



ASPIRE GUARDIANS

Parent Handbook



Aspiring for Excellence, Guiding with Care

Contents

Contact Details	3
What is an Educational Guardian?	4
The role of Aspire Guardians	4
The role of the host family	4
The role of the school	5
Safeguarding	5
Statement of Services	5
Emergency Services	6
Host Families	6
Transport	6
Loco Parentis	6
Codes of conduct	7
Arranging a Host Family	7
Change of plans	7
Transport Arrangements	7
Use of the host family's car for transport	8
Emergencies	8
Accommodation requirements	8
Curfews and Bedtimes	9
Student Finances	9
Permission for students to visit the local area / travelling further afield	9
Students staying away from the host family	9
Meals and Snacks	10
Laundry	10
Access to computers and the internet & safe use of the internet	10
Updates on student's welfare and academic progress	10
Homesickness	10
Health and Safety in the Home	11
Finance	12
Expenses Account	12
Your contract and cancelling the agreement	13
Liability	13
Responsibilities during a pandemic	13

Welcome to Aspire Guardians

Welcome to the Aspire Guardians Family!

Firstly, we'd like to welcome you and offer a warm-hearted thank you for choosing Aspire Guardians to look after you and entrust us with this great responsibility for the upcoming year whilst you are in the UK.

In this guide, you will find everything you need to help you and your family prepare for your child's trip to the UK. We have included important contact details for when you need to get in touch, a mini guide to living in the UK, an insight into the culture and even a recommendation on what to wear whilst in the UK.



We hope you find this guide useful as it comes from our experience of the UK and what parents and students are most concerned or confused about prior to departure.

We would like to wish all of our students an enjoyable and fulfilling year in the UK and remind you that the Aspire team is here to provide support for you and your children every step of the way, whenever you may need.

If you have any other questions or recommendations of things that we should include, please do let us know!

Contact Details

There will be times that you need to contact us. We are always here to assist you with any questions or concerns that you may have. You can contact Aspire in the following ways:

General enquiries	
Telephone UK Office hours (Mon - Fri - 9:00 - 17:00) HK Office hours (Mon - Fri - 10:00 - 18:00, Sat by appointment only)	+44 7542 181 244 +852 5978 6678
Email	info@aspireguardians.com
Whatsapp UK	
Whatsapp HK	
Emergencies 24/7	

Telephone	UK +44 7542 181 244 HK +852 5978 6168
Safeguarding concerns	
Designated safeguarding Lead Mrs Thomas	UK +44 7542 181 244 sthomas@aspireguardians.com
Contact Details for the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP): The City of London & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP)	0208 356 6956 Out of hours: 0208 356 2710 MASH@hackney.gov.uk
Contact Details for the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO): City of London	Emergency Duty Team on 020 7332 1215 Emergency LADO Team: 07795 090649 LADO@cityoflondon.gov.uk

What is an Educational Guardian?

The term 'guardian' differs from a 'legal guardian'. A legal guardian is someone who replaces a parent, whereas an Education Guardian is appointed by parents who attend a UK Boarding School and act in loco parentis while their children are in the UK without them. Schools, parents and students often get confused as to who is actually their guardian and will refer to the host family as their guardian.

Whilst your child may stay with an Aspire host family and may refer to them as their 'guardian' technically and legally, Aspire Guardians is the guardian to the student. A host family does not have the ultimate responsibility for the student and are protected by Aspire's insurance and company infrastructure.

The role of Aspire Guardians

Our job as educational guardians, or guardians involves supporting our students to prepare for their departure to a UK boarding school. We support our students before they have even left their home country and help them through the first few weeks of term. This support continues throughout their stay in the UK and at host families. We find host families for students that are required to leave school for any reason, particularly for weekend closures, known as exeats or any holiday times. We ensure they travel safely around the UK using our trusted drivers; taxi firms or hosts, or on occasions, where permitted, on public transport.

The role of the host family

Aspire Guardians could not operate without host families. We believe that time spent with a host family provides valuable benefits to our students. Firstly, it provides children with a home away from home and somewhere to relax outside of the school environment. Staying with a host family will also give them a cultural experience depending on where you're from. We ask our host families to treat their Aspire students as a part of the family, as if they were their own children. Host families may only use reasonable, appropriate and lawful means of control to maintain safety. Under no circumstances should physical punishment ever be used.

The role of the school

In the UK, all children under the age of 16 legally require a guardian. Boarding schools will look after their students during term time only. For exeat weekends, half terms and end of term holidays the school passes over that responsibility to the students guardian or educational guardian who would organise a host family.

The Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS) has the responsibility to safeguard the welfare of international students studying at schools, colleges and universities in the UK, making them feel safe, welcome and cared for.

From time to time AEGIS may send through communications regarding your child's guardian. Aspire requests that you adhere to completing and returning the information AEGIS might require when they are sent for your response.

Safeguarding

Aspire Guardians is committed to safeguarding and child protection. We have comprehensive policies on safeguarding, mental health, prevent and anti-radicalisation, low level concerns, complaints, anti-bullying, missing student, online safety, data protection that provide further information and outline our procedures. These can be found [here](#). Please ensure that you have read and understood all our policies. Should you have any questions about any of our policies, please do not hesitate to contact us via email info@aspireguardians.com.

All our staff and host families are required to undertake a basic certificate course on safeguarding which is refreshed every three years. Aspire will also provide an annual safeguarding update which will either be during a visit or online.

We encourage students to talk to any trusted adult should they have any concerns. A trusted adult could be a member of school staff, Aspire Guardian or a member of their host family. The student may approach any trusted adult about a concern they may have. We encourage all staff and host families to be made aware of what to do if a concern is shared with them. Please help remind your child that any concerns they raise will be treated seriously. If a student comes to an Aspire member of staff or any host family member to raise a concern, it will be dealt with in line with our published procedure (see safeguarding policy) and reported to our Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

Statement of Services

Aspire Guardians offers high quality student guardianship throughout the UK with our priority being to ensure that all students are safe and enjoy their time in the UK whilst reaching their full academic potential.

We achieve this by:

- Regularly liaising with all stakeholders; students, parents, schools and as such offering the highest level of service possible within the subscribed package
- Always ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the students are our top priority offering personal support by being kind, understanding and empathetic to students at all times
- Visiting students as required and attending parents evenings
- Ensuring all staff members act in a professional and considerate manner at all times

- Providing a pro-active and responsive service; predicting students' needs in advance
- Continuously working on improving the standard of service offered
- Taking feedback into account and acting on it in a timely manner

Emergency Services

- Being available 24/7 in case of emergencies
- Providing support for any medical emergency
- Providing support for any suspension or expulsion

Host Families

- Ensuring all host families are kind and welcoming and treat students like members of their family
- Regularly monitor students whilst they are being hosted
- Inspecting host families annually to ensure the high standards are maintained
- Undertake a rigorous employment procedure for staff and host families, including Enhanced DBS checks
- Ensuring host families are fully supported and have regular guidance and training and ensuring that the safeguarding and prevent policies are understood

Transport

- Airport transfer arrangements for all breaks or holidays from school
- Coordinate any ticketing requirements for trains, buses, flights
- Transport arrangements to and from host families as required

Loco Parentis

Parents authorise Aspire Guardians and the appointed host family to act in 'loco parentis'¹ in all emergencies including essential medical attention and agrees that as a result of such action, neither the appointed guardian, nor Aspire Guardians, be held financially or otherwise liable.

Aspire parents must complete all medical details at registration including all conditions and medical treatments to date. Aspire will treat all information confidentially and reserves the right to terminate the agreement if parents withhold any relevant medical information.

As parents, we kindly request your understanding and support regarding the discipline, management, and monitoring of our students' educational journey. These aspects play a crucial role in the educational guardianship service provided by Aspire Guardians. We sincerely hope for your full cooperation in these important matters.

Should there be serious misconduct or misbehaviour by your child, Aspire Guardians reserves the right to terminate the agreement immediately and in these circumstances shall not be held liable financially or in the respects for any consequences.

All students are subject to British law whilst they reside in the UK.

If damage to the host family's home or school is caused by your child, repairs will be charged to your child's account and must be paid in full.

¹ <http://www.lawandparents.co.uk/what-in-loco-parentis-means-you.html>

Codes of conduct

Aspire has a code of conduct for students. This infographic outlines the expected standards of behaviour for our students. Please [click here](#) to familiarise yourselves with this as it will help you to understand our expectations and support your child accordingly.

Arranging a Host Family

Your aspire contact will be in touch with you via your preferred method of contact around six weeks prior to the upcoming exeat, half term or end of term to arrange the logistics for your child to go between school and a host family, a camp or course or the airport.

We would need to know whether you would like us to organise a host family for the break and all transport to get your child from school to the host family and of course back to school when it reopens again.

For any emergencies or suspensions the same process applies where you or the school may contact us (likely via a quick phone call) to move a student. We will of course respond as soon as possible with the most practical and suitable outcome at the time.

For all instances of students being off campus we have a duty to advise the school and this can be carried out by either you, as the parents or by us as the Guardians.

Change of plans

There may be occasions when you need to change the arrangements that have been made for an exeat, half-term, holiday, or other periods of hosting. Please ensure that you contact us as soon as possible, and no later than 14 days prior to the confirmed hosting period.

If a student cancels within 14 days of the start date and you have received final confirmation you will need to pay 50% of the fees of the confirmed hosting period.

If a student cancels within seven days of the start date and you have received final confirmation you will need to pay 100% of the fees of the confirmed hosting period.

If a student cancels after arrival you will need to pay 100% of the fees of the confirmed hosting period.

If a student cancels and the host family or Aspire are able to find a replacement, you will not be charged. However, please note, as we try and plan our host families and holiday arrangements in advance most students will already be assigned to a host family and finding a substitute is quite unlikely.

Transport Arrangements

Parents can discuss all transport arrangements with their Aspire contact. This includes flights, trains, buses or taxis. Information can be sent to your contact and all details of travel confirmed with them.

At Aspire, we will only use approved taxi companies or either our own drivers. Should you wish to use the school taxis then this will be added to the school bill.

All travel is arranged as early as possible. Aspire operates around four to six weeks in advance of any exeat or holiday. Should you have any specific requests, please send these to your point of contact as soon as possible.

All travel arrangements will need to be shared with the school to comply with immigration requirements. All schools need to know the whereabouts of their students during all exeat and holidays.

Use of the host family's car for transport

Aspire Guardians will conduct all the necessary checks to ensure that the host family driver has a clean drivers licence, that their car is roadworthy with up-to-date tax, insurance, and MOT (where required). We will also provide training to our Host family drivers and make them aware of the need for adequate comprehensive vehicle insurance to provide transport to international students.

Aspire also ensures that host family drivers are aware of all relevant laws relating to the use of child seats or booster seats for under 12s, when the student is below 135cm in height, and seat belts for over 12s or more than 135cm tall are discussed with students and adhered to.

Host families are obliged to comply with these laws and should consult the following advice: <https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/using-a-child-car-seat-or-booster-seat>.

Emergencies

Aspire will respond to all requests to provide emergency support and accommodation for students. For example, this could be due to a medical issue or suspension. Where possible the student will be placed with their usual host family, but if this is not possible, they will be cared for by another host family who works for our organisation. In an emergency we will seek availability from the closest available host family to the student's school.

Accommodation requirements

Host families should ensure that they provide a comfortable living environment for students. We require our students to be provided with the following:

- A suitable bedroom and social area(s) which are well kept, clean and in good repair, with sufficient natural light.
- Suitable safeguards must be in place to ensure that students have sufficient privacy from other students. Parents should be made aware of students who may wish to share bedrooms and must give consent before the arrangement goes ahead.
- Where host families are using a double bed, only one student is using this facility. Under no circumstances should students share a double bed.
- The rooms should have suitable heating and lighting and there should be access to sufficient supplies of hot water as required.
- Students should have access to a private space to study.
- Students should have access to appropriate hanging and drawer space for clothing.
- Students should have access to a bathroom with a lock on the door and either a shower or bath.
- Students should be treated as part of the family, and therefore have access to the communal rooms in the home. They should not have access to family member's bedrooms.

Aspire will advise parents should a host family have any pets, share a host family with more than two other students.

While there are no legal restrictions, host families are expected to adhere to NSPCC advice on adult supervision and ensure that:

- Students aged 12 and under are not left home alone for a long period of time.
- Students aged 16 and under are not left home alone overnight.
- Students are not left home alone regardless of their age if they do not feel comfortable with this.

Curfews and Bedtimes

Students who have permission to go out on their own will be required to return to host families by the following times:

- Age 12 – 14; 18:00
- Age 14 – 16; 21:00
- Age 17 – 18; 22:00

Should you prefer for your child not to go out alone, please let Aspire know. We will ensure that the host family is informed of this and will support your wishes.

Students who are permitted to go out unaccompanied by their host family must take their mobile phone (fully charged) with them and keep this switched on. Students must have the host family's phone number saved in their mobile. It is important that if students do go out unaccompanied, they let the host family know where they are going and roughly know how long they will be out. If for any reason they are delayed, students must contact the host immediately to keep the host family informed of their whereabouts.

Aspire suggests that student bedtimes should be as follows:

- Students under 14; 21:00
- Age 15 – 16; 21:30
- Age 17 – 18; 22:30

Any deviation to these times should be discussed with Aspire, the parents and the host family.

Student Finances

Aspire Guardians can support students with opening a bank account prior to leaving for the UK. We can also assist with sending pocket money for the holidays to school before departing for the holidays or straight to the host family if preferable. We would need parents' permission to send money to students.

Permission for students to visit the local area / travelling further afield

Responsible students over the age of 15, with permission from parents may visit the local area alone or travel further a field. At all times, the students must take their mobile phone (fully charged) with them and keep this switched on and provide the host family with where they are going, who with and what time they anticipate to be home.

Students staying away from the host family

On the odd occasion, students may be invited to stay with their friend, particularly for long holidays. Parent's permission must always be sought in this instance through Aspire

Guardians. Host Families, Students and Parents can not make these decisions without Aspire being made aware of the arrangements.

Meals and Snacks

We ask that host families provide students with a full board provision of breakfast, lunch and dinner during their stay, taking account of any dietary needs. In addition, students should be provided with access to suitable drinks and snacks during their stay. This might include tea, coffee, squash or juice and healthy snacks.

Please let us know if you would like more information on how best to cater for our students.

Laundry

Host families are asked to provide students with suitable laundry facilities for students staying for half term (or more than three nights). In most cases the host family would undertake to do the laundry for the student. Depending upon the age of the students, the host family may give permission for them to do their own laundry if requested and agreed.

Bedding should be changed every week and they should be provided with sufficient blankets and a duvet to keep them warm.

Access to computers and the internet & safe use of the internet

It is most likely that your student will want to access the internet during their stay. We ask that they use their own devices and not the family computer. We have an online safety policy that outlines the main risks to be aware of and what you can do as a host family to help keep students safe.

Updates on student's welfare and academic progress

Aspire Guardians prioritises the well-being and academic progress of students in both their school and host family environments. We ensure effective communication by providing regular updates to parents, schools and host families where required. This includes welfare check-ins, progress reports, parent-teacher meetings and 24/7 emergency support.

Aspire also maintains close communication with host families for the duration of our students' stays and conduct visits to ensure all our students are in a supportive environment.

Homesickness

When students arrive in the UK, they might feel homesick.

Signs that they may be feeling homesick include:

- A strong desire to go home
- Feeling lonely
- Feeling sad
- Feeling anxious
- Lack of motivation
- Loss of confidence
- Feeling depressed
- Experiencing mood swings
- Feeling insecure
- Finding simple tasks difficult

- Physical symptoms, such as headaches and nausea

If your child is showing signs of homesickness we ask host families to ask and listen to how they are feeling. Many of the students may not realise what they are feeling is homesickness.

We ask for host families to remind them that they are not alone in their feelings and there are many people that can support them. They can always talk to their house parent, teacher, parent, guardian, or any member of guardian staff who will listen and will be able to support and offer advice. It is best **not** to encourage them to frequently call home, as this can exacerbate their feeling of homesickness. Host families will keep the student busy and interested in a variety of family activities and discussions may help them settle and feel happier. Please do let us know if you are concerned that your child is suffering with homesickness. We are here to support both you and the student.

Health and Safety in the Home

We expect all host families to adhere to our health and safety guidelines:

- A minimum of one smoke alarm should be installed on every storey.
- A carbon monoxide alarm to be installed in any room containing a gas, liquid or solid fuel burning appliance.
- An annual landlord gas safety check to be undertaken by a Gas Safe registered engineer and a copy of the certificate provided to Aspire Guardians.
- The host family must ensure that the electrical system is safe, e.g. sockets and light fittings are secure and not overloaded and any appliances used by the student are safe.
- The host family must discuss the possible evacuation routes from the property with students on a regular basis. If doors or windows are locked students must know where to find the key in the event of a fire.
- If fire extinguishers and fire blankets are provided, they must be suitably serviced.
- Where open fires are used, a suitable fire guard should be in place when the fire is lit.
- Any matches / lighters should be appropriately stored.
- A basic first aid kit should be available to include, plasters, sterile eye-pad, triangular bandage, safety pins, non-medicated wound dressing, disposable gloves, leaflet giving guidance on first aid.
- Any prescription medication and drugs should be kept safely especially when hosting young students.
- Alcohol should be appropriately stored.
- The host family should have an awareness of basic food hygiene when preparing meals for students.

We will conduct an initial visit to check that the host family is suitable prior to hosting a student. Thereafter we will undertake any necessary annual checks.

Please refer to our separate Welfare, Health and Safety Policy.

Finance

The provision of guardian services can not commence until the registration form has been completed accepting our terms and conditions and payment for the guardianship fees have been made.

Parents agree to pay all necessary fees in either GBP or HKD into either a Hong Kong or UK bank account, in the name of Aspire Guardians UK Ltd or via an online payment method via credit card (credit card fees may be charged).

Exchange rates are set out by Aspire Guardians at the prevailing rate and will be stated in the invoice which is valid for 7 days. Thereafter the fees as outlined on the annual invoice must be received by Aspire Guardians prior to the commencement of the term or to carry out responsibilities.

Should the expense balance in credit with Aspire Guardians fall below that which is considered sufficient to carry out responsibilities, then further services will be suspended until adequate funds have been received.

Aspire Guardians reserves the right to discontinue their responsibilities should the account not be completely and promptly settled.

Expenses Account

The registration fee and expenses account will form part of the general funds for the provision of Aspire Guardians Services. The Registration Fee is non-refundable.

Aspire Guardians requires an expense account for each student. At the start of each term, the balance is £500 for Classic Package students and £1500 for Premium Package students. Funds are deducted from this expense account for transactions incurred when Aspire provides services to your child as per the agreement to pay for expenses on behalf of your child.

If the amount of the expense account falls below £300 at any time during the provision of guardianship services an invoice will be sent to you to top-up the student's expenses account as stated in the initial registration invoice.

Host families should not lend money to students. If your child has a cash flow problem (lost bank card, etc.), please request support from Aspire Guardians who can send monies to the host family at your request. All financial transactions should be made via Aspire as this protects both you and the host family. If a host family acts outside of this instruction, Aspire can not guarantee that a payment will be made on behalf of the parents.

Any credit on the expense account will be refunded to you without interest on termination of this contract. Bank details of parents for terminating students will be requested and need to be provided within 7 days before a finance administration charge of £5 per day will be deducted. All refunds will be made within 30 days of receiving bank account details and termination of account.

Your contract and cancelling the agreement

Students are able to terminate their contract with Aspire with a notice period of one school term.

Aspire reserves the right to terminate the contract with a student with a notice of one school term or sooner should there be breach of contract or policy.

It is important to note that if a student is being expelled from school, i.e. they are not permitted to return to school, then according to our Terms and Conditions, effective immediately, Aspire are immediately released from any guardianship obligations and no refunds will be offered. However, where the student needs a safe place to stay between their expulsion and their flight home or being taken into the care of their parents, we will arrange a host family, subject to our removal procedure and risk assessment for a maximum of seven days. All fees incurred must be paid for in advance.

Liability

Please note that the host family provider and Aspire Guardians will not be liable for any damage arising from conduct and/or behaviour of any student placed with the host family by the Aspire Guardians.

Responsibilities during a pandemic

Pandemics can cause major disruption to travel and schooling. It is important in such events that Aspire takes advice from the government, the UK Health Security Agency and the World Health Organisation. AEGIS also provides guidance for members to follow. This is regularly updated as a situation develops. Usually, in a pandemic it is important to restrict movement so as not to spread the disease further. That means boarding school students would usually remain at school. In the event of a pandemic, Aspire may not be able to offer host family accommodation as this could place students, host families and the wider community at risk. Aspire will work with parents to find flights to home countries where required. Aspire will also work with schools to meet students' needs during a pandemic. This could be by helping to support students to learn remotely as directed by the school. Aspire will work with parents and schools to find suitable quarantine accommodation for students if required.