shower cubicle or a shower over the bath, both in the mornings and evenings. Students are to have full access to common areas of the house.

Although no set UK laws define adult supervision for under 18s, we ask all host families to consider strongly the advice from NSPCC:

- Children aged 12 and under should not be left home alone for a long period of time – they are rarely mature enough to cope in an emergency.
- Children aged 16 and under should not be left home alone overnight.
- A child should not be left home alone regardless of their age if they do not feel comfortable with this.

With these guidelines in mind, we would ask that host families inform Oxbridge Guardians of **any** plans to be away from the home overnight so that we may make alternative arrangements for the students care. Similarly, we ask host families to consider the risks when leaving a child unsupervised during the day. For any students aged 13 and below, we would ask that host families ensure that students are not left home alone for any period of time. For students aged 14-18 we feel that it would be appropriate for a maximum of 4 hours for students to be without direct adult supervision at home. In this way, and in reference to guidelines from NSPCC we request that you consider every aspect of the student's capability, age and emotional capacity when deciding if a student will be at the home without supervision. For any questions or if you are unsure of what the appropriate course of action would be, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead directly: 07837778298.

The maximum number of students per home should be no more than three students at any time, as per AEGIS guidelines in best practise. Similarly, we would ask that students are placed in single rooms unless otherwise requested by Oxbridge Guardians. Should you be hosting students from a different guardianship agency or school you should immediately inform us. It is not permissible to take any other paying guests or operate any form of bed and breakfast when hosting Oxbridge Guardians students.

Please note that you should allow Oxbridge Guardians to visit at any time, given suitable notice. Oxbridge Guardians conduct Annual Host Family inspections, to ensure that students information is up to date, and to provide updates in safeguarding training to the host. Similarly AEGIS or other statutory bodies may request home visits as part of routine inspections, which would be pre-arranged with the Homestay. Oxbridge Guardians are accredited by AEGIS, so hosts should be prepared that they may be in contact for feedback, or to arrange home visits.

Different Types of Students (Boarding and Day Students)

Depending on the area which your home is in, you may be thinking about short or long term students. When hosting a short-term student, generally this student is attending a Boarding School and so during term time they would be used to staying within a Boarding House at the school. Whilst this often means that they are very comfortable and chatty in sharing social spaces, they may be slightly unused to a 'family' atmosphere which is a

more personal experience. Students who study at Boarding School will often only stay in Host Family for a maximum of two weeks (in holiday times or when the school is closed) and so these students would be on a Full Board Basis. Whilst some students will attend holiday tuition, some may be having free-time during their stay with you.

Long Term students are generally studying at a Day School, and so would be booked with you for an Academic Year (September – July). We appreciate that this is quite a long commitment to hosting, and so if you have any holidays planned during this time we can make alternative arrangements for the student, as long as we are provided with the minimum notice period as detailed in the Host Family Agreement). Generally the rate for hosting students long term is a weekly price, with a higher rate paid during half terms and holidays if the student stays in the UK with you. This is to reflect the upgrade to full board seven days a week, as Day students will generally have their lunch at the school Monday - Friday. With Long Term students it's often easier to create a more relaxed and harmonious relationship with the students as there is a longer period of time to build on the home away from home environment.

Meal Examples

- **Breakfast** - Cereal, toast and milk 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 will provide biscuits, cake or some fruit. A hot drink and a biscuit before going to bed is usually available.
- **If your student has special dietary needs you will be advised in the student profile**

Internet access

A wireless internet connection is required. We advise Hosts to limit access time in the best interests of the student, particularly overnight, when some students stay up very late at night, get no sleep and disturb the household. Hosts can consider restricting or switching off the internet overnight. Students should not need to use the host's telephone or computers. We would advise monitoring internet use as per safeguarding and child protection guidelines. This is to ensure that children stay safe when using the internet. Some providers offer the option of adding parental controls, should you wish to look into this. Should you have any concerns please contact Steph at Steph.Gilbert@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk. You can find more information on our ICT policies

Laundry

Laundry should be done for the students once per week (including sheets and towels). Should the student wish to wash their own personal clothes and you are confident with their use of your washing machine this should be overseen once weekly.

Host Family Checks

All members of the Host Family that are aged 16 or above are required to have a valid enhanced Disclosure and Barring Certificate (DBS) check. Hosts are required to regularly service gas appliances in the home and provide Oxbridge with a Gas Safe certificate to demonstrate this.

Host Families are visited at least annually and Oxbridge undertake a recorded safety assessment of the household to determine if the household remains suitable for our students. Oxbridge will keep records of these visits and may make recommendations for improvements which will be re-inspected after an appropriate time interval to ensure our recommendations have been complied with.

Important Student Policies

These policies affect students during the times they are staying with an Oxbridge host family or away from school.

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 explains what is needed from students and parents when Oxbridge staff consider 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 of the student 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.

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

Absent or Missing Students

- If the student is absent or missing in your care, please immediately phone Stephanie on 07837 778 298 or contact our 24 hour emergency line. Following this please complete the attached form (Appendix 1) or online: <https://podio.com/webforms/20205240/1376094>.
- If you believe they are in imminent danger or a crime is being committed please call the police immediately before informing us.
- For further information on our absent/missing child procedures please read through the Absent/Missing Child policy (Appendix 2) or available on our website available at the following link: <http://oxbridgeguardians.co.uk/policies-and-procedures>

Sick Students Missing School

If students are sick and it is not a medical emergency:

- they should inform you;
- you to assess their wellbeing; and
- then inform us.

If students are unable to go to school due to illness you should always make sure you contact the PSO or the DSL (students@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk steph.gilbert@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk) so that we can report the absence as authorised to the school. It is not acceptable to have the students inform us without some form of confirmation from the Host Family.

Student Behaviour and Use of ICT

All students are asked to sign agreements on their behaviour and use of ICT (Information & Computer Technology). This is to provide both guidance on appropriate behaviour and keep them safe from potential risks. Below are the agreements which students sign – please assist us in supporting students by letting us know if any of the below rules are not kept to in your home. As part of our safeguarding, e-safety and anti-radicalisation policies we ask that you assist us in encouraging students to use the internet and personal devices safely.

ICT Acceptable Use Agreement – For Students

At Oxbridge Guardians we understand the importance and benefits of emerging technologies for children’s learning and personal development. However, we also recognise that safeguards need to be in place to ensure children are kept safe at all times. Please read the below agreement for use of IT in the Host Family or Boarding House.

- I will not download or install software, and will use my own, or host family equipment responsibly and according to the house rules of my host family. I understand that whilst I will always be allowed to contact my family, there may be limitations to the period of time/time of day which is suitable to use.
- I will follow the recommended security guidelines and not reveal my passwords to anyone and change them regularly.
- I will make sure that all ICT communications with pupils, teachers or others is responsible and sensible.
- I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the Internet. This includes resources I access and the language I use.
- I will not deliberately browse, download, upload or forward material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material I will report it immediately to my host family, and to Oxbridge Guardians
- I will not give out any personal information such as name, phone number or address.
- I will not arrange to meet someone I have spoken with online, and should anyone suggest this I will report it immediately to my host family, and to Oxbridge Guardians
- I will ensure that my online activity is responsible and sensible and will actively work to ensure that any social media/communication programmes or apps that I use have the appropriate privacy settings to protect me.
- I will support Oxbridge Group Ltd approach to online safety and not deliberately upload or add any images, video, sounds or text that could upset or offend any member of the community
- I will not attempt to bypass the internet filtering system.
- I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe and that if they are not followed Oxbridge Group Ltd would take appropriate action to ensure my safety, including but not limited to; contacting my parents.

Student Behaviour Agreement

Our Student Behaviour Agreement is based on mutual respect and tolerance. We want all our students to have a successful and positive study experience. We are committed to ensuring the enjoyment and well-being of all our students. To ensure this we need you to follow our rules. Please read them very carefully. They apply at all times, including on study visits and in all accommodation.

- **Travel & Staying elsewhere overnight**
We expect students to adhere to our Important Rules on overnight stays as detailed in the Student Handbook, specific to age. Any requests for alternative accommodation/holiday plans should be made
- **Attendance & Sickness**

We expect students to attend all lessons, activities and trips unless authorised by Oxbridge. Should you feel unwell you must report it to your host family or houseparent who will assess if you need further medical treatment and officially report your illness to Oxbridge Guardians We would then authorise this absence with the school.

- **Punctuality**

We expect students to be punctual for all classes, meals, organised activities, trips or events.

- **Respect**

We expect all students to be courteous and respectful to all other students, staff or host families they may meet whilst in the UK. Students should show understanding for different cultures and behave in respectful and appropriate manner at all times.

- **Responsibility**

We expect students to have the equipment they will need for class (e.g. pens and dictionary) and activities (e.g. sports shoes, swimming costume, towel, etc.)

- **Consideration**

We expect students to be understanding, polite and respectful in their dealings with other students and with members of staff or host families. Violence will not be tolerated. Mobile Phones, iPods, etc. – we expect students to switch off their mobile phones and other electronic devices during classes.

- **Property**

We expect students to respect school property and the property of others, this include the home of your host family which should be kept clean and tidy.

- **Health and Safety**

We expect students to follow the guidance provided in Student Handbook about keeping safe in the UK, particularly about Fire safety, electrical items from outside the UK, and personal safety.

- **Valuables**

Students must not leave money or valuables unattended in their bedrooms

- **Bullying**

As detailed in the Anti-bullying policy, we do not expect our students to behave in a way which may deliberately cause harm to another person – either emotionally or physically. If a student feels that they are being treated in a way which is causing them personal distress they should contact a member of Oxbridge Guardians immediately so that we can stop it from happening.

- **Smoking**

No smoking is allowed

- **Alcohol or illegal drugs**

Students found to possess, use or supply alcohol or illegal drugs be subject to a full investigation by Oxbridge Guardians and related parties (School, Local Authority, Parents, Host Family) and should be aware that the result of this investigation could be various levels of sanctions such as suspension, moving host family, or termination of your guardianship with us. Discussion about sanctions for behaviour or other such issues would be with the student, parents and any other involved parties and would be at the discretion of the Guardian. All sanctions are recorded on encrypted central student file.

- **Laws in the UK**

Students should take care to respect and abide by laws in the UK, as described in the Student Handbook. Any student found to break UK law will incur the relevant sanction from the police or authority.

Medical and Health & Safety in the Home

Action in the event of non-emergency illness or accident

If your student has a non-emergency illness or accident, please notify the Oxbridge Guardians immediately. If you feel it necessary, please also call your own doctor.

What do we do in a Medical emergency?

Host families should contact Oxbridge Guardians in case of a medical emergency. We will try to make immediate contact with parents in the case of a medical emergency. Where consent for a serious medical procedure is required and we cannot contact the parents then as per the medical waiver to which parents have consented in our terms and conditions we will act in the best interests of the student as advised by a medical professional.

Bullying – What to do?

Bullying can be defined as behaviour that is:

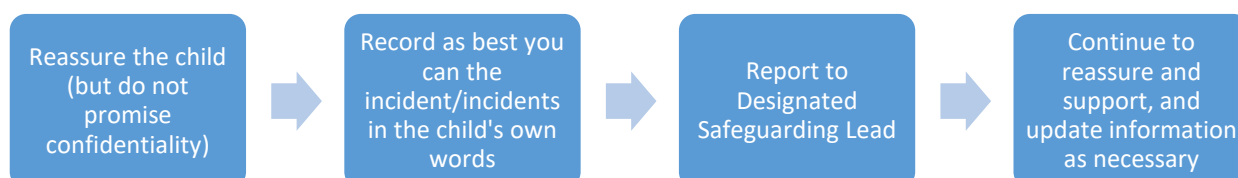
- Repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

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 your student reports that they are being bullied or have witnessed bullying you should follow the below steps:

1. Reassure the student that they're doing the right thing by seeking support. **You should not promise confidentiality as you should report this disclosure to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.**
2. Try and record in the child's own words the report of bullying event/events.
3. Report to Designated Safeguarding Lead who will work with the student, school, parents and host family to resolve the issues and effectively support the child. If the bullying involves a crime it will be reported to the Police accordingly.
4. Continue to reassure and support the student, and advise Designated Safeguarding Lead of any continued issues with regard to the student's behaviour or welfare.



For further advice on how to support a child who is being bullied, witnessed bullying or may be bullying other people we would advise that you undertake some of the free training made available by the website: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

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

Registering with a doctor

Any student staying in the UK for longer than six months should register with a doctor on arrival. We can help with this, although it is often preferable for the student to be taken on as a new patient by your family doctor if possible if they are residing with your long term. If this is not possible, you can ask the school or your local chemist for a list of doctors in the area.

Medical treatment

If any medicine is prescribed, make sure dosage instructions are understood and the medicine is kept in a safe place. Our students pay an NHS surcharge for treatment to be received like a UK resident.

Dental treatment

If a student needs a dentist please inform Oxbridge Guardians. It is usual to send them to the dentist used by your household. You should tell the student that they will be expected to pay for treatment, and that they should establish the cost and extent of treatment in advance.

Home Heating

Adequate heating must be provided in the home and the student's room.

Household Insurance

Please note that the Oxbridge Guardians cannot accept liability or responsibility for damage to your property caused by your students. You should ensure you have household insurance that covers any accidental damage by your students. It may also be worth insuring valuables, in case of breakage. Fair wear and tear should not be charged to students but they may be expected to pay for any damage they may have caused through carelessness. In cases of dispute Oxbridge Guardians will be willing to arbitrate and should be contacted at an early stage, before the student leaves. It is imperative that you inform your household contents policy insurers that you have a paying guest/student in your home. If your insurance policy does not cover paying guests in your home, you may be jeopardising your cover for damage caused by a third party. For further information you can contact the Association of British Insurers on 020 7600 3333 or via their website (www.abi.org.uk).

Driving and Car Insurance

If the student is to be driven in a vehicle then (a) the driver must be a responsible adult, in a fit state to drive, and have a full and valid driving licence that is acceptable in the UK; and (b) the vehicle must be in a good state of repair and have a valid MOT (if required) and be insured for the driver.

Oxbridge Guardians require that Host Families ensure that they have updated their insurance with the information that they will be transporting international students.

Gas Safety and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Hosts providing accommodation to students are classified as landlords/landladies under the Gas Safety Regulations (installation and use) 1994 and Amendments 1996. Consequently, providing a room for a student means that you must conform to the Regulations by ensuring that all gas appliances (including boilers and central heating systems) are completely safe. This involves obtaining a Gas Safety Certificate through inspection by an installer approved by Gas Safe. This must be shown to the Oxbridge Guardians on request.

We also require that a carbon monoxide alarm be fitted in any room containing a gas, liquid or solid fuel burning appliance).

Electrical Safety

All electrical appliances in the home must be safe to use

Fire Safety

The home must have smoke detectors in appropriate locations, with at least one smoke detector on every storey of the home – these will be checked at annual inspections, but Host Families should endeavour to ensure their smoke alarms are in good working order at all times. The host family must discuss the protocol in the home in the event of a fire emergency with the student. A fire risk assessment should also be completed, along with an emergency evacuation plan.

You and Oxbridge Guardians — working together

As a host, we regard you as an essential partner in the pursuit of our main aim — to give every one of our students a happy, successful and unforgettable experience of living and learning in the UK. Close liaison between us and the host is often the key to a successful and happy experience for all.

Dealing with problems together

Most students' stays are happy and uncomplicated, but from time to time problems may arise. Oxbridge Guardians are very experienced in dealing with many situations that you will not have met before.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you feel the student is excessively homesick, not adjusting to life in Britain, or suffering from any illness or stress. These are often more evident when the student is alone and away from the school environment.

Keeping us in the picture

If the whole household is going to be absent for any substantial period of time, you should inform us to make any arrangements. If you take students from more than one school, you should let the Accommodation Officers know. Please also let us know about any change in domestic circumstances — such as your marital status, new children or pets.

Please contact us if you have any problems with your student. Please remember only to use the emergency number in the event of a genuine emergency. Otherwise, please contact us during normal working hours.

Physical Contact Policy

- Homestays will endeavour to keep physical contact with the student to a minimum.
- Homestay family members may not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind with students in their care.
- Use of corporal punishment is not allowed.
- Use of restraint should only be used in highly exceptional circumstances (for the safety of the child – any questions please raise them with the Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Under no circumstances may a Homestay or member of their family give tobacco or drugs to students.
- Alcohol may only be given to students, in moderation, at times specified by parents or guardians and in accordance with the law restricting the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol.
- Homestays should prudently avoid situations in which they are alone with students in rooms or areas which are locked or made inaccessible to others.
- Student's bedroom must always be regarded as private space and staff or Homestays should never visit a student in his or her bedroom or dormitory except when exercising specific responsibilities or duty of care. In this case, doors should be left ajar or another Homestay family member made aware of the course of action being followed.
- The general principle of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child or young person. Children and young people with special needs/disabilities may require more physical contact to assist with aspects of their everyday lives. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child/young person's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Where a member of staff, volunteer or Homestay has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from the Directors. Directors will then consult relevant stakeholders to determine an appropriate written care plan.
- There may be occasions when a distressed child or young person needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Homestays should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening in any way.
- This means that Homestays should:
 - consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed young person;
 - always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child or young person;
 - record situations which may give rise to concern. 'Cause for Concern' report is available online for all Staff, Homestays and Volunteers to access. These reports will be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Child Safeguarding Policy

Oxbridge Guardians believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and keep them safe and are committed to practice in a way that protects them. To this end Oxbridge is committed to industry best practice and we have developed our policies and procedures to reflect this. We recommend that at least one carer in the Host family takes a level 1 child safeguarding course. Please find our full Safeguarding Policy at www.oxbridgeguardians.co.uk/policies-and-procedures

Oxbridge has an obligation to:

- Work within the relevant legal framework in the UK, namely
 - Children Act 1989
 - United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
 - Data protection Act 2018
 - Sexual Offences Act 2003
 - Children Act 2004
 - Protection of Freedom Act 2012
 - Relevant government and AEGIS guidance on safeguarding children
- To protect children and young people who receive Oxbridge Guardians services and
- To provide staff and homestay families with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount in the Children Act 1989
- All children , regardless of age , disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We plan to keep young people safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff
- Developing and implementing effective-safety policies and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff through supervision , support and training
- Recruiting staff and homestay families safely , ensuring all safety checks are made
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children , parents, staff and homestay families
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know , and involving parents and children appropriately

Policies and Procedures that support this policy:

- Safe staff and homestay families recruitment policy
- Welfare Health and Safety policy
- Complaints policy and procedure
- Data protection policy
- Physical contact policy
- Flow chart of reporting procedure
- Whistle blowing policy
- Staff training and safeguarding awareness policy

IMPORTANT:

What to do if you have a concern or you are unsure on what to do with respect to your student?

If there is a concern of any kind about your child, host family, our member of staff or any aspect that is related to child safeguarding and protection, then please ring the office or contacting our Designated Safeguarding Lead during office hours (or **07837 778 298** in the event of an emergency) or email [Steph. Gilbert@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk](mailto:Steph.Gilbert@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk).

If you remain concerned, please contact Helen Wu (Director), who will respond to any issue with urgency and in confidence, if required.

AEGIS Accreditation

We are AEGIS (Association of Educational Guardianship for International Students) accredited to a Gold Standard, which means that you are receiving the highest quality of Guardianship services recognisable in the UK. As part of this accreditation, we work to the highest standards, with special focus on excellent business practice and safeguarding of students.

We are very proud to be part of the leading Guardianship providers in the UK, and this offers parents and students a support system also as we are inspected every four years, to ensure we are always working to the best standard. For information about AEGIS Accreditation or to view our most recent reports, please contact: steph.gilbert@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk

Anti-Radicalisation and Prevent Policy

Oxbridge's Anti-Radicalisation and Prevent Policy should provide a framework for staff, host families and volunteers to deal with issues relating to vulnerability, radicalisation and exposure to extreme views. As a guardianship service Oxbridge Guardians are well placed to be able to identify and deal with any incidents or causes for concern swiftly and in the best interests of the student.

By ensuring that all staff, host families and volunteers undertake the initial Government Prevent E-Learning, we hope to equip all host families with the ability to:

- have an understanding of what radicalisation and extremism means.
- Receive annual updates (and urgent updates where appropriate) notified via the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- understand the dangers of radicalisation and exposure to extremist views; and will build resilience against these knowing what to do if they experience them based on our policies and handbooks.
- overcome any personal or professional disbelief that may be curbing the effectiveness of monitoring student behaviour and use of systems. We also aim to work effectively alongside other professional bodies and agencies to ensure that our students are kept safe from harm.

There are a number of behaviours which may indicate a child is at risk of being radicalised or exposed to extreme views. Examples of this are:

- Becoming withdrawn and isolating themselves from family and friends
- Inability or unwillingness to discuss their views or opinions
- A change in attitude which is disrespectful towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Secretiveness, especially regarding internet use

Young people who may be most at risk of radicalisation may be affected by other contributing factors such as bullying or discrimination, or may be suffering from low self-esteem.

It is also very important that Oxbridge Guardians staff, host families and volunteers are well informed of the areas local to the student and any possible changes to this environment. Should any staff, host family or volunteer notice any change in behaviour or circumstance of a student they should immediately raise a concern to the Designated

Safeguarding Lead, who will conduct a risk assessment, along with the Director to assess the potential threat to the student and their level of vulnerability to potential radicalisation. We strongly believe that early intervention is essential to protecting those vulnerable to radicalisation or exposure to extremist views, and by following the clear processes detailed below we may be able to refer concerns early, swiftly and through the right channels to prevent any harm to our students.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will deal with concerns made by staff or host families through investigation and assessment of risk with the Director of the company about the most appropriate course of action on a case-by-case basis.

The cause for concern will be treated in the same way as any other safeguarding concern in that it will be discussed with the appropriate parties (School/Host Family/Parents) and if necessary referred to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in the area which the child is staying. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that the Prevent Officer (where possible) at the LSCB is updated with the relevant information about the referral. Actions will be proportionate and Oxbridge Guardians will work effectively with external agencies to seek a positive outcome for the student to ensure their wellbeing and safety.

The DSL(s) will attend WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent)/Prevent Duty training and cascade the training to all staff and host families annually, in addition to the initial Prevent online training undertaken during staff and host family induction.

ICT policies are highlighted, with guidance offered to families for effective monitoring of internet use, and all students asked to agree with and sign the 'Acceptable Use of ICT Agreement' and 'Student Behaviour Agreement' prior to arrival on the UK. During the student induction, these policies and practices will be discussed in more detail, and translated where necessary.

Data Protection Policy

Oxbridge Guardians is committed to complying with the Data Protection Act 2018 by collecting, holding, maintaining and accessing data in an open and fair fashion.

The data protection act is underpinned by eight important principles: These say that personal data must :

1. Be processed fairly and lawfully
2. Be obtained only for specific and lawful purposes
3. Be adequate, relevant and not excessive
4. Be accurate and kept up to date
5. Not be held for longer than necessary
6. Processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject
7. Be protected in appropriate ways
8. Not be transferred outside the European Economic Area (EEA) unless that country or territory also ensures an adequate level of protection

The organisation only keeps relevant information about employees for the purposes of employment,

and about our children, young people and host families to provide them with safe and appropriate

Guardianship services. The organisation does not process any relevant 'sensitive personal data' without prior informed consent. As defined by the Act, 'sensitive personal data' is that related to political opinion, racial or ethnic origin, membership of a trade union, the sexual life of the individual, physical or mental health or condition, religious or other beliefs of a similar nature. Sickness and accidents records are also kept confidential.

Hard copy and computerised records are stored, reviewed and updated securely and confidentially. Records are securely destroyed when no longer required. Confidential information is only seen by personnel who need to see it and the staff are trained on our policies and procedures to keep personal information confidential.

To facilitate health care for a student, the personal information may be disclosed to a doctor, health care professional, hospital, or NHS authority. All confidential information is sent via secure methods.

No information or comments about our students, staff or host families are posted on social networking or blogging sites.

Criminal record check information is kept in a secure database or securely in a lockable, non-portable storage cabinet with access strictly controlled and limited to persons who need to have access to this information in the course of their duties.

Staff responsibilities

Everyone who works for Oxbridge Guardians has a responsibility for ensuring data is collected, stored and handled appropriately and in line with our policy and procedures. All training will be provided and our policy and our data protection policy and procedures are reviewed annually.

Our full Data Protection Policy is Available at: <http://oxbridgeguardians.co.uk/policies-and-procedures>

Oxbridge Guardians Complaints Procedure

Our Aim:

Oxbridge Guardians is committed to providing a quality service for its clients, and to working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. We strive to continually improve our service by listening and responding to the views of our students, parents, schools, colleagues and host families and implement changes as a consequence of learning if ever we fall short of best practice. Our complaints/ Grievance policy and procedure is integral to this process.

We aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- We deal with it promptly, politely and when appropriate confidentially

- We respond with an explanation, an apology or with further information and action
- We review our complaints annually and adapt our policies and procedures in accordance to lessons learnt and so improving our service

We recognise that concerns may be raised informally and if this is the case we aim to resolve them using mediation, quickly, and in a low key manner.

Concerns communicated informally

If you have any concerns please contact the most appropriate staff member for an informal discussion and for the chance to be taken for matters to be addressed and put right. If the matter cannot be resolved informally then our formal complaints procedure should be followed to which the complainant will receive a formal response.

Formal Complaints Procedure

The complainant's responsibility is:

- To communicate promptly and directly with Oxbridge Guardians. A complaint should be made in writing and addressed to the Director within eight weeks of the issue arising. The problem should be explained as clearly and as fully as possible including any action taken to date, the consequences to the individual as a result of the issue, and the remedy you are seeking
- Allow Oxbridge Guardians a reasonable time to deal with the matter
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Oxbridge Guardians control

Oxbridge Guardians responsibility will be to:

- Acknowledge a formal complaint in writing within 4 working days of receipt
- Resolve all matters as quickly as possible and within a stated period of time. A response with an explanation will be sent within 15 working days, or, if the issue is complex, this will be an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, when a full reply can be expected, and from whom that will come.
- Call a review meeting to which the complainant may be invited if this assists the ability of the management team to reach a conclusion
- Deal with the complaint sensitively and where appropriate confidentially. In exceptional circumstances when confidentiality cannot be maintained, the situation will be explained to the complainant
- Take action where appropriate
- Monitor and report complaints on an annual basis

Escalation of Complaint:

If you feel that there has been a failure to reach an earlier resolution, you may contact AEGIS (our accrediting body) in writing and refer the matter to them:

Mrs Yasemin Wigglesworth – Executive Officer
 The Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS)
 The Wheelhouse
 Bond's Mill Estate
 Bristol Road
 Stonehouse
 Gloucestershire
 GL10 3RF

Tel: 0044 1453 821293

E-mail: info@aegisuk.net

The matter will then be referred to the AEGIS Complaints Panel for consideration.

- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied to them in writing.
- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation.
- Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations, which it shall usually complete within twenty-one working days of receiving the complaint.
- The Panel will write to the parents informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Panel will be final. The Panel's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to all parties.

Communication with Oxbridge Guardians

Office Opening Hours: **Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm**

We are closed on weekends and bank holidays

Address: **DEVAS Club, 2a Stormont Road, Battersea, London, SW11 5EN**

Our office is based in a serviced office block in zone 2 of Central London. We are 15 minutes' walk away from Clapham Junction train station which is centrally located on the London rail network.

Email Communication: homestay@oxbridgeguardians.co.uk

During office hours urgent emails will receive immediate attention, and all emails will normally be dealt with on the day they are received. **Please note** that out of office hours, emails will only be read at peak times, such as the start of term. If something requires urgent attention please include 'urgent' in the subject of the email.

Telephone: **+44 (0) 20 8432 3457**

Calls are received directly to the office and answered by our staff. We do not operate an out of hours service, so please call back during office opening hours if we are closed

Emergencies:

Director – Helen Wu

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

International: **+ 44 7515 494 045** (English and Mandarin)

Alternative

Designated Safeguarding Lead - Steph Gilbert

From UK: **07837 778 298** (English only)

International: **+ 44 7837778298** (English only)

The following numbers provide emergency telephone lines 24 hours per day, manned by our Director or alternatively our Designated Safeguarding Lead. These numbers will be forwarded to another member of staff if they are not available as part of our normal contingency planning. These telephone numbers **SHOULD NOT** be used for routine matters.

Host Family Expenses Policy – 2020

What is included in the standard accommodation and foods expense payments?

- Accommodation for the duration of the arrangement
- Day School Pupils – Full Board Meals and Snacks at weekends and half board (breakfast and dinner) during the week, with snacks
- School Holidays – Full Board Meals and Snacks
- Adequate heating in their room and in the home
- Reasonable use of host family facilities such as laundry (at least once a week), internet / wifi, television and other facilities which would be available to a normal family member in the home
- If a suitable family member already drives to school, and there is sufficient space in the vehicle then we would expect this to be included where possible

What is not included, and what can be reasonably applied for as an expense?

- School meal tickets, school uniforms or other school expenses
- School bus travel and other public transport
- Family trips – etc
- Emergency Medical expenses

These would typically be paid directly via Oxbridge Guardians

Expense Claims

- All expenses a family wishes to claim should be agreed in advance with Oxbridge Guardians. Where this is not possible during an emergency or other extraordinary circumstances then all expenses should be reasonable and appropriate
- Oxbridge Guardians will reimburse the host family from available funds from the Students Expenses Deposit or where this is not available recover this from the student's parents.
- Under no circumstances should a host family lend a student money without approval from Oxbridge Guardians. Students have access to money, and if there is an emergency then the student should contact Oxbridge Guardians, who can determine the most appropriate course of action as the students guardian

Appendix 1 – paper copy of Missing Student Risk Assessment. Please note that if you are reporting a student missing you should firstly contact the DSL or Director.

Date	
Reported By	
Full Name of Child/Young Person	
Absent or Missing (If contact is not made with student within 1 hour of initial report, student to be treated as missing)	
Details of Contact Attempts (Every 20 minutes by phone, text, email and social media - please record all communication)	
Date & Time student absent/missing - start	
Date & Time student absent/missing - end	
Gender	
School	
Host Family	
What are the circumstances in which the child/young person is absent/missing. Please note as much information as possible	
History: Has this student been absent/missing before?	
When and where was the child/young person last seen?	
Where is the child/young person supposed to be currently?	
What was the temperament of the child/young person when last seen?	
Does the child/young person have any medical conditions or take any medication? If so, do they have their medication with them?	
Other Factors contributing to risk calculation	

Level of Risk presented	
total time student absent/missing	
Physical Description (Height, Build, Ethnicity, Eye colour, Hair Colour & Style, Glasses/Contact Lenses, Distinctive Features)	
Please supply as much information as possible about what the child/young person was last seen wearing (Top/Sweater/Shirt/T-Shirt, Coat/Jacket. Trousers/Shorts/Skirt, Shoes/Trainers/Boots, Headwear/Gloves/Scarf, Other identifiable clothing)	
Action Taken (Reported to DSL)	
DSL/Director Report on Outcome/Further Action Taken (Parents/School/Authorities/Airports)	

Appendix 2: Absent or Missing Child Policy:

Oxbridge Guardians

Absent or Missing Child or Young Person Policy

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Safeguarding Statement

Oxbridge Guardians is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, homestays and any individual working with the organisation to share this commitment. Every young person in the care of Oxbridge Guardians should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse or neglect.

Oxbridge Guardians believe that:

- Guardians and Homestays can contribute to the prevention of abuse.
- All children have the right to be protected from harm.
- Children need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse.
- Children need to be safe and feel safe in school and when staying with their guardian or homestay.

Policy Aims

- This policy is designed to give all members of the Oxbridge Guardians team a clear list of guidelines in case of an absent or missing child or young person.
- The purpose of the policy is to help locate the child or young person by the quickest and safest means possible and return them to an approved location.
- Oxbridge Guardians will respond appropriately to reports of unauthorised absence and missing children and young people without delay. After each report, Oxbridge Guardians will assess and update if necessary the procedure to minimise any future risk.
- When a child or young person is absent or missing they may be at risk from all forms of serious harm including abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and trafficking. The Oxbridge Guardians Safeguarding and Child Protection clearly states our commitment to protect children and young people from these risks.
- In any case where there is potential that the child or young person may have been trafficked, exploited, radicalised or involved in any form of criminal activity Oxbridge Guardians will immediately contact the Police and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- In accordance with the National Policing Improvement Agency, 'Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2013' this policy will help determine whether a student is absent or missing.
- The policy provides a model and framework for response and dealing with incidents dependent on the risk posed, and encourages partnership working with other agencies to reduce the number of recorded incidents of missing or absent people.

Policy Background

Oxbridge Guardians will fulfil local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, September 2016
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_child_ren_safe_in_education.pdf
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children, March 2015 \(Statutory guidance\)](#)
- [Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care – January 2014](#)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – March 2015
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf
- [Children missing education – statutory guidance for local authorities – September 2016](#)
- HSE Health & Safety Executive: www.hse.gov.uk information line: 0845 345 0055
- 5 Step to Risk Assessment leaflet available to download from: www.hse.gov.uk/risk/fivesteps.htm
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA): www.rospa.com
- Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2013:
<http://library.college.police.uk/docs/college-of-policing/Interim-Missing-Persons-Guidance-2013.pdf>
- ACPO (2009). Collection of Missing Persons Data: A code of practice for the Police Service on collecting and sharing data in missing persons with public authorities:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243597/9787777146872.pdf
- ACPO Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons (2nd Edition):
<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/missing-persons/>
- Office of the Children's Commissioner (2012). Briefing for the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education, on the emerging findings of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, with a special focus on children in care:
https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Accelerated_Report_for_the_Secretary_of_State_for_Education.pdf

Definitions

Absent: “A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.”

Missing Person: “Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.”

The `absent` category should comprise cases in which people are not presently where they are supposed to be and there is no apparent risk. `Absent` cases should not be ignored, and must be monitored over periods of time with consideration given to escalating to `missing` if there is a change to the circumstances that has increased the level of risk.

Prevention

In order to minimise the risk of children and young people going missing whilst under the care of Oxbridge Guardians (for example at half term, exeat or during a suspension/expulsion) we undertake to put the following measure in place as far as is practical:

- Ensure premises that children and young people in our care are staying at when not at school (for example when staying with a Homestay) are secure and take steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering these premises.
- Ensure that children and young people are appropriately supervised according to their age when visiting unfamiliar areas.
- Assessing a child and young person’s stage of development to ensure the required level of supervision is in place.
- Educating children and young people in our care about how to keep safe.
- Advise children and young people about what to do if they find themselves lost.
- With appropriate parental consent, have an up-to-date photograph of each child and young person under Oxbridge Guardians’ care.

Procedure to follow upon report of an absent student

The Director, Helen Wu, has ultimate responsibility for overseeing the report of any unauthorised absence or missing student.

Director – Helen Wu

From UK: 07515 494045 (English and Mandarin)

International: + 44 7515 494 045 (English and Mandarin)

Alternatively

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Stephanie Gilbert

From UK: 07837778298 (English only)

International: + 44 7837778298 (English only)

The senior member of staff on duty at the time of the report is responsible for ensuring the completion of all the necessary stages of the following procedure upon the report of an unauthorised absence or missing student.

It is important to remain calm and to follow the appropriate steps without delay.

Stage 1

Complete the ‘Absent or Missing Student Risk Assessment’ (paper version available Appendix 1) (<https://podio.com/webforms/20205240/1376094>) to determine if the child or young person is absent or missing. The absence of a child or young person together with full notes of any decision taken must be recorded in their file.

Stage 2

If it is decided that the child or young person is absent then the senior member of staff should ensure the following is carried out:

- If appropriate, review the flight and airport transfer details by communicating with the airline and/or airport and also the transfer company assigned to deliver or collect the child or young person.
- Try to contact the child or young person by phone (leave a message if no answer), text, email and social media. This must be repeated every 20 minutes.
- Make contact with the child or young person’s School to collate any relevant information about their whereabouts. Explain that Oxbridge Guardians will be responsible for leading the search and ask that the School work with you to manage the situation. If appropriate, you may wish to request that the School organises a search of the grounds and the child or young person’s bedroom. You may also wish to ask the School to speak with the friends of the child or young person to see if they have any information about their whereabouts.

- Make contact with the child or young person's parent(s) to collate any relevant information about their whereabouts.
- Make contact with the child or young person's agent (if appropriate) to collate any relevant information about their whereabouts.
- If appropriate, request that the Homestay conduct a search of the house and garden. It may also be appropriate to ask the Homestay to conduct a search of the immediate local area.
- Review information held on the Oxbridge Guardians database about the child or young person to ascertain if there is any further relevant information about their possible whereabouts. E.g. any external clubs etc. they may belong to.
- Every hour the absent student risk assessment should be reassessed by a senior staff member (DSL or ADSL) to monitor the status of the absence, and whether to escalate this to 'missing'. This escalation would only be put into place after consideration of outside factors (previous conduct, contact with parents/school/host family, informal communication). The DSL or ADSL will continue to monitor if the situation is escalated.

Stage 3

Any member of Oxbridge Guardians staff or Homestay team may report a child or young person as absent or missing to the police if there is a genuine concern for their immediate safety. Following a risk assessment the local police force will record a report of absent or missing if there are grounds to do so. In cases of missing children or young people, the police will work cooperatively with Children's Social Care staff during the enquiry. In order to make a police report the following information will be asked:

- Where you are and where the missing person was last seen.
- Who is the missing person's next of kin.
- A detailed description of the missing person, including age, sex and as much information about their clothing as possible. N.B. the Oxbridge Guardians office will hold a copy of the child or young person's recent photograph which can be e-mailed to the police.
- The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance,
- How long the missing person has been missing, where they were last seen, if there was an argument.
- Who is looking for the child or young person, where were they last seen, do they have a mobile with them, what is the number.
- The police may also ask more detailed questions, all information about the child or young person can be found in the Oxbridge Guardians' electronic database or in the individual hard copy file.

Stage 4

The senior member of staff handling the incident must inform the parent(s) of any report made to the police. The parent(s) should be updated every 3 hours with any developments. The senior member of staff should ensure that they are contactable at all times. If possible they should have access to a landline and a mobile telephone number and use one for outgoing and one for incoming calls.

Stage 5

The senior member of staff handling the incident must inform the child or young person's school of any report made to the police, as the school may remain with the overall duty of care. The school should be updated every 3 hours with any developments.

Stage 6

All unauthorised Absence and Missing Student reports must be reviewed daily until the incident is resolved.

Procedure to follow upon report of a missing student

Oxbridge Guardians Director, Helen Wu has ultimate responsibility for overseeing the report of any unauthorised absence or missing student.

The senior member of staff on duty at the time of the report is responsible for ensuring the completion of all the necessary stages of the following procedure upon the report of an unauthorised absence or missing student.

It is important to remain calm and to follow the appropriate steps without delay.

Stage 1

Complete an Oxbridge Guardians 'Absent or Missing Student Risk Assessment' to determine if the child or young person is absent or missing.

Stage 2

If it is decided that the child or young person is missing, it should be immediately reported to the police by telephoning either 101 or 999.

If it is known that there is an immediate danger to the child or young person then 999 should be called in order to receive an emergency response.

Stage 3

The senior member of staff handling the incident will ensure that the following information is gathered for the initial police report. All information about the child or young person can be found in the Oxbridge Guardians electronic database or in the individual hard copy file.

- What is the name, date of birth and nationality of the child or young person?

- What does the child or young person look like and what were they last seen wearing?
- When were they last seen and who were they with?
- What is the specific concern for the child or young person?
- Is the child or young person likely to be subjected to crime, become a victim of abuse or at risk of sexual exploitation?
- Is the child or young person likely to attempt suicide?
- Is the child or young person likely to pose a danger to other people?
- What actions have been completed so far to locate the child or young person?
- What are the contact details for the child or young person's family?
- Who are the child or young person's known associates, what are their telephone numbers and addresses?
- What is the child or young person's Homestay's address?
- What are the details of the child or young person's social media accounts or who might know these details?
- Does the child or young person have a previous history or absconding/absenteeism and what were the circumstances?
- Are there any factors that could increase the risk to the child or young person that you or others are aware of at this stage?

It is very possible that the police will ask more questions than listed as they will try to ascertain as much information as possible. As much information as possible must be given to the police.

Stage 4

The incident must be recorded in the child or young person's file and must be reviewed daily until the incident is resolved.

Stage 5

The senior member of staff handling the incident must inform the parent(s) and school of any report made to the police and if they have any contact with the child or young person, they must contact 999 immediately and also make Oxbridge Guardians aware of any developments.

Contact with the Press and Media

The police are responsible for advising the press and media regarding children or young people who are reported as missing. The decision to publicise these matters will always be made in consultation with the parents who have to give their signed consent before the media are able to circulate the details. As such, no member of Oxbridge Guardians should release any details to the press or media and must refer any contact from them directly to the relevant police force. If in doubt please direct all queries to the Director and make no comment at all.

Procedure once the Child or Young Person is found

The police are responsible for ensuring that the child or young person that has been reported as missing has been returned safe and well, and has an opportunity to disclose any relevant issues in the return interview.

Where a student has been reported as absent to the police they will not be given a return interview. In such cases, Oxbridge Guardians's Director, Helen Wu will conduct a return interview with the child or young person and will discuss and record their reasons for absence.

If there is a suggestion that the child or young person has been the victim or perpetrator of crime, consideration must be given to securing evidence by police including forensic examination. This should also include securing clothing and delaying washing/bathing in relevant cases. Staff and Homestays must remember that all necessary permissions must be obtained from the child or young person's parents and/or those with parental responsibility. The priority is to recognise that the welfare of the child or young person is paramount and careful consideration must be given to the potential effects of such procedures of the child or young person.

If there has been an allegation of abuse toward the student, the Local Authority Child Protection Service must be contacted immediately and the Oxbridge Guardians Designated Safeguarding Lead informed.

Any persons informed that the child or young person was absent or missing must be contacted immediately and be advised of their return.

If a child or young person has been absent or missing on more than one occasion Oxbridge Guardians' Director, Helen Wu will consult with the child or young persons' parents and a formal review of the guardianship level required must be assessed.