

Homestay Handbook

Welcome and introduction from the guardianship organisation

Victoria Guardianship Ltd is an information centre of guardians jointly organized by the UK and China. It aims to provide thoughtful and intimate guardianship, application services and homestay for underage Chinese students. The company is comprised of an experienced and highly educated custodial team that provides high-quality custodial services. All of our host families have DBS checks, Gas Safety Certificates, Fire Risk Assessments and References. We confirm that all our host families have been visited by on our representatives and the accommodation meets both British Council and English UK recommended standards and that we do not place more than one student of the same nationality in the same household unless specifically requested by the person making the booking with us. Our host families spread all over the UK across more than twenty cities and towns. The majority of our host families are British families, which is good for international students to practice their English and experience British culture. Our host families are not simply renting a room, but treating the students as family members. However, student's expectations will vary and families may vary from a single host mother, to a retired couple, to a family with pets and kids!

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 us in the following ways:

General enquiries	
Telephone (office hours 9 am- 5 pm Monday-Friday)	+44 (0) 115 846 6602
Email	Office@victoriaguardian.co.uk
WeChat	Victoria_ marketing
Emergencies 24/7	
Telephone	+44 7732569162
Safeguarding concerns	
Designated Safeguarding Lead Junyi Xiao	+44 7732569162
Deputy Designated Lead Qian Lu	+44 7425091683

<p>Contact Details for the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP)</p>	<p>Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership +441158764762</p> <p>Denbigshire Safeguarding Children Partnership 01824712200</p> <p>Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership 01452426565</p> <p>Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership 01865 815843</p> <p>Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership 03001234043</p> <p>Westsussex Safeguarding Children Partnership 01403229900</p> <p>Suffolk Safeguarding Children Partnership 03456061499</p> <p>Shropshire Safeguarding Children Partnership 03456789021</p> <p>Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership 03004709100.</p>
<p>Contact Details for the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)</p>	<p>Nottinghamshire: Sara Bale +44(0)1159773921,sarah.bale@nottsc.gov.uk</p> <p>Denbigshire: 0345 053 3116, spoa@denbighshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Gloucestershire: Nigel Hatten, 01452 426565, amadmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Oxfordshire : Jo Lloyd, 01865 810603, lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Hertfordshire: Andrea Garcia-Sangil, 03001234043, andrea.garcia-sangil@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Westsussex: 033 022 26450, LADO@westsussex.gov.uk</p> <p>Suffolk: 0300 123 2044, LADO@suffolk.gov.uk.</p> <p>Shropshire: Charlotte.Percival, 01743 254147, Charlotte.Percival@shropshire.gov.uk.</p> <p>Surrey: 0300 123</p>

	1650,lado@surreycc.gov.uk.
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The role of the guardianship organisation, your role as a homestay

We host students aged between 10 years old to 18 years old. Students of different ages may require different care. For example, younger students will require greater nurturing and supervision during their stay, whereas older students will be more independent and may be allowed to visit the local area on their own. Parental permissions may vary from student to student too. We will explain to you what we expect from you prior to placing any student with you. One of the most mutually rewarding experiences of hosting an international student is learning about another culture. We ask that all homestays respect the students' own culture, values and background and be mindful that there will be some differences in the way students approach everyday life, such as when greeting others or whilst eating. Likewise, the students may have a different religious belief to the homestay. Again, we ask that you are respectful of any differences.

The guardianship organisation

All of our students have their own guardians in the UK, and understand UK policy on children's protection policies and guardian requirements. They should be a 24hr point of contact in an emergency; fill out the guardian information statistics form and submit a copy of your passport or other identification; Monitor the child while communicating with the company and understand the child's basic information; In the event that students and parents are found to have disrespect or other insults against the guardian, the guardian shall promptly explain the situation to the company and coordinate the handling; when a student has an emergency, the guardian needs to explain the situation to the company and make a decision after consultation. If there is an emergency, the guardian can judge and deal with it.

Your role as a homestay

The host family in the UK needs to provide the student with a place to live during school holidays. At the same time, they need offer a safe, welcoming and supportive family environment for the student and to ensure they are treated in the same manner as other members of the family in terms of rules and expected behavior. Ensure students' life safety during their stay in the host family. Report students' outing alone to the company and parents before giving consent to them, parents' consent form must be filled if necessary. Assist students arrange hospital visit if emergency happened, extra fees can be paid. Ensure students' life safety when hanging out with host families. Special implement must be conducted like lateral flow test and PCR test during epidemic. Report students' arrival and leave to the company. The family will also need to provide their family details, like address, contact number, email to guardians, and then the guardian can send them to the school. Every host family assigned by Victoria Guardianship Ltd will host no more than 3 Students. For students under 18 years old, the host family needs provide three meals per day for the student; For students over 18 years old, the student can choose different meal plans, which we explained in this handbook.

Looking after and respecting the rights of the student

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Loco Parentis

We expect our homestays to exercise the same levels of care as a responsible parent – in loco parentis. This means that you are accepting the day-to-day responsibility for the care of the student whilst they are staying with you.

Codes of conduct

Victoria Guardianship has a code of conduct for staff and homestays. Please take time to read through this document as it outlines how staff and homestays are expected to behave whilst working for the guardianship organisation: www.victoriaguardian.co.uk.

Likewise, we have a code of conduct for students. This outlines the expected standards of behaviour for our students. Please read through this as it will help you to understand our expectations: www.victoriaguardian.co.uk.

Safeguarding

Victoria Guardianship is committed to safeguarding and child protection. We have comprehensive policies on safeguarding, prevent / anti-radicalisation, low level concerns, complaints, anti-bullying, missing student, online safety, and data protection that provide further information and outline our procedures. These can be found www.victoriaguardian.co.uk. Please ensure that you have read and understood all our policies.

You are required to undertake a basic certificated course on safeguarding. This should be refreshed every three years. We will also provide an annual safeguarding update. This will be via annual visit.

We encourage students to talk to any trusted adult should they have any concerns. As a homestay, a student may consider you to be a trusted adult. There may be students who feel more comfortable speaking to other homestay family members about a concern they may have. You should therefore ensure that all members of your household are aware of what to do if a concern is shared with them. We have explained to students that any concerns they raise will be treated seriously. If a student comes to you or any homestay member to raise a concern, please ensure that it is dealt with in line with our published

procedure (see safeguarding policy) and reported to our Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

Self Reporting

Our safeguarding policy and low-level concerns policy outline our procedures for handling an allegation against a member of staff or homestay. We encourage homestays to self-report to our DSL any situation which could appear compromising or be misconstrued, or where their behaviour has fallen below the standards required in the code of conduct.

Control

Homestays may only use reasonable, appropriate and lawful means of control to maintain safety. Under no circumstances should physical punishment ever be used.

Homesickness

When students arrive in the UK, they might be 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 student is showing signs of homesickness, tell them not to worry as there are many people who can help them manage their feelings. Let them talk to you about their feelings, and remind them that 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 them and offer advice. It is best not to encourage them to frequently call home, as this can make the feelings worse. Keeping 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 student is suffering with homesickness. We are here to support both you and the student.

How to comfort a student in distress

There may be occasions where your student is upset. For example, the student may be homesick (see above), unwell or experiencing pressure in their academic studies. In such incidences please do not comfort the student physically. It is inappropriate to hug a student as you may comfort your own child, however there are many things you can do to help:

- Listen to the student's concerns
- Offer comforting words and advice
- If you can speak the students' first language, this may help to calm the student
- Please do alert us to the problem and we will offer you support

Curfews and Bedtimes

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

- Ages 15 and under No later than 8pm or before dark
- Age 16 - 17 *No later than 10pm*
- Age 17 - 18 *We do not set a curfew, but they must act responsibly and respectfully.*

We will inform you whether or not the student you are hosting has permission to go out alone. All students who are permitted to go out unaccompanied by their homestay must take their mobile phone (fully charged) with them and keep this switched on. Please make sure that they have your telephone number programmed into their phone. It is important that if students do go out unaccompanied, that they let you know where they are going and roughly how long they will be out. If for any reason they are delayed, students must contact you to keep you informed of their whereabouts.

Victoria Guardianship suggests that student bedtimes should be as follows:

- Ages 15 and under 10pm
- Age 16 - 17 11pm
- Age 17 - 18 12pm

Any deviation to these times should be discussed and agreed with the student.

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

Permission for students to go to outside, UKVG requires parents to sign the disclaimer, and the student needs to get the permission from parents, guardian and host family.

Students staying away from the homestay

Permission for students to stay away from the homestay, UKVG requires parents to sign the disclaimer, and the student needs to get the permission from parents, guardian and host family.

Accommodation requirements

Homestays 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 homestays 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.

Please make us aware if any member of the homestay is a smoker, or if you have any pets. Students should have the right to opt for a non-smoking and/or non-pet homestay environment.

Please be aware of the need to ascertain the adequacy of your home insurance in respect of hosting international students. The insured (homeowner) should declare all facts to the insurer in order to a) obtain the right cover and b) obtain the right premium.

No more than three students should be placed with the same homestay at any one time, unless in exceptional circumstances. Please ensure that you inform us if you work with other guardianship organisations as we need to check that you are not accommodating more than three students in total when members of an AEGIS guardianship organisation are being hosted.

When students under the age of 16 are in the care of a homestay, no students over the age of 20 should be hosted either by the guardianship organisation or another guardianship organisation working within the same homestay.

Homestays should not host any other paying guests or operate any form of bed and breakfast facility when hosting AEGIS students.

While there are no legal restrictions, homestays 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.

Meals and Snacks

We ask that homestays 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.

Breakfast - Typical food includes cereal, porridge, toast, croissants, fruit, or yoghurt. You may offer a cooked breakfast such as poached, boiled, or scrambled eggs, or bacon and eggs.

Lunch - this is usually a light meal, such as a salad, sandwich, or soup.

Dinner - this is usually the main meal of the day and will usually be a two-course meal. The main course will usually be hot. Dinner should be usually served around the table with the family members.

Snacks - you are asked to provide the student with snacks and drinks in-between meals. Typical snacks include a biscuit, slice of cake or fruit. Please explain to the student how they can access these.

We will provide you with information about any special dietary requirements or allergies. We ask students to let homestays know if they have any special requests.

Homestays are expected to prepare meals for the student (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). Students may want to help the family in their meal preparations or cook something themselves. Please do talk to your student about this and advise them how to use the kitchen and the necessary safety rules. If students have their own food that they wish to eat during their stay, we ask that they let you know so that this can be stored safely (for instance in a fridge if required).

Students can choose BB, HB or FB when they book the host family. Our families offer a continental style breakfast consisting of cereal, toast, tea/coffee etc. Half board includes continental breakfast and a cooked dinner consisting of a main course of meat/fish with pasta/ rice/ vegetables/ salad followed by a dessert or yogurt or fruit. Meals are usually eaten with the family unless otherwise arranged and special diets such as vegetarian, halal and other requirements can be catered for; please specify these at the time of booking. We also offer a self-catering option, where students can prepare their own evening meal, in line with household rules and timings. The students will be given storage space in the kitchen/fridge for their own food and drink for breakfast and evening meal. Our families also offer groups full board consisting of three meals a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner, and half board with a packed lunch containing a sandwich, fruit, drink, and a bag of crisps or a bar of chocolate.

Laundry

Homestays are asked to provide students with suitable laundry facilities if they are resident for more than one night. In most cases the homestay would undertake to do the laundry for

the student. Depending upon the age of the students, the homestay may give permission for them to do their own laundry if requested and agreed.

Use of the homestay's car for transport

Any cars used to transport students should be roadworthy with up-to-date tax, insurance, and MOT (where required). If you provide transport using your car for the students in your care, please be aware of the need for adequate comprehensive vehicle insurance and that you should inform your insurers that you will be using your car to provide transport to international students for which you may be paid or receive expenses.

Please ensure that 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.

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.

Guardians encourage staff and host families to set an appropriate agreement with students in order to supervise internet access and set boundaries about what they can and cannot do online. If a child breaks the rules, we would ask the host family to restrict internet access for an agreed period of time. Below is some suggested advice for talking to children about online safety: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-your-child-staying-safe-online/>

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 homestay to help keep students safe. When students use the internet in host family, they might be exposed to upsetting or inappropriate content online. So the host family needs to set up parental control over Wi-Fi router for student's online safety. Then the host family can use parental control options to manage and control students by accessing unwanted content or games. For specific operations, the host family can refer to this link: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers/parental-controls-offered-your-home-internet-provider>

Health and Safety in the Home

We expect all homestays 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 the guardianship organisation.
- The homestay 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 homestay 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 homestay should have an awareness of basic food hygiene when preparing meals for students.

We will conduct an initial visit to check that your accommodation is suitable prior to you hosting a student. Thereafter we will visit at least once a year to undertake an annual check. Please let us know immediately if there are any changes in the accommodation you are offering. This includes informing us of any temporary building work that may take place when you are due to host students.

Please refer to our separate Welfare, Health and Safety statement, that can be found on our guidance book.

Medication

Occasionally students may have health conditions that require them to take medication. Medicines will usually be passed to the homestay from the school, with full details given. In such circumstances we will provide you with a care plan, which will provide necessary information, and an administration of medicines record sheet. Please record any medication administered and return the sheet to Victoria Guardianship at the end of the student's stay. Where a student's condition requires homestays to have specific training, we will arrange this for you. If a student arrives with medication that you were not expecting, please contact Junyi Xiao immediately.

Private Fostering

Where Victoria Guardianship has any day students under the age of 16 (under 18, if the student has a disability) living with homestays who are not their parent or a close relative for 28 days or more, they must adhere to the regulations regarding private fostering in place within their local area as directed by their local authority.

Victoria Guardianship is required to liaise with the school and the homestay to ensure that where possible the local authority are notified of the proposal for a private fostering arrangement at least six weeks before the date on which the arrangement is to begin. Where the arrangement is to begin within six weeks, the local authority is to be informed immediately.

Victoria Guardianship will liaise with the school and homestay to explain carefully what is required of them in entering into a private fostering arrangement. This includes explaining that there will be regular visits and meetings with the local authority.

Victoria Guardianship has a system in place for recording all correspondence with the local authority private fostering team and securing relevant permissions to share such information as is necessary with the student, parents, agents (where appropriate), homestay and partner school.

In the case of day students over the age of 16, we are mindful of the extended period students will spend with homestays and regularly carry out suitable checks to monitor and ensure their welfare.

Changes in circumstances

You are required to inform the guardianship organisation about any changes to the homestay arrangements.

Expenses and payments

Victoria Guardianship ensures that any payments due to homestays are transacted promptly and in line with any contractual agreements in place.

We attempt to send a booking confirmation with the family information within 3 working days of receiving the booking, longer in peak season or in cases of difficult bookings or specific requirements outside of the norm. After the student accept the offer and made the payment, we will transfer the home stay fee within 24 hours, and we promise the home stay fee will be transferred to the host family before the student check in. When students have any incidental expenses during the period of staying with host family, for example, expenses in restaurant, tickets, cost in a trip, buying anything like books, medicine, clothes which payed by host family, we will transfer the incidental expenses to the host family with in 2 working days after we received the bills from the host family.

Your contract and cancelling the agreement

If the student wants to cancel the booking, it would be better to inform Victoria Guardianship two weeks before check in. If the cancellation notice is between three days to two weeks, 20% cancellation fee will be charged. If the cancellation notice is within three days, then 50% cancellation fee will be charged. If the host family wants to stop hosting the student and terminate the contract, we require at least one-week notice, and the host family need to pay 30% of the rest hosting fee as the cancellation fee.

Responsibilities during a pandemic

Pandemics can cause major disruption to travel and schooling. It is important in such events that Victoria Guardianship 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 Victoria Guardianship may not be able to offer homestay accommodation as this could place students, homestay families and the wider community at risk. Victoria Guardianship will work with parents to find flights to home countries where required. Victoria Guardianship will 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. Victoria Guardianship will work with parents and schools to find suitable quarantine accommodation for students where required. Victoria Guardianship has a policy that outlines the procedures we will follow during a pandemic. This can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>.