

UK2Learn Guardianship

Parent Handbook

Updated: 27/04/18

In the UK, it is a school requirement for overseas students to have a guardian that is based in the UK, someone that can be on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week to offer parental, logistical and emergency support. We at UK2Learn offer this service to our parents and their children. UK2Learn Guardianship is a company small enough to care about each child as an individual but also big enough to cope with any demands professionally, with a personal touch.

Welcome from Suzie



UK2Learn Guardianship was established in 2006 by Suzie Mackie with the aim of providing high-quality caring, personal and professional care for international and overseas students. Suzie has a wealth of experience dealing with international students having travelled extensively all over the world with the British Council as a teacher and a teacher trainer. Suzie's passion and true dedication to education has enabled her to develop an invaluable insight into students' needs and this is evident in the service that UK2Learn Guardianship delivers.

The Guardianship team at UK2Learn ([link to team](#)) assumes full guardianship responsibility of all students and they take great pride in knowing each student personally. This is to ensure that all UK2Learn guardianship students are in safe, professional and, above all, caring hands. UK2Learn Guardianship is a company small enough to care about each student as an individual but also big enough to cope with any demands professionally, but with a personal touch.

UK2Learn aims to deliver a service that cares for every aspect of an overseas student's stay in the UK, therefore removing any worries that a parent may have. Investing in an overseas education for your child can be an incredibly difficult decision but the reward of a unique and life-changing experience is a fantastic one.

All staff, associates and homestay families support this caring and personal ethos that UK2Learn Guardianship values so greatly, thus ensuring that all of our guardianship students receive the highest standard of care possible. With representatives and homestay families throughout the United Kingdom, help and assistance is never more than an hour away.

Meet the UK2Learn team



Alex Mackie – Managing Director (and Suzie’s son!)

Alex is Managing Director at UK2Learn, which means he ensures that everything runs smoothly in Guardianship and all UK2Learn programmes.



Fiona Sutherland – Marketing Manager

Fiona has worked for UK2Learn since September 2014 – she was an experienced member of the guardianship team and then in January 2018 took over the exciting new role of UK2Learn’s Marketing Manager. Fiona will be raising the profile of UK2Learn Guardianship with our British boarding school partners and all our international parents, students and agents.



Lucy Riley – Administration Team Leader

Lucy provides full-time guardianship support for all UK2Learn Guardianship students. She liaises with parents, students and schools over day-to-day matters, travel arrangements, the booking of homestay families and other administrative duties.



Sarah Judd – Administrator

Sarah provides part-time guardianship support for UK2Learn Guardianship. She liaises with parents, students and schools over day-to-day matters, travel arrangements, the booking of homestay families and other administrative duties.

Role of Guardian:

Whilst at the school, your child's houseparent will take responsibility for academic progress and welfare, but there are times during the academic year when the school must be able to hand over these responsibilities to a properly appointed guardian.

There can be unforeseen events such as illness or injury which requires an emergency trip to the dentist or hospital, closure of airports and cancellations of flights which require last minute logistical assistance and disciplinary incidents which may result in a student being unable to remain on school premises and requiring overnight accommodation for a period of time.

There are also more practical day to day aspects of a student's study in the UK which will need additional support and assistance such as purchasing a UK sim card, opening a bank account, managing school trip schedules and purchases of additional kit, booking safe and reliable airport or private transfers off school grounds and most importantly homestay accommodation for fixed exeats and half term when the school is closed and a student is not travelling home.

UK2learn aims to deliver a service that enhances every aspect of an overseas student's stay in the UK. UK2Learn work closely with the school and houseparents' and we are always happy to attend school events, parents' evenings, concerts and matches as requested.

UK2Learn offers the following services as standard to you and your child:

- communication with the school, parents and student as required
- support and advice during UK2Learn office hours
- 24 hour telephone contact in case of emergency
- two visits to your child on school premises during the academic year
- a dedicated member of the UK2Learn team providing administrative support
- arrangement of reliable general transfers to and from school premises by a UK2Learn driver
- arrangement of reliable airport transfers by a UK2Learn driver
- assistance with opening a UK bank account and any financial transactions
- assistance when purchasing a UK phone sim card
- assistance with parents' visits to the UK
- proof of guardianship letter to show Immigration at UK arrivals
- advice and assistance with school application and selection
- supervision of academic progress
- complimentary birthday card

Role of the school:

In your child's first few days and weeks can be an anxious time for both your child and the parents. The main point of contact at the school is the houseparent, who will give understanding and support to your child.

Your Guardianship Administrator will email the houseparent after the first few days, and arrange for Suzie, or one of her team, to visit in the first term to check how your child is settling in. During the visit, we will endeavour to speak to your child's houseparent and tutor, and we can do this on your behalf at any time should you have any concerns that you cannot address directly. It can take time for your child to get used to a new environment and culture, to meet new friends and to become familiar with the boarding house and school arrangements and during this sensitive time. UK2Learn Guardianship will stay in close contact with your child to provide support and reassurance.

We provide two free visits per academic year to your child in their school, during which we discuss academic performance, clubs and interests, friendships and life in the boarding house. We will notify you in advance of the date of the meeting to give you the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns you may have. We will do everything reasonable to ensure that your child is represented at parents' evenings and at other special events in which your child is involved and that you receive feedback.

Homesickness

Children are kept very active and engaged during their first few weeks at boarding school. They will be taking part in a very busy programme of study and extra-curricular activity. It is only in the odd few moments of downtime that your child will start to feel sad and to miss home, since there really isn't opportunity for this most of the time. Sadly, it is in these occasional miserable moments when your child will tend to phone, text or email you, leading you to believe that they are feeling sad and distressed all of the time. Please message us if your child is experiencing homesickness and we can act with the school accordingly.

Role of the Homestay

UK2Learn Guardianship has a selection of wonderful homestay families and we carefully choose the right homestay for your child depending upon his/her personality, interests and requirements. Homestay families are inspected by Suzie Mackie initially and provided with a comprehensive handbook containing guidelines regarding the care of your child. The homestay will be one that is known to us and has been police-checked (DBS) and reference checked. We provide a comprehensive set of guidelines to our homestay families which we expect them to follow.

Accommodation

Your child's room should include a bed, desk/table and chair, drawers, hanging space and wastepaper basket. Your child will have access to a bathroom – shared or en-suite. Your child will be provided with a bedroom of a suitable size where he/she will feel safe and secure. When staying with a UK2Learn Guardianship homestay, it is not unusual for students to share a twin room with another student of a similar age and same sex. This can be a very enjoyable experience for your child and allows them the opportunity to meet students from different schools and of different nationalities. This will always be agreed and discussed with the parent and your child in advance.

Laundry and Cleaning

Your child will be provided with clean bedding, two towels and you should make sure their room is cleaned on a weekly basis. They will be able to launder their clothes during their stay and we will show them how to use the washing machine.

Communication and Internet Safety

Homestay families commonly have a limit on their internet capacity set by the internet provider. We therefore ask that students staying in homestay families do not download large files, such as games, music and films. UK2Learn Guardianship has guidelines for homestay families on the use of internet, and will advise homestay families to limit access time in the best interests of your child should your child regularly stay up very late at night and disturb the household; some hosts may restrict or switch off the internet overnight. Schools will have similar restrictions. There are also dangers to young people of unsupervised

access to the internet, but the demand for access makes it impossible for UK2Learn Guardianship and their homestay families to supervise or police. Therefore the responsibility for internet use and downloads rests with your child and we cannot accept any liability in this respect.

Health and Safety

When your child arrives they will be given a tour of the whole house and, along the way, the host will demonstrate how to use various appliances and equipment they are likely to use during their stay; this could include the toaster, kettle, TV, shower, bath, etc

Pocket Money

Your child's expense account at UK2learn will be used to pay for your child's additional expenses incurred in the UK. If your child would like pocket money to spend while staying at a homestay then authorisation will need to be given by you and we can organise the cash to be made available.

Bedtimes, Curfews

The homestay will agree a suitable bed time appropriate for your child's age.

These are our guidelines regarding curfews but these are discretionary and may need to be varied according to the individual child:

Aged 12 and under

Are allowed to go into the local town with an adult

Bedtime: 21:30

Aged 13 (with discretion) and 14

Are allowed to go to town with their friends but must be back at 17:30

Bedtime: 22:00

Aged 15

Go to town alone but must be back at 18:00

Bedtime: 22:30

Aged 16 and over

Go to town alone but must be back at 19:00

Bedtime: 23:00 (at your discretion)

Excursions and Travel

On all occasions, the guardianship student must tell the homestay where they are going and who they will be with. The homestay should agree in advance what time the guardianship student will be home and will not allow the guardianship student to walk home in the dark. The guardianship student will not be allowed to stay out overnight unless expressly agreed by UK2Learn Guardianship team.

Both students and homestay families should exchange mobile telephone numbers so that they are known to all parties, as well as landline and any other useful contact numbers. Your child should keep their mobile phone switched on, charged, and notify you if there is a change of plan.

Complaint

In the unlikely event of your child being unhappy with the homestay, we will do everything reasonable to mediate and, if necessary, to find an alternative homestay. Most of our students return to the same homestay for all their stays, but changes can and do occur. Frequently, more than one student of a similar age will be staying with a homestay at any one time. In our experience, students prefer this as it offers them

additional company and friendship during their welcome break away from busy school life; however, we are happy to place your child with no other children if specifically requested.

House rules

You must explain to your child that, when staying with the homestay, he/she must accept and abide by the guidelines outlined in their Student Handbook regarding acceptable behaviour. Your child must obey the UK law and respect our authority and the authority of the homestay, and the needs and welfare of all members of the homestay.

Booking

When asking us to arrange a homestay, we ask that you give as much notice as possible of your requirements. Should you wish to cancel or amend any arrangements that have been made, we ask that you notify us within 48 hours in advance to avoid cancellation costs.

In the case of long-term homestay accommodation arrangements it is usual practice for the parents to meet the homestay in advance of the arrangement and we would encourage the parents to travel with your child at the beginning of the academic year in order to do so. The homestay will liaise regularly with us over pastoral care and any educational matters which may arise whilst your child is under their care.

Staying with a non UK2learn host or family

We have a duty of care to the parents and your child to protect your child and to provide safe homestay accommodation. However, should you prefer your child to stay with a friend or family member for leave weekends or half-term, your child must only stay with an adult **over the age of 25** and residing in the UK, who will take responsibility for your child during the stay. The responsible adult will need to confirm in writing that they will be taking responsibility for your child during the break. Any such arrangement is subject to UK2Learn Guardianship and/or school staff being satisfied that a child will be safe. We reserve the right to refuse any arrangement if we feel it is unsatisfactory in anyway.

If this is your child's first time away from home, we would ask you to prepare your child for staying with another family; perhaps you could arrange for your child to stay with family or friends on a few occasions before they arrive in the UK.

Sports and Activities

The homestay will not allow your child, without its consent, to take part in unduly hazardous or dangerous sports and activities when in the care of the homestay. Parental consent as provided in your child profile form will be considered at all times.

Supervision & Control

We and the homestay will set rules as to when (if at all) your child may be alone in the house for short periods, go out with friends, go out in the immediate area, or may travel long distances unaccompanied. There will always be a responsible adult in the house when your child is staying overnight.

Respect for Rights

We and the homestay will respect your child's privacy and cultural and religious background and beliefs and dietary needs.

Transport Arrangements

We will ensure that travel and escort arrangements have been made in accordance with the travel itinerary of your child. Wherever possible, a UK2Learn representative will provide transfers for your child; alternatively, travel arrangements will be made with the school's transport department.

We will send a profile of the driver including photograph, name and telephone number to your child when we confirm the arrangement. All our drivers are DBS checked and fully insured with good quality vehicles. We are happy to offer an Unaccompanied Minor service for younger or in experienced students.

Should there be a major incident that closes an airport, the plan will be to ensure that your child is moved to a safe place and, if possible, to safe accommodation which will be dependent upon whether the incident takes place within the UK. All plans will be made in cooperation with the school, driver, parents, transport companies and any authorities involved in the incident. If a student's flight is cancelled or missed due to an incident, UK2Learn Guardianship pledges to find them safe travel to a homestay until their flight is rebooked. If a student needs to be accompanied at the airport, we will arrange a UK2Learn Guardianship representative to sit and supervise your child until they can continue their journey.

For incidents outside the UK, UK2Learn Guardianship will remain in contact with parents, school and student in the case where a student is stranded at an airport, and unaccompanied whilst attempting to travel back to the UK or back to home. Although we would be unable to travel to meet them we will do all we can to liaise with authorities, any help or information centres and act as a go-between for parents, school and student. UK2Learn Guardianship's 24-hour emergency telephone is 07787556963 and email address suziemackie@gmail.com.

Unauthorised absence

Please be aware that schools require students to adhere to published school dates for the start and end of terms. Failure to do so can sometimes result in a record of unauthorised absence against your child which can affect future visa applications.

English Law and Customs

There may be differences between age limits and customs at home and those which apply in the United Kingdom. Where appropriate you must prepare your child for these. We will provide your child with a Student Handbook which we encourage your child to study. We are happy to provide any other guidance that you require on this matter.

UK2Learn Guardianship always remembers.....

Culture	Values	Race	Customs
Religion	Food	Tradition	Expectations
Beliefs	Love & Marriage	Class	Sexuality
Gender	Special Needs	Language	

Telephone Contact

We strongly advise you to provide your child with a UK mobile telephone so that he/she can keep in touch with you, at times most convenient to your child and you. Suzie Mackie and the Guardianship Administrators usually communicate with students using WhatsApp so we ask that you and your child download WhatsApp on your mobile devices.

UK2Learn Guardianship can assist in arranging pay as you go mobile sim cards or phones, but we cannot enter contracts on behalf of students. Schools invariably control the use of mobiles by students and students are discouraged from using their phones in an antisocial way. Students should keep their mobile phones switched on when travelling in the UK and with homestay families throughout their stay in case there is a need to contact them.

Changes to Circumstances

You are responsible for updating UK2Learn Guardianship should there be any changes to your circumstances or your child's with respect to the information provided on your child Profile Form.

Liaison and Contact

We will do our best to make sure that there is regular liaison between you and your child and also between you and us.

Medical Details

We will pass on to the homestay all relevant medical details and special dietary requirements which you have provided. In signing your child profile form, you consent to UK2Learn acting in loco parentis so that we make take all action necessary for the welfare of your child, including emergency medical attention requiring operations and anaesthetics if necessary. Whilst every effort will always be made to contact us in the event of an emergency, this may not always be possible.

EU Nationals should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before coming to the UK. For those students not entitled to an EHIC, private health insurance is recommended. All students will be registered with their local doctor (known as their GP - General Practitioner).

Emergency Accommodation

In the event that your child needs to leave school in an emergency (such as suspension or school closure), Suzie Mackie (as educational guardian) will provide emergency accommodation.

Insurance

UK2Learn has comprehensive business insurance including public liability insurance. The homestay is advised to notify their home contents insurers and car insurers that your child will be staying with the homestay.

You are responsible for making certain that your child is adequately insured within the United Kingdom in the event that he/she causes personal injury, loss or damage to members of the homestay or other third parties. You are also responsible for insuring your child's belongings such as mobile telephone, computer, musical instrument, watch, sports or other equipment. You must provide a copy of this insurance to UK2Learn Guardianship when submitting the completed Student Profile Form.

Confidentiality

Your child's rights of confidentiality will be respected and will only be overridden if it is necessary to do so in order to protect your child's safety and welfare.

