

## **Guide for International Students Enrolling From September 2023**

It is a requirement of The Purcell School (the 'School') that all international students whose parents are resident overseas (not resident in the UK), have a UK educational guardian appointed by their parent/parents. This applies to all international students enrolled at the School, regardless of the age of the student.

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## Welcome

The Purcell School welcomes all international students and trusts that students enjoy a happy and rewarding experience at the school.

The following members of staff are available, in particular, to support international students and their families.

**Caroline Fletcher** is the **Overseas Student Co-ordinator**. Her role is to:

- Be key contact for all international student enquiries relating to:
  - Managing Child Student/Student visa arrangements, including issuing the CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) and being the key link with the Home Office/UK Visas & Immigration
  - Support with the induction for all international students when starting at the School
  - Maintaining and overseeing all Guardian information (including educational guardians)
  - Liaise with houses for exeat arrangements and at the start/end, half-term for all international students
  - Point of contact for international students, parents and guardians (including educational guardians) for support and advice
  - Caroline Fletcher can be contacted by email at [international@purcell-school.org](mailto:international@purcell-school.org) or by telephone 01923 331100.

**Kinga Kozak and Martina Swift** are the **EAL teachers**

The EAL Department aims to:

- Provide EAL classes for students based on their individual needs in one-to-one or small group lessons
- Prepare students for appropriate EAL examinations including the IGCSE in English as a Second Language and the IELTS examination
- Ensure that students at all levels work to improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills and that they develop their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.
- Offer support for students coming to learn in a new country and culture

Kinga Kozak can be contacted by email at [k.kozak@purcell-school.org](mailto:k.kozak@purcell-school.org) and Martina Swift at [m.swift@purcell-school.org](mailto:m.swift@purcell-school.org).

**Houseparents** have overall charge of pastoral care and are responsible for:

- The safety, pastoral well-being and discipline of all students in their boarding house. Houseparents should be the first point of contact for pastoral concerns and can assist with communication with academic and music staff. Boarding House contact information can be found on page 15.
- The Director of Boarding is Kate Cayley

## **Educational Guardian Information**

During their time at the School, all international students, regardless of age, must have a suitable UK educational guardian. This is a condition of the place offered to your child and you, as a parent, are responsible for appointing, and retaining, an educational guardian for the duration of your child's schooling and until their leaving date. Such arrangements must be made prior to the student's arrival in the UK. This is noted in the School's Admission Policy and Terms and Conditions, which you would have seen, and agreed to, on your child securing a place at the School.

Educational guardians play an important role in the support and care of international students who are living away from home and can assist with communication between families and the School. An educational guardian should be able to represent the parent/parents and provide a level of family interest and personal support for the child, whilst being educated away from home.

The School is unable to take on the responsibility of choosing a suitable educational guardian, nor is able to recommend educational guardians. However, there are many educational guardians and guardianship agencies that can provide students with a safe and caring environment during their stay in the UK. Such guardianship agencies may be subject to accreditation, validation and certification of the services they provide. Alternatively, parents may consider a relative or family friend suitable to be an educational guardian.

There are a number of factors parents should consider when appointing an educational guardian:

- the educational guardian should be within sufficient proximity to enable attendance at the School at short notice, in the case of emergencies. Ideally the educational guardian would be within 2 hours of travel from the School;
- the educational guardian is expected to be a permanent resident in the UK and over 24 years of age;
- the educational guardian should have availability to deal with routine events, for example Parent Consultation evenings and unexpected events such as illness. They must be able to provide the student with a safe place to live in case of illness, suspension or closure of the School due to an emergency;
- the educational guardian should have sufficient authority and reliability to ensure a balance of supervision and sanctuary for international students whilst away from home. The educational guardian must be able to provide care for the student during exeat weekends, half term and school holidays, where the student is unable to return home; and the educational guardian should have sufficient communication skills to communicate with the School and parents, and be available to contact by the parents and the School. This may include the educational guardian being fluent in English and, ideally, in the student's first language.

The School considers a suitable educational guardian to be one that has been independently assessed and accredited by a reputable independent school sector body, such as the Boarding Schools' Association.

Adult siblings who are not yet 25 years of age or are still in full time education themselves are not considered to be a suitable educational guardian. Equally, anyone who is unable or unwilling to commit to the role of educational guardian are not considered suitable. It is important for parents to choose a guardian, or guardian agency, who can provide a positive working relationship between the parents, student and the School.

The School will only issue the Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) that the student will require for their student visa application, once it has confirmation of the appointment of an educational guardian. Therefore, parents should inform the School as soon as possible, following confirmation from the School that the student has secured a place, of the appointment of the educational guardian. Contact details of the educational guardian should be given to the School at this stage. The School cannot be held responsible should parents fail to provide the information regarding the educational guardian in sufficient time to allow the School to issue the CAS and for the student to apply for, and secure, their student visa.

Parents and educational guardians must inform the School immediately if an educational guardian is out of the country or unavailable for any reason and must provide alternative arrangements that are agreed by the School. Parents and guardians must inform the School of any changes of contact information.

The Home Office requires the School to hold a full record of the destination and travel plans for student visa holders at all times when they are not in school, as the School must ensure the safety and wellbeing of students during their time in the UK. This data will be held securely and in line with our Data Protection Policy and our GDPR Student Privacy Notice.

### **What Can Parents Expect From An Educational Guardian?**

Parents can expect the following from an educational guardian:

- to provide a safe and secure environment for the student while they are not at school or at home. For example during school holidays, when a student is unable to return to their home country, or at Exeat (weekends when the School is closed and all students return home to parents/carers or educational guardians);
- to support students and provide a level of family interest and care. This may involve attending Parent Consultation evenings, concerts and school events, if requested;
- to help with communication, if required, between parents and the School. To liaise with the School over pastoral and academic matters and to maintain regular contact with parents. Language difficulties and time differences can pose problems for parents, and guardians should help with this;
- to support parents with organising travel/transport at the beginning and end of term and to ensure that travel arrangements are communicated to the International Coordinator at least 2 weeks prior to the end of term. To escort students to and from airports and stations, if required. Please note that all students from Year 6 to (and including) Year 10 must be accompanied by an educational guardian to and from airports when departing and arriving in the UK. Term dates can be found on the School website;

- to support the student in their music commitments including regular instrumental practice while staying with the educational guardian;
- to organise routine dental/optician appointments during holidays and weekends. All international students are registered with the local GP & Medical Centre in Bushey. This is organised by the School Nurse, who can be contacted for any medical concerns and questions; and
- to make decisions, if required, regarding emergency medical treatments and to authorise school trips and concerts.

### **How Do You Find An Educational Guardian If You Don't Have a Relative Or Family Friend?**

The School is unable to take on the responsibility of choosing a suitable educational guardian, however there are many Guardianship companies that offer educational guardianship services for non-UK students during their schooling in the UK. . Such companies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **AEGIS** is the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students. Please visit their website for a list of approved educational guardians and for further information: <http://www.aegisuk.net>.
- **BSA** is the Boarding Schools' Association. Please visit their website for a list of approved educational guardians and for further information: <https://www.boarding.org.uk/497/about-us/bsa-certified-guardian-scheme>.

Please note that a 'Light' Guardianship option is not acceptable for students at the School.

### **Travel Requirements**

Term dates are listed on the School website. It is important to plan travel and school holiday arrangements well in advance. Around 3 weeks before the end of term, half term and Exeat weekend, the International Student Coordinator will email parents and guardians asking for arrangements for the holidays. It is important that these arrangements are communicated in full, including how the student will travel from School, where they are staying and with whom, flight information and return information.

The Home Office requires the School to hold a full record of the destination and travel plans for student visa holders and the School must ensure the safety and wellbeing of students during their time in the UK whilst not in School.

Each student has their own safe to enable them to keep their travel documents safe. Students can request that travel documents are securely stored in the Boarding House Office, if preferred. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have their travel documents with them when leaving the School.

## Visas – Biometric Residence Permits

The Child Student/Student visa route is for non-UK nationals aged between 4 and 17 years old who wish to study in the UK. If a child has a UK/Irish passport they will not require a visa to study in the UK. Full information on student and child student visas can be found on the UK Government website [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

### What is a Biometric Residence Permit?

A Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card is the visa and is proof of the student's right to be in the UK to study. They are only issued to those studying in the UK for more than 6 months. If the student loses the BRP when they are overseas they will need to apply for another card before they can return to the UK so it is vital to keep documents safe at all times.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that requests for visa renewals are made in good time. It is important that any changes that may affect a student visa are communicated to the International Co-ordinator, including passport renewals.

The School will issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) document - the CAS reference number is needed for the visa application. To be granted a visa students need to have 70 points in total

<u>Points Type</u>	<u>Relevant Requirements To Be Met</u>	<u>Number of Points</u>
Study	CAS requirement Course requirement Study at an independent school Aged between 4 and 17 when applying Parental consent	50
Financial	Financial requirement	20

- Students will need to have their fingerprints and photograph taken at a visa application centre (VAC) as part of the application.
- If the child is 16 or 17 years old they may be asked to have an interview, either in person or on the telephone, to check that they are a genuine student.
- Once the application is successful, the child will be given a vignette valid for 30 days (Entry Clearance) which allows entry into the UK.
- The School has an ACL code which means that the BRP can be delivered to the school instead of the student having to go to the post office. The code is 3SC842. This code must be entered into the Alternative Location field on the BRP Collection page of your application. **PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ENTER THIS CODE WHEN APPLYING FOR THE VISA SO IT CAN BE DELIVERED TO THE SCHOOL**

## Conditions of Visa

A Child Student's independent travel to the UK is the responsibility of the Parent(s)/Guardian.

All visas and passports will be checked and copied on arrival at the School.

Parents and guardians (including educational guardians) are responsible for booking and purchasing travel tickets appropriate for the start and end of school term dates. Any requests for absence during term time must be requested by email to [studentabsence@purcell-school.org](mailto:studentabsence@purcell-school.org) at least 14 days in advance, unless the absence is due to an emergency/health reason/travel issue. Unauthorised absences will be reported to UKVI (United Kingdom Visa & Immigration), as part of the School's Sponsorship duties.

Parents are responsible for renewal of passports and must supply the School with a copy of the student's new/updated passport. Parents are responsible for checking visa expiry dates and applying for a new visa in good time.

If the parent of an international student intends to live in the UK with their child, the School is required to hold a copy of the parents' current passport (in colour and scanned) and their UK visa, as evidence of their right to stay in the UK. This must be sent before arrival in the UK. The School Terms and Conditions includes the right for the School to terminate the contract with the parents where the student has no legal right to be in the UK.

**Where students will be studying at the School as a dependent of a UK Visa holder, or by Settlement/Indefinite Leave to Remain, the School must hold copies of the passport and visas of both student and parent.**

**If you have any queries about the visa process, please contact the Overseas Student Co-ordinator Caroline Fletcher – [international@purcell-school.org](mailto:international@purcell-school.org)**

## English Classes

The Purcell School is open to musically able students of all nationalities. For those for whom English is not their first language, English As An Additional Language (EAL) classes are arranged by the EAL department led by Kinga Kozak and Martina Swift.

Students work to improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills and to develop their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Lessons are in small homogenous groups or one-to-one. The department's main objective is to provide a supportive environment in which students who are not native speakers of English can develop their language skills and cultural understanding.

Students are prepared for the International GCSE in English as a Second Language, which assesses speaking, reading, writing and listening at Key Stage 4 level.

At Key Stage 5, some students prepare for the Cambridge IELTS examination or TOEFL, to meet recommendations for entry to Higher Education in the UK or abroad. The exam consists of four papers: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Lessons involve practising these four skills, along with grammar and vocabulary development.

## **Parent Educational Guardian/Guardianship Agreement**

The Purcell School is required by the Department for Education and the Home Office to ensure that suitable care arrangements are in place for all international students studying at the School throughout the time they are in the UK. This includes ensuring suitable care arrangements are in place for their travel, reception when they arrive in the UK and care while in the UK (including during exeat weekends, half term and school holidays).

Students who reside outside of the UK, must have an educational guardian, appointed by their parent/parents. The educational guardian must accept parental responsibility on a temporary basis whilst the student attends the school and is far from home.

Parents are required to appoint a suitable educational guardian and should consider the factors highlighted in the 'Educational Guardian Information' section of this policy when deciding who is suitable for this role. The educational guardian should be over 24 years of age and resident in the UK, irrespective of the age of the student. Educational guardians must not be students in full-time education and must have a permanent UK address.

The School must hold a copy of the educational guardian passport and a copy of a utility bill in the educational guardian's name, as proof of residence. Any changes in educational guardian or educational guardian information must be communicated to the School immediately.

The School reserves the right to check that students are safe and well during the holidays/exeats when they reside with an educational guardian or homestay.

All flights and travel must be booked within the school term dates (as listed on the school website). Any requests for early departure/late arrivals must be made to the International Student Coordinator, for authorisation by the Vice-Principal and Director of Boarding. Unauthorised absences will be reported to the Home Office as these may be in breach of visa conditions. Parents and educational guardians are responsible for booking all travel and for ensuring the safe travel of students from school and for their return to school.

The Home Office requires the School to hold a full record of the destination and travel plans for student visa holders at all times when they are not in school, as the School must ensure the safety and wellbeing of students during their time in the UK. This data will be held securely and in line with our Data Protection Policy and GDPR Student Privacy Notice.

The educational guardian must be able to provide a safe and secure environment whilst the student is not at the School or residing at home. The educational guardian must also be able to provide safe and suitable accommodation for the student in case of illness or emergency. No student of any age can stay alone in accommodation.

The educational guardian must be able to facilitate good communication between parents and the School, when required. Parents and educational guardians must notify the school of any absence from the UK of an educational guardian, or any other absence that may impact on the student during holidays and must ensure an alternative arrangement is in place, which must be agreed with the School.



The School, parents and educational guardians will work together to ensure that priority is given to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of international students during their time at the School.

The Purcell School has the right to suspend a child from school studies if the parent(s) has no appointed educational guardian in place or if appropriate safe travel arrangements have not been arranged by the parent(s)/educational guardian.

By signing this agreement, I/we acknowledge and confirm the following:

1. I/we have fully read, understood, and agree to the guidelines in relation to educational guardians as detailed in the International Student Guide
2. I/we have read, understood and agree to this Parent Educational Guardian Agreement;
3. I/we will/have notified the School of the appointment of the Educational Guardian;
4. I/we will/have completed and returned the Educational Guardian Contact Form to the School;
5. I/we will notify the School immediately of any changes to the information provided on the Educational Guardian Contact Form or in the guardian's circumstances, which may result in a change.

**Signed by**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(PRINT NAME)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

**Signed by**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SIGNATURE)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(PRINT NAME)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

**To be signed by the child's parents or legal guardian, or just one parent if that parent has sole legal responsibility for the child**

### **Educational Guardian Contact Form**

Parents are required to fill in an **Educational Guardian Contact Form** giving all details concerning the educational guardian they have appointed for their child.

Details will be kept on record.

Parents must undertake to inform the appointed educational guardian of the role of an educational guardian and the responsibilities required of them.

**The Purcell School has the right to suspend a child from school studies if the parent(s) has no appointed suitable educational guardian in place or if appropriate safe travel arrangements have not been arranged by the parent(s)/educational guardian.**

**Educational Guardian Contact Form**

**Name of Student** \_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE PRINT)

**Name of Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE PRINT)

**Relationship to the Student** \_\_\_\_\_  
(AGENCY / RELATIVE / FAMILY / FRIEND)

**Permanent UK Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Tel No** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mobile** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guardian Date of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE PRINT)

**Parent Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guardian Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE PRINT)

**Guardian Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide a colour copy of the guardian's passport details and a copy of a utility bill showing the guardian's name and address.**

**Return to:** Caroline Fletcher

Address: The Purcell School, Aldenham Road, Bushey, Herts WD23 2TS

Telephone: 01923 331100

Email: [international@purcell-school.org](mailto:international@purcell-school.org)