

# Guardians — UK —

## DRIVERS HANDBOOK



# Welcome

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Welcome to Guardians UK; we are really looking forward to getting to know you and working with you over the coming years whilst you are caring for our students. Guardians UK is run by Helen Lewis who has over 20 years' experience in international education and who understands the importance of nurture and care for children and young people.



## AIMS, PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE

Guardians UK cares for the child as if they were our own. We act as the bridge between parents and school: liaising with both, caring for students, and making practical arrangements, all of which enable the child to thrive.

By spending time getting to know the child, meeting up with them regularly and maintaining contact with them, we respond quickly and effectively to their needs, to your requests, to the school and in support of our host families.

Guardians UK staff always act professionally to support all our stakeholders and foster genuine friendships with those in our care.

## WHAT IS A GUARDIAN?

Good boarding schools and colleges in the UK insist that all international students have a guardian. A guardian is an adult, based in the UK, who acts independently of the school, caring for the student's welfare, practical needs and academic progression. Having a responsible adult independent of the school and 'in loco parentis' to ensure that students are happy and progressing academically is crucial for the best possible educational experience.

## WHY GUARDIANS UK?

Guardians UK provides a quality service to parents, students and schools by building up a positive and caring rapport with the student, offering excellent pastoral care, pairing them up with welcoming host families, mentoring and supporting the student academically, helping them to successfully navigate the next stages of their education, supporting them if they remain in the UK during the holidays and communicating frequently and openly with parents.

## OUR STUDENTS

Our students come from a range of countries and board at different schools across the south of the UK. They range in age from seven to nineteen years old, although we currently have more teenagers than younger ones. Most students return home for the longer holidays (Christmas, Easter and Summer) whilst many of them chose to stay in the UK with friends or a Guardians UK host family for the shorter half-term breaks.

The peak days for our drivers are at the starts and ends of terms and half-terms when the students and possibly their families as well may need an airport transfer or a transfer to their host family. Our drivers can also be needed on other days too if a student has to attend a visa appointment or visit another school or is sanctioned for misbehaviour and needs to leave the school either temporarily or permanently.

## WHAT DO WE EXPECT OF OUR DRIVERS?

Staff who drive in the course of their work are at risk of being involved in a road traffic accident. We are committed to reducing the risk so far as we can and have prepared this handbook which sets out our policy, our rules and the general arrangements in respect of driving Guardians UK customers.

By adopting this strategy we aim to prevent loss of life, injury and property damage caused by driving accidents. You should familiarise yourself with the information in this booklet.

### HEALTH & SAFETY

Drivers must carry out regular safety checks on their vehicle and are expected to be familiar with, and observe, the Highway Code at all times.

- Vehicle speed must always be appropriate to the road conditions and passenger comfort and not exceed the speed limit.
- Drivers are responsible for the safety, comfort and security of passengers, their equipment or luggage while carried in the vehicle, and while passengers are boarding or alighting.
- All luggage and equipment must be secured safely and not block gangways or access to any door. This is to ensure every passenger has clear access to any door including emergency exits.
- Drivers should visually check inside their vehicle at the start and end of a route, to ensure that nothing has been concealed or left behind.
- Checks should include areas underneath seats and any storage areas.
- Whenever vehicles are left unattended (e.g. at the start and end of a journey, during a comfort break or whilst parked at termini, depots or stations), drivers should ensure that all the doors and windows are closed.
- Vehicles must not be left unattended at the roadside with the ignition running.
- Ignition keys must not be left in the vehicle whilst the driver is not present.
- Drivers should report any concerns about unusual behaviour that occurs on or close to their vehicle.
- If a vehicle makes a stop on route (e.g. at a service station) the driver should satisfy themselves that the correct passengers are re-boarding.
- Drivers where possible, should be responsible for loading and unloading all items of passenger baggage with the help of the passenger if needed.
- At stations, airports and other public places remind passengers not to leave their luggage unattended and advise them to report unattended/suspect packages or unusual behaviour to staff or the police.
- Care must be taken to ensure children cross roads safely and in addition, are a safe distance from the vehicle before its departure. A duty of care towards the children is paramount.

### AWARENESS

The prime concern for all drivers is the safety, wellbeing and comfort of the passengers.

### PROFESSIONALISM

Drivers are a visible part of Guardians UK for members of the public and therefore drivers are expected to drive in a safe and considerate manner, without aggression, and to display a professional and courteous attitude to other road users and to dress appropriately.

### FITNESS TO DRIVE

Drivers must be medically fit to undertake driving duties and must inform the Director, Guardians UK, immediately if they have any medical condition including eyesight which will affect their ability to drive. Drivers must not take, or be under the influence of, any drugs which will affect their ability to undertake their driving duties. This may include prescribed drugs or medication.

## SMOKING

Drivers are not to smoke in the vehicle when transporting Guardians UK passengers and this includes the use of electronic cigarettes.

## DRIVING LICENCES

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure they have a current valid driving licence appropriate to the vehicle being driven. Guardians UK will carry out online driving licence checks every six months. You must report any changes to your licence including change of address or driving convictions as a matter of urgency.

## MOTOR INSURANCE

The driver needs to have current fully comprehensive vehicle insurance to include driving for business purposes.

## MOT

If the driver's vehicle is more than 3 years old it must have a valid MOT certificate.



# Drivers FAQ's

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## WHICH AIRPORTS ARE USUALLY USED?

Our students use many of the airports across the south of the UK and we need drivers to collect from Luton, Stanstead, London City, Gatwick, Heathrow and Bristol airports

## HOW WILL I KNOW WHERE TO TAKE MY STUDENT TO AND FROM?

One of the Guardians UK team will email you all the details about your journey including pick-up and drop-off points and timings. If the student is nervous and/or young and needs help at the airport, for example, we'll let you know in advance and tell you what needs to be done.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T FIND MY STUDENT?

There is always a member of the Guardians UK team on duty and that person has the emergency phone so call them if you have any problems. The main Guardians UK number is 01823 703199 and if it's outside office hours then call the same number, listen to the message and press 1 to speak to someone.

## WHICH SCHOOLS DOES GUARDIANS UK WORK WITH?

We are based in Taunton and currently look after students in Taunton School, Taunton School International (Middle School), Queens College, Kings College, Wellington School, Millfield, Millfield Prep, Bath Academy, Royal High School Bath, Kings Bruton, Earlscliffe, Hurtwood House, Cardiff Sixth Form College, Plymouth College, St Mary's Calne and Bristol University. We support students across the south of the UK and use drivers and taxi companies across the region.

## HOW WILL I RECOGNISE MY STUDENT?

Guardians UK will try to provide you with a photo and short profile about your student in advance which will include their mobile number. We try to allocate the same driver to the same student so, after collecting them once, you are likely to collect them again which makes recognition easier.

## HOW MUCH WILL I GET PAID?

We have set rates for the regular airport runs which we inform you of before you agree to complete a job. Any additional expenses incurred such as parking (keep your receipt) and waiting will be listed on the booking form. Once the journey is over, complete the booking form, copy all receipts and email the form and receipts back to us and we will aim to process your payment and transfer the money to your bank account within 10 days.



## WHERE SHOULD THE STUDENT SIT?

The student should sit in one of the rear passenger seats when possible. If you're transporting more than 2 and need to use the front passenger seat as well, that's fine. If the student is under 12 years old and less than 135 cm tall, they must use an appropriate car seat. Guardians UK have some which you can borrow for the journey. All occupants of the vehicle must wear a safety belt and the total seating capacity of the vehicle must never be exceeded.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE TO WAIT A LONG TIME BECAUSE OF FLIGHT DELAYS?

We suggest you track your student's flight in advance of your journey to help you judge your arrival and departure time. However, long delays do incur and we ask you to keep us informed of these via the emergency phone (01823 703199). We pay an hourly rate if you do have to wait around in addition to the set rate.

## WHAT DO I DO IF THE STUDENT DISOBEYS ME?

If the student refuses to do something you have asked them to do, remain calm, and reassess if your request is reasonable and that the student has fully understood what you are asking them to do. If it is unsafe to continue the journey, stop at an appropriate and safe place and call the Guardians UK emergency number for support (01823 703199).

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T DO A JOURNEY WHICH I'VE AGREED TO DO?

Please just let us know as soon as you can. Emergencies happen and we will do our best to find another driver to take your place.

## DO I NEED TO ACCOMPANY THE STUDENT INTO/FROM THE AIRPORT?

Some Guardians UK students travel as Unaccompanied Minors on the airlines and they will need to be handed over to the airline staff at check-in and collected from airline staff when they arrive back in the UK airport. Guardians UK will tell you in advance if this service is needed.

## WILL I NEED ANY PAPERWORK AT THE AIRPORT?

With the younger students Guardians UK may give you paperwork in advance which is needed by the airline to help a student check-in and/or to collect a student from the arrivals hall. You should also carry with you your own photo ID such as driving licence or passport.

## WHERE DO I WAIT IN THE AIRPORT?

When collecting a student from the airport, wait in the designated Arrivals Hall with a Guardians UK sign. You can add the student's first name to the sign as well to help them find you. Stand in an obvious location where the arriving student will easily be able to see you.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM LATE?

If you are late to collect a student then please let us know by calling the emergency phone (01823 703199) and then we can inform the student. If you are late taking a student to the airport to catch a flight, remain calm, let us know if you can and if it's safe to do so, and we will advise you as best we can.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET A SPEEDING OR PARKING TICKET?

The driver will always be responsible for parking offences and other road traffic offences. We therefore expect that you will drive in accordance with the Highway Code.

## CAN I STOP AT SERVICE STATIONS?

You should start each journey with a full tank of fuel and/or fully charged battery. If you need to refuel or recharge en route then do stop at a garage or service station. Switch off the engine and keep the keys with you. If the student requests a stop at service station and you have time to do so then do stop and allow them to use the toilets and/or purchase some food. If they have no money with them and ask you to buy them some things then it is fine for you to purchase them a small snack and/or non-alcoholic drink. Keep the receipt and add the expenses to your booking form and Guardian UK will refund you the money. Stay with your student at the service station.

## WHAT DO I DO IF THE STUDENTS FALLS ILL DURING THE JOURNEY?

Assess how poorly the student is and take the necessary steps to help them feel better. You need to carry a basic first aid kit containing items such as plasters, sterile dressings, bandages, sterile gloves, alcohol-free cleansing wipes, scissors, sticky tape, thermometer, skin rash cream, antiseptic cream and distilled water in your car and know how to use them. Do not give painkillers to any of your passengers or any other medication to which they may be allergic. Call the Guardians UK number for advice (01823 703199). If necessary call the emergency services by dialling 999 or 112.

## CAN I USE MY MOBILE PHONE WHILST DRIVING?

It's illegal to hold a phone, Satnav or similar mobile device while driving. You must have hands-free access which, if mounted, must not block your view of the road ahead in order to take a call. Calls taken during a journey should be essential ones only and kept short in duration. The law still applies if you are stopped at traffic lights or queuing in traffic. Mobile phones or similar devices must not be used by drivers at any time while the vehicle is in motion except to call 999 or 112 in a genuine emergency when it is unsafe or impractical to stop. Satnav systems must be set up prior to commencing the journey. A hands-free phone can be used as a Satnav, but only while securely held in a cradle, and the route has been programmed before the journey. If a driver needs to input new directions, they should only do so when parked in a safe place, with the vehicle engine switch off. Drivers must not wear headphones or ear phones whilst driving as this impedes their ability to hear warning signs, signals and sirens.

## WHAT DO I DO IF THE WEATHER MAKES IT TOO DANGEROUS TO DRIVE?

Guardians UK will monitor weather and traffic conditions in advance of your journey and make a decision, in consultation with the driver, as to whether the journey can go ahead or not. If there is an unexpected change in the weather once you have started your journey which makes continuing it dangerous, stop in a safe place and call the Guardians UK number for advice. Always adapt your driving style to take into account the current weather conditions.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF THE VEHICLE BREAKS DOWN?

Your first priority is for the safety of your passengers so deal with them first and keep them safe.

- Switch on hazard warning lights and switch on sidelights if it is dark or visibility is reduced.
- Endeavour to position vehicle where it will create least danger – pull onto the verge or hard shoulder.
- Put a warning triangle on the road at least 45 metres (147 feet) behind your broken-down vehicle on the same side of the road, or use other permitted warning devices if you have them - always take great care when placing or retrieving them, but never use them on motorways.
- Remove passenger(s) to a position away from the road.
- Call Guardians UK (01823 703199), give us your exact location and details and we will try to send out another driver to collect your passenger from you to continue their journey.
- You should be registered with one of the roadside breakdown companies and call their number.
- Never put yourself in danger by attempting even simple repairs.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF MY VEHICLE CATCHES FIRE?

In the case of a vehicle fire the procedure to follow should be generally as a breakdown, but also:

- Unless already stationary, stop the vehicle where it is safe to do so.
- Switch off the engine and remove the ignition key.
- Everyone should be immediately evacuated and moved to a safe place as far away from the vehicle as possible – at least 20 metres from the vehicle.
- The driver should never attempt to tackle an under-bonnet engine fire. The fire extinguisher (if available) should only be used on fires inside the vehicle.
- No one, including the driver should re-enter the vehicle once it is evacuated.
- Obtain assistance by ringing the emergency services.
- Contact Guardians UK as soon as it is safe to do so.



## WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT?

No two accidents are exactly the same and the actions taken will vary, dependent upon the circumstances. As a general guide the procedure detailed below should be followed:

- Activate hazard-warning lights.
- Try to make sure the accident does not escalate into a worse situation e.g. warn other traffic without endangering anyone, use a high visibility jacket.
- Telephone police, fire or ambulance service if necessary (and remain at the scene).
- Help those trapped or badly injured if you are able to do so.
- Attend to other passengers; get them to a safe place off the road and as far away from the vehicle as possible.
- Attend to minor injuries using the First Aid box in your vehicle.
- Take photographs as evidence of the incident scene and vehicles involved including the number plates for identification.
- All accidents must be reported to Guardians UK

If you are involved in an accident which causes damage or injury to any other person, or other vehicle, or any animal (livestock or dog) not in your vehicle, or property, legally you must stop and remain at the scene and provide the following:

- Your name and address
- The registration number of the vehicle if this cannot be done at the scene, you must report the accident to the police as soon as possible, but in any case within 24 hours.
- Produce evidence of insurance to the Police or anyone who has reasonable grounds to ask for it.
- If you have reported the incident but cannot produce the Insurance Certificate at the time of the incident, then the Certificate must be produced within 7 days after the occurrence of the accident at a named police station.
- Collect details of other drivers and vehicles and any witnesses and provide your details to the third party.
- Record details at the scene. This will prove of value when you are asked to complete an accident report form for the insurance claim.
- Drivers should not admit responsibility for an accident to the other party or to witnesses.
- Drivers should not communicate with the media, they should refer them to the Director Guardians UK for comment.
- All accidents must be reported to the Director Guardians UK.

## WHAT DO I DO IF THE STUDENT TELLS ME SOMETHING WHICH WORRIES ME?

Some students will be happy to chat with you whilst others may not be. If they do tell you something which is worrying or that may be cause for concern do the following:

**Listen** to what they want to tell you. Do not question or interrupt. Do not promise confidentiality.

**Reassure** them and explain what you are going to do next.

**Write** down notes as soon afterwards as possible.

**Report** to the Guardians UK Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Helen Lewis

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Office: 01823 703190

Mobile: 07577 691759

Contact the police if you are still concerned that the child is at risk of serious harm.

## Appendix 1: SAFEGUARDING

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Guardians UK is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of our students and we expect all our staff, host families, drivers and working partners to share this commitment. We operate on the premise that 'it could happen' and have the following policies and documents in place to safeguard our students and staff:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Prevent / Anti-Radicalisation Policy
- Missing Student Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Emergency Contingency Policy

These are all available to view on our website [www.guardiansuk.com](http://www.guardiansuk.com) or from Head Office upon request. All staff receive safeguarding training as part of their induction, including an online Introduction to Child Protection course, and ongoing support and updates at least annually. Guardians UK Director, Helen Lewis is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and can be contacted on 01823 703199. Our Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy reflects Guardians UK views on this subject and provides advice on how to deal with any related issues. Should a driver become aware of any form of bullying whether from the point of view of the victim, perpetrator or bystander they need to inform their Regional Guardian and offer appropriate support to their student. By working as a driver with Guardians UK you adopt our safeguarding principles. By signing your contract, you agree to uphold Guardians UK highest standards and we agree to provide you with the highest standards of support and commitment to carry out your role. Once your journey is complete, we ask you to let us know how it has gone either by calling us or emailing us when you send in your completed expense form. This way we can best support you and the students going forwards.

## Appendix 2: EXPENSES & PAYMENTS

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All expenses claimed by drivers are charged to the Student Expense Account. Guardians UK must be able to justify all expenditure to parents when they receive their invoices each term. The following payments are made:

- Flat rate fee as agreed in advance for each journey
- Parking expenses at cost (receipts need to be provided)
- Waiting time @ £15 per hour
- Other expenses at cost such as snacks or food for the student if needed (receipts need to be provided)

When claiming for expenses, include receipts whenever possible. You will be provided with a booking form which you can complete by hand or online and return to Guardians UK along with scanned/photographic copies or paper copies of your receipts. We shall process your claim within 10 working days of receipt and make payment directly into your bank account.

## Appendix 3: ITEMS TO BE CARRIED IN THE VEHICLE

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You need to ensure the following items are available in your vehicle and that they are regularly checked to be in good, working condition:

- Basic First Aid kit
- Emergency triangle
- High-visibility jacket
- Fire extinguisher – if competent/confident to use it

## Appendix 4:

# SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

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If you have any comments on this booklet, any of our literature or operating procedures and how they may be improved then please email us at [info@guardiansuk.com](mailto:info@guardiansuk.com).

We value working with you but appreciate you may, on occasion, have concerns about Guardians UK. If so, please contact either your Regional Guardian or Director, Helen Lewis and we will try to resolve things to your satisfaction.

If, however, you still feel aggrieved or concerned the Guardians UK Complaints Policy is available on our website [www.guardiansuk.com](http://www.guardiansuk.com) or upon request and you can follow the procedures suggested within it.



# Contact Details

YOUR FIRST POINT OF CONTACT IS  
YOUR REGIONAL GUARDIAN

✉ [info@guardiansuk.com](mailto:info@guardiansuk.com)

🌐 [www.guardiansuk.com](http://www.guardiansuk.com)

📞 Head Office: 01823 703199

📞 Emergency: 01823 703199 ext. 1

**Helen Lewis, Director**

✉ [helen.lewis@guardiansuk.com](mailto:helen.lewis@guardiansuk.com)

📞 01823 703190

Guardians  
— UK —

YOUR CHILD IS OUR PRIORITY.

[WWW.GUARDIANSUK.COM](http://WWW.GUARDIANSUK.COM)

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