


UKG Student Handbook

2024 - 2025

Welcome to UKG!

Thank you for choosing us as your educational guardian while you are studying in the UK. We are here to help you if you have any questions or problems. Please read through this handbook carefully, where you will find useful information about your stay in the UK and how we can help you.



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If you cannot find the information you are looking for or if you have any further questions, please ask UKG and we will be happy to help.

1 - Key Information

UKGuardianship (UKG)

Kinetic Business Centre, Theobald Street, Borehamwood WD6 4PJ, United Kingdom

Office opening hours: 09:00 to 17:00, Monday to Friday

Contact Details

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

General enquiries	
Telephone (Monday to Friday: 09:00 – 17:00)	+44 (0) 20 3576 8880
Email	service@ukguardianship.com
Emergencies 24/7	
Telephone	+44 (0) 78 3446 5463
Safeguarding concerns	
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Annie Fang	+44 (0) 20 3576 8880 service@ukguardianship.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Jonas Lim Kit Yau	+44 (0) 20 3576 8880 contact@ukguardianship.com admin@ukguardianship.com

Public Holidays (UKG will be closed on these days and around 1 week over the Christmas period)

	2024	2025
New Year's Day	1 st January	1 st January
Good Friday	29 th March	18 th April
Easter Monday	1 st April	21 st April
Early May Bank Holiday	6 th May	5 th May
Spring Bank Holiday	27 th May	26 th May
Summer Bank Holiday	26 th August	25 th August
Christmas Day	25 th December	25 th December
Boxing Day	26 th December	26 th December

*substitute days

Christmas Holiday 23rd December 2024 - 2nd January 2025

Emergency Numbers in the UK

999 (or 112)	Emergency: Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance	Free
101	Police (Non-Emergency)	Free
111	NHS (National Health Service, Non-Emergency)	Free

2 - UKG's Role as your Guardian

UK schools require all their students whose families live overseas to have an appointed guardian living in the UK, normally aged over 25 years. It is also now a UK visa requirement. Whilst at the school, your houseparent will take responsibility for academic progress and welfare, but there are times during the term and more importantly outside term time, when the school must be able to hand over these responsibilities to a properly appointed guardian. For example, exeat weekends, half terms, medical emergencies, suspensions and exclusions.

These responsibilities include:

- acting on behalf of your parents in situations where they are unable to do so due to distance or timing;
- looking after your welfare in the UK when the school is closed for holidays;
- providing a host family for you to stay with during half term and exeat weekends when the school is closed;
- assisting you with things you may need – school uniform, sports equipment, pocket money, phone cards, mobile phone, UK mobile sim card, etc.;
- helping you arrange your travel both in the UK (taxi, train or bus) and back home (flight bookings, transfers);
- helping you if things go wrong:
 - if you have a problem at school
 - if you get into trouble at school and you are suspended/asked to leave for a short period of time
 - if you have problems with immigration or passports (for example, lost or stolen)
 - if you get ill and need to go to hospital, or away from school
- being available for you anytime, particularly if you are worried about things like:
 - work
 - school
 - friends
 - your own family (it is not unusual to feel homesick when you first start at your school)
 - the host family you stay with (life in the UK may be very different to your own country and we can give you some ideas and guidance to help you settle in more quickly and easily).

UKG will be the main point of contact for guardianship issues for you during school terms.

UKG acts as your guardian and will take responsibility for decisions made.

If you have a personal problem, or need some advice or support, you can always contact us.

UKG will ensure all arrangements are carefully put in place, and that confirmation is sent to you, your parents and your school. You may have regular contact with UKG by telephone and email. If you would like to talk to a member of UKG in your native language, then this can often be arranged.

You must provide your current mobile number and email to UKG, especially if these details change! It is your responsibility to notify us of any change to your contact details as soon as they are in place.

Designated Guardianship Coordinator

You will be assigned a designated Guardianship Coordinator before you travel to the UK. This person will be your main point of call when you are in the UK – if you have any questions or problems, you should speak to them first. They will be in regular contact with you and will usually visit you in school and at your host family (dependent on the guardianship package booked). Your Guardianship Coordinator will be available by phone at all times in cases of emergency.

If requested by your parents, you will be visited by your designated Guardianship Coordinator. PLEASE REMEMBER to attend the meeting! UKG have a strong background in education, and experience and knowledge of boarding schools and international students.

3 – Your Responsibilities as a Student

UKG has a Student Behaviour Code of Conduct which outlines the positive behaviour it expects from students. Please see the stand-alone code of conduct for further details. The guidelines are covered in the relevant sections of this handbook, such as your behaviour when staying with a homestay (see the Homestay section) and UK laws (see the Living in the UK section).

Abusive Behaviour

We do not accept any abusive behaviour by students, staff or visitors (this includes unkind words, messages and actions, verbal, mental and physical abuse, taking or damaging someone else's things, violence or anger towards another person, talking to/about people in an unkind way, teasing, harassment, bullying).

4 - Arrival in the UK

Please remember your passport and any other relevant paperwork. Contact us before your travel day if you are unsure of what you need to take with you.

Student Visas

If you are from a country in the EU or EEA, you will not need a visa to study in the UK.

If you are from another country, you will need a visa and, most of the time, will need to organise it before you travel. The most common visas are Tier 4 (General) and Tier 4 (Child).

If you do need a visa to study, you must:

- get it before you travel
- follow the rules
- think about your passport expiry dates
- not stay after your visa expires

For the most up-to-date information, please visit this website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

BRP Cards

If you are an international student applying to come to the UK for longer than 6 months, you will need a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). Your visa decision letter will inform you if you need to collect a BRP card and will specify where to collect it. You must collect it before your vignette expires or within 10 days of arriving in the UK, whichever is later. Your school should be able to assist you with this.

Starting in 2024, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) is developing a digital immigration system. This means that physical documents will be replaced with an online record of your immigration status, known as an eVisa. If you have a BRP that expires on 31 December 2024, you can now create a UKVI account and access your eVisa. You should do this before your BRP expiry date. Please check with UKG staff if you are unsure.

Registering with the Police

The police registration scheme ended on 4th August 2022. Students no longer need to register with the police upon arrival to the UK.

Arriving at the Airport

If UKG has arranged an airport transfer for you, our designated driver will meet you at the arrivals hall and will be holding a sign so you can find them easily. DO NOT leave the airport alone. If you have trouble finding the driver, please call our office or emergency number and we will help you.

Bank Account

Opening an account in the UK can be difficult, but your school may be able to help. To open an account you will need a 'bank letter' from the school, your passport/ID and proof of your address.

If you open a bank account, keep your account numbers, PIN and cards safe at all times. Do not give this information to anyone.

If your bank card is lost or stolen, you must report it to the bank immediately so they can cancel the card and send you a new one.

Remember, if you change your address, you must inform the bank.

National Insurance Number

You will need a National Insurance (NI) number to work in the UK.

The easiest way to get an NI number is to call Jobcentre Plus on 0345 600 0643. Opening times: Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 18:00. You will need to make an appointment. You can also find further information here <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>

Take your passport, a letter confirming you have been offered work or are registered with an agency and a 'Certificate of Enrolment' letter from the school. During your appointment, please ask them how long you will have to wait for your NI number, it is normally sent in the post.

If you have a biometric residence permit (BRP), you might have a National Insurance number already - it will be printed on the back of your BRP if you do.

5 - School Rules

Your school will explain to you their rules and expectations of how you should behave. Please go through them carefully when given and keep them in mind when staying at your homestay as well. In general, they include the following:

- English Only
- Being Punctual
- Eating and Drinking is Not Allowed in Class
- Mobile Phones Should be Turned Off in Class
- Good Attendance: having poor attendance may result in expulsion or jeopardise your next visa application. (If you cannot attend school, you must inform us in writing at least 1 week in advance. UKG reserve the right to decline your request.)

Start and End of Terms

Please be aware that schools require students to conform to all school rules and to adhere to published school dates for the start and end of terms. Failure to do so can sometimes result in disciplinary action against the student and would almost certainly be marked down as an unauthorised absence.

You must provide what arrangements we need to make for you for each half term, exeat weekend and whenever you are not in school but in the UK. If you do not require us to make arrangements for you, you must inform us of your travel and accommodation arrangements for our approval.

6 - Study and Development

Academic Mentoring

UKG offers academic monitoring and mentoring services supported by a team of qualified and experienced tutors and education consultants upon request to suit all levels, interests and learning needs. Academic Mentoring is ideal for students who hope to be accepted into a top school or university, who would like to improve their exam grades or who need additional help with their studies. Whether or not you know what you would like to do in the future, our education consultants will help you to prioritise the areas you want to focus on and monitor your progress. We will also give you termly tutorials where you can discuss your strengths and areas to develop.

Tutoring

If you need some extra academic support while you are studying at school or in your school holidays, we can arrange one-to-one tutoring sessions for you with one of our qualified and experienced tutors. Our tutors all have areas of expertise and can offer tutoring at all levels, from 11+ entrance exams to GCSE, A-level, IB and degree students in a wide range of subjects. Sessions can be arranged face-to-face throughout the UK or via Skype/Zoom (we can only arrange online lessons at the moment due to Covid-19). We may be able to arrange a bilingual tutor depending on the language and subject.

School / University Placement

If you are thinking of changing your school or applying to a new school or university next year, we can help. Since 2002, UKG has successfully helped students gain admission into reputable schools and universities all around the UK. We provide a seamless and comprehensive service, offering a high level of support to students and parents. Every student is assigned a personal consultant who will help you to select the best schools and universities based on your needs. We also have contacts in schools and universities throughout the UK, enabling us to speed up and track applications.

Oxbridge and G5 Preparation

If you are thinking of applying to Oxbridge or another G5 university, let us know. With a team of experienced and dedicated consultants, UKG provides a comprehensive and tailor-made service to help applicants with their Oxbridge and G5 applications. Our services range from document checking, college short listing, personal statement assistance and reading list recommendations to admission test support and mock interview practice. Our Oxford- and Cambridge-educated consultants can give applicants exclusive and first-hand information and advice on the notoriously lengthy and difficult admission procedure, in order to fully prepare them.

Work Experience Programme

The UKG Work Experience and Work Placement Programme combines our professional development course with either a paid or unpaid work placement in the industry of your choice. This is an ideal opportunity for those wishing to improve their job prospects, gain valuable work experience in the UK and give their CV a substantial boost.

For more information or to book any of our additional services, please contact us.

Student Feedback

Your views and comments are very important to us. We welcome your feedback and opinions so that we can improve our services.

During or shortly after your 1st term, UKG will give you a questionnaire; in this you can tell us if everything is going well or if you have any problems. This is so we can help you at this stage of your stay if you need it. These questionnaires need to be completed online as quickly as possible.

If you would like to leave feedback at any other time, please send it to us via email at service@ukguardianship.com or contact the office on +44 (0) 20 3576 8880.

Changing School

Remember – sometimes it can take 2 or 3 weeks, or even a term, to feel comfortable in your school, with other students and your teachers, and with living in the UK. In your first term, try to relax so you can enjoy your time here as much as possible.

If you have a problem, please try to speak to the school and your designated Guardianship Coordinator. We will try to assist if the matter does not get resolved. We can assign you with an education consultant if the School Placement service is required.

7 - Homestay Accommodation

UKG have a number of host families with whom we place our students when schools are closed for half-terms and exeat weekends. We will match you as closely as possible to the family in terms of their experience, interests, and location. We try where possible to place you in the same host family for all your stays, subject to availability.

All our host families meet the requirements set out by AEGIS (The Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students). Host families are inspected at least once a year by UKG to ensure high standards are maintained. UKG also undertake rigorous checks on each family, including with the national police database (Disclosure and Barring System or DBS).

Our host families will all have a kind disposition towards you and are given guidelines and, where necessary, training from UKG on the best practice when hosting an international student. This includes advice on Health and Safety matters but if you have any concerns whilst you are staying with our host family, please let us know immediately.

Please note, actual guardianship remains with UKG during your stay with a host family, so you should speak to us about any concerns you may have or if you need to make any changes to the original arrangement.

Living with a homestay

UKG expects all their students to be polite and courteous when staying with a homestay. It is expected that you say “please” and “thank you” when asking for and receiving items. Your homestay is not a hotel and the expectation is that you will be included as part of the family. As such, you will be expected to engage with family members, joining them at mealtimes, and possibly helping with chores such as laying the table. Your homestay will explain their own house rules with you when you arrive. Please do ask them if you have any questions.

House Rules

Every Host Family has their own house rules which will be given to you upon arrival. Please respect and follow them accordingly, for example:

- When you should take a shower

- If you can use the kitchen
- If you can eat in your room
- If you can use the computer and internet

Meals:

You will be provided with three meals a day:

Breakfast - Typical food includes cereal, porridge, toast, croissants, fruit, or yoghurt. You may be offered 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 is usually served around the table and all family members usually attend.

Snacks - your host family will provide you with snacks and drinks in-between meals if you so wish. Typical snacks include a biscuit, slice of cake or fruit. Your homestay will explain how you can access these.

You should ensure that UKG is aware of any special dietary requirements or allergies. If you have any special requests, please do let your homestay know.

Most homestays will prepare meals for you (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). You may want to help the family in their meal preparations or cook something yourself. Please do talk to your homestay about this and they will advise you how to use the kitchen and the necessary safety rules. If you have your own food that you wish to eat during your stay, please let your homestay know so that this can be stored safely (for instance in a fridge if required).

If there are things you like or don't like to eat, please tell your host and they will try and provide accordingly but remember the food will be very different to home, so do try everything - you never know, you may like it!

Be sure to watch your table manners:

- Wait until everyone is seated at the table and has their food before you start to eat.
- If you want something from the table, ask someone to pass it to you. Remember to use 'please' and 'thank you'.
- It is the English custom to eat quietly, with your mouth closed!
- Hands are usually placed under the table when you are not eating.
- Stay at the table until everyone has finished and then ask to leave.
- When you leave the table, ask if you can help by taking your dishes to the kitchen, and leave them by the sink or place them in the dishwasher.
- Tell the family ONE DAY in advance if you wish to miss a meal and eat elsewhere.

Shower and Bathroom:

Students are asked to be respectful of the family routines. You will probably need to share the bathroom with your host family and they will tell you the most convenient time for you to use the bathroom and shower in the mornings and evenings. Host families will often need to be up early, so please don't make them late for work!

Please make sure you shower regularly (every one or two days) but remember that hot water may be limited, so you should spend no longer than 15 minutes in the shower.

Please leave bathrooms tidy. Make sure the shower curtain is on the inside of the shower cubicle to avoid flooding the bathroom.

Please ensure that you lock the door of the bathroom when in use and ensure that you are suitably clothed when travelling to and from the bathroom.

Your Room:

You will be provided with a single or twin room (one or two beds), and occasionally, if a room is large enough, some families have a triple room (three beds).

Clean bedding and a towel are provided.

The room will have some storage facility (depending on the length of your stay) and a desk and adequate lighting for working. Sometimes host families provide a table in another room (like the Dining Room) for working instead of the bedroom.

Make your bed and keep your room tidy, especially on your departure. Report any damage to the host and apologise for it.

Laundry:

Hosts are happy to help you with any washing you may have, especially during a longer break like half term. In most cases the homestay will do the laundry for you. Depending upon your age and maturity, the homestay may give permission for you to do your own laundry if requested and agreed.

Phone:

Please be courteous when using your mobile phone whilst at your homestay. This includes not using it at the mealtime, or when the family are engaging in discussion with you. Remember not to speak too loudly or call someone late at night. You should not ask to use the homestay telephone unless there is an emergency, or you have agreed this in advance with the homestay.

Internet Access and Host Computers:

Please discuss Wi-Fi access with your homestay. Some families have packages where they have a limit on the data they may use in a month; therefore, streaming films for example would be inappropriate. Please note that homestays may have filters on their internet and may use parental controls to prevent access of inappropriate sites. Some homestays may turn off the Wi-Fi at bedtime. Students should use their own devices rather than the family's home computer.

Homesickness

When you arrive in the UK, you might miss your home, family, and friends. These feelings of missing familiar surroundings and family are perfectly normal and are called homesickness.

Signs that you 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 you feel homesick please do not worry, there are many people who can help you manage your feelings. Talk to your house parent, teacher, parent, guardian, or any member of guardian staff who will listen and will be able to support you and offer advice. School life will be very busy and there will be many activities arranged to enable you to have fun and make new friends (see more information in the Social Activities section below).

Curfews and Bedtimes

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

15 and under	Must be accompanied by an adult member of host family
16 & 17	10pm at the latest
18 and over	11pm at the latest

If you go out, you must tell your host family where you are going and when you will be home. Make sure you have the telephone number of the host family and UKG's emergency phone number (07834 465463) with you and that the family have your mobile number. Your phone should have enough battery and be switched on at all times. If you are delayed, you must phone the host family to let them know.

UKG suggests that student **bedtimes** should be as follows:

12 and under	9pm
13 – 15	10pm
16 – 17	10:30pm
18 and over	11pm

Any deviation to these times should be discussed with the homestay. Please remember many families **NEED TO BE UP EARLY** to go to work, therefore please be considerate (do not take a shower late at night!) and be **QUIET!**

You are not allowed to stay out all night unless UKG has already received specific permission, in writing, from your parents (see Other Accommodation).

You are not allowed to have friends to stay overnight unless agreed by UKG and the host family in advance.

Other Accommodation

We have an obligation to your parents, schools and even the UK Immigration to care for and protect our students and to provide safe host family accommodation. If you would like to make alternative care arrangements during half term / exeat weekends, please follow the rules below.

Please note that you are not allowed to stay in a hotel, hostel, short-let, leased property or even your own property in the UK without your parents or a designated guardian under any circumstances.

- Students Aged 18 and over

Parents' Permission in writing in advance is required, during office hours.

- Students Aged 16 & 17

Parents' Permission in writing in advance is required, during office hours. PLUS details of the accommodation and travel plans, as well as the main contact person, who should reside in the UK and be over 25 years old, and agree to full responsibility for the student during the stay. UKG reserves the right to refuse the request if we do not feel that it would be safe for the student.

- Students Aged 15 and under

Must stay in homestay accommodation arranged by UKG unless otherwise agreed.

Changes or Cancellations

Please note that there may be charges for cancellations or changes to homestay or transfers bookings. If you have any concerns, discuss them with us or your parents.

Pocket Money

You do not need to bring too much pocket money to the host family, as your parents will have already paid for your meals and accommodation during your stay with the host family. If you need extra pocket money, we will only issue this to you after we receive your parents' permission.

Personal Hygiene

It is important to present yourself well in school and when you are staying with the host family. Remember to shower regularly (every one or two days), brush your teeth twice per day, use deodorant and wash your clothes regularly.

8 - Social Activities

There are many students already in the UK looking for friends like other international students and eager to make that connection. Once a student has spent some time here, they will find that making friends is rather easy and this will help ease some of the homesickness they are feeling. We can help bring students together, to forge friendships and build relationships.

The more students get involved with their school, the easier it is to adjust to a new life. There are many fun activities in school outside of schoolwork, such as sports and groups where you can connect with other students who enjoy the same things you do. If you are having fun with other people, you won't feel so homesick and adjusting to school life will be easier.

Another good way to help you cope with homesickness is to find a new hobby. There are many fun activities to join outside of classes. Students are encouraged to pursue things that are new and interest them, this will help you to adapt to your new way of life. You might meet new people too, and this will help you feel more welcome.

The initial period you are at a new school is going to be an adjustment, but you will find over a period of time your homesickness will reduce. The best thing to do is find fun activities and connect with other students. By meeting new people and making new friends you will feel like you belong here. It is also a good idea to join any excursions or entertainment the school or host family organise.

You will not be alone at your new school. Everyone wants to see you do well and enjoy your new life. We are here for each student in our care to help them overcome any difficulties and to help them ease and settle into their new lives. This is why we often organise activities and events during half term. Please do check your email or our social network for the latest event. Everyone is welcome; you can also help others to overcome being homesick!

PARENTAL AUTHORITY

Visiting the local area / shops / travelling further afield / excursions

Schools frequently need a parent or guardian to sign for parental permission for you to participate in school activities and excursions or if you want to visit the local area, shops etc. Our policy is to forward these to your parents for approval if the cost is over 20 GBP, and / or if the activity is strenuous or potentially dangerous. Otherwise, we will sign, unless your parents have indicated otherwise on the Application Form.

Please see the Homestay Accommodation section above for curfew details when staying with a host family.

9 - Living in the UK

Manners and Customs

Living in the UK may be quite different to what you are used to. Every country has its own customs, and it may take you a while to get used to the new way of life. Please do not worry, this is more normal. Here are a few examples of British customs to help you understand what is expected:

Meeting people: Sometimes British people come across as being reserved but usually they are kind, helpful and welcoming of visitors. British people usually greet each other with a handshake and use their title and surname, until being invited to use their first names. For example, when meeting a new contact, they may greet saying "Good morning, Mr. Harris". Due to the coronavirus, greetings have changed, and handshakes are not currently being used. A verbal greeting is perfectly acceptable, whilst maintaining social distancing.

Queues: The British people love queues! When waiting their turn, for example in a shop, bank or for public transport, people form a line one behind the other so that they are served in turn. It is considered rude to push in. Due to the coronavirus, spaces between people waiting in the queue are currently larger, so please be aware of maintaining a suitable distance. In the UK this is currently 1m plus. Shops in the UK are currently limiting the number of people allowed inside at any one time, so you may need to queue more often than in usual times. Some shops and services have clear instructions and markers to show where you should stand. Please respect the instructions given.

Please and thank you: British people greatly appreciate politeness. This means when you would like something you would start a sentence with the word "Please", for example, "Please may I have a sandwich?" When you have received something, you should always reply with "Thank you".

Sorry! The British people are often heard to say "Sorry!" This word is used if people accidentally bump into each other or make a mistake. Often people say it even if they were not to blame (for example, a person bumped into them whilst walking in the street).

Mealtimes: It is considered polite to wait for all the people at the table to have their meals in front of them before you start to eat. Knives and forks are used to eat most main courses, although some British families may use other cutlery to suit the cuisine. Knives and forks are placed together to indicate that the dinner has finished. It is not considered polite to eat with your mouth open or speak whilst eating. Like the beginning of the meal, diners usually wait until everyone is finished before leaving the table, and often time is spent having a chat around the table.

British people are generally punctual so make sure you always arrive on time.

Do not spit, pick your nose or stare at people in public places – these are all considered to be very rude.

Culture

Going to a new country and being part of a new culture can be confusing and difficult (culture shock). Try to learn as much about the British culture, customs and behaviour as possible. People will be more helpful and much kinder if you are polite and show respect for others.

For more information about British culture, please visit:

<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Preparation-and-Arrival/Facing-culture-shock>

Student cards

You are entitled to receive discounts from travelling, clothes purchases and entertainment as a student, for example:

Young Persons Railcard for travel on trains (<https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>)

Oyster Zip Card for travel around London (<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel>)

International Student Identity Card for student discounts (<https://www.isic.org/cards/>)

Mobile Phones

The UK has several network providers. We will be able to help you register with a phone provider and help you purchase SIM cards - please contact us for further details.

Mobile phones are extremely useful devices, especially when you are a long way from home and want to stay in contact with your family and friends. However, it is important that you use them safely. Childline offers useful advice on their website:

- “Use a passcode on your phone: This can help to protect your data if someone tries to steal or access it. Nobody should be able to guess your passcode, so do not set it to something other people will know, like your birthday.
- Keep your phone with you: Store your phone in a safe pocket so that it is hidden from sight. Be careful when you take it out in public places and do not let other people use it unless you know and trust them.
- Do not use public WiFi: Public WiFi may not always be secure, especially in places like cafés. Connecting to it means that someone might be able monitor the sites or apps you are using.
- Check what data your apps can use: Lots of apps will ask for permission to use your data when you install them. They might want to view things like your location, contacts, photos and even messages. Be careful about what you agree to and check what permissions your apps have in the ‘settings’ menu of your phone.
- Add an ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact number to your phone: If you lose your phone or something happens, it can be hard for someone to contact you. Add the phone number of someone you trust, like your parent or carer to your lock screen or on the back of your phone with a sticker.
- Be careful who you add or talk to: When you talk to someone online, you do not always know who they are or whether they’re being truthful. If you are talking to someone online, be careful about what you share.
- Think before you share or save something: Once you share a message, photo or video you lose control of it. Someone else can save or screenshot it, and they can share it with other people. Sharing or saving nudes can be illegal.”¹

Weather

British weather is very changeable. You should bring/pack clothes to suit many different weather conditions. You will need an umbrella (at any time of year!) but you can buy one here in London. For a weather forecast, or more information about the climate, visit www.metoffice.gov.uk

Religion

The population of the UK is diverse, and many religions are practised. You may wish to access places of worship during your stay. If so, please speak to your school or to us and we will make the necessary arrangements.

¹ <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/mobile-phone-safety/>

Links to useful websites

www.visitbritain.com Official Tourist Office site with information about the UK
www.ukcisa.org.uk Advice for international students
www.bbc.co.uk/news News in the UK and around the world
www.ukstudentlife.com Information for students coming to study in Britain
www.educationuk.org/global/articles/safety A useful site for safety in the UK

Health

There will be a School Doctor and Nurse in the school who will look after your health. When you are staying with your host family, they will look after you if you are unwell or have an accident. They will usually contact their GP (doctor) and book an appointment for you (your school doctor will have already registered you with the NHS). If the illness is more serious and/or you need to go to hospital, the host family will contact UKG and we will inform your parents. If you require any other medical care such as a dentist, they will also be able to book an appointment for you.

Medical Emergencies

You will be required to register with a doctor whilst staying in the UK. This is usually arranged by the school. If you have private medical insurance, please provide us with the details. Depending on your period of stay, it may also be advisable to register with a dentist.

Please do let your homestay or the guardianship organisation know if you feel unwell. They will look after you. This may include making a doctor's appointment for you, or in an extreme emergency taking you to hospital. If you feel unwell at school, please let your house parent, matron, nurse or teacher know and they will look after you.

The National Health Service has a helpline that can be used. This number is 111. In an emergency, an ambulance can be called on 999.

Travelling around

You may need to travel during your time in the UK. This will include travelling to and from your homestay, to and from school, to the airport or any places that you wish to visit. If you require transport, please let us know. Transport is usually arranged by your school or guardianship organisation. We use trusted drivers who have had the necessary safety checks. Occasionally guardianship staff or homestays may be permitted to provide transport for you.

You will be provided with details of who is going to collect you in advance. You will be given the name of the driver and the time that they will arrive. Please ensure that you are ready at the stated time. Never go with anyone other than the named person provided, even if they say that this has been arranged with school/guardian. If you are in any doubt ask a trusted adult, such as a member of school staff, or your guardian.

When you are travelling in a car please sit in the back where possible and use the seat belts provided. If you are under 12 and below 135cm in height you will be required to use a booster seat. This is a legal requirement.

If you wish to use public transport, please ask us for permission. We will help you with booking tickets if permission is granted.

The British Council has some useful advice for keeping safe on public transport. It can be found here: <https://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/learners/uk-life/be-safe-uk/staying-safe-public-transport>

When you are walking or cycling, you need to take care to keep safe.

When walking:

- Use pavements to walk on.
- Use Zebra or pelican crossings where possible to cross the road, but do not assume cars will stop if they see you waiting. Make sure that it is safe before you cross.
- Stay alert and listen for bikes and runners- this means not wearing headphones when out walking
- Look both ways to check that it is safe to cross
- If there isn't a safe crossing, find a good place to cross away from parked cars where you can see what is coming on both sides of the road.

Walk on well-lit roads and ignore people who are rude or abusive. If you think you are being followed, go into a shop or where there are other people or phone a friend, telling them where you are and why you are worried. If you need some help, approach people directly or call out to them, don't shout 'help', say what is happening and what help you need.

The Think!² Website provides the following advice for cyclists:

- Ride decisively and keep clear of the kerb.
- Look and signal to show drivers what you plan to do, make eye contact where possible.
- Avoid riding up the inside of vehicles, as you might not be seen. If a vehicle is indicating to the left hang back at the junction to reduce the risk of a collision.
- Always use lights after dark or when visibility is poor. Wear high-visibility and reflective clothing and accessories at all times
- Wear a correctly fitted cycle helmet that is securely fastened and conforms to current regulations.
- Your local council can help you plan your journey by providing maps showing dedicated paths and routes.
- Where possible, try to maintain social distancing when you cycle, for example when waiting at crossings and traffic lights.
- Where using bikes (private, docked or dockless) wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands before and after cycling.

Keeping your passport and BRP safe

Your passport, along with BRP (where required) are important documents. You should ensure that these are always kept safe. Usually schools will keep these for you but there will be times when you need to travel with them, for instance, when travelling to and from the UK. Please take care not to lose them as this could result in travel delays.

Learning to Drive

If you are over 17 and planning to spend some time in the UK after your schooling, you may want to learn to drive. You must apply for a provisional licence first and then apply for lessons. When the driving instructor feels you are ready, they will suggest that you apply for your test. There is a theory test and a practical driving test, and both must be passed before you will be awarded your licence. Please let us know if you would like to learn to drive, and if your parents agree, we will help you to make the necessary arrangements. Further information can be found on the government website

<https://www.gov.uk/driving-lessons-learning-to-drive>

Safety and Security Advice

- **Always put your safety first.**
- **Make sure your phone always has battery and credit.**
- **Make sure you have all of the contact details, addresses or maps that you need (e.g. school, accommodation).**

² <https://www.think.gov.uk/cycle-safety/>

Contact with UKG

As your dedicated guardian, we need to know your whereabouts at all times. If you go missing from your school or homestay accommodation and we cannot reach you, we will report you to the police as a missing person. Therefore, you must always inform us if there are any changes to your accommodation/travel plans and make sure your phone is always switched on.

10 – Keeping Safe

We expect your stay in the UK to be a safe and happy one. The UK has a diverse population and is very welcoming. There is lots to do - from visits to art galleries and museums, to a wide range of outdoor activities. However, as is the case in all countries, you need to be aware of how to keep yourself safe just in case you find yourself in a difficult situation:

Personal Safety and Belongings/Valuables (e.g. mobiles, cameras, money)

You do not have to carry your passport or ID card with you in the UK.

Try not to carry more money than you will need, and keep some money in a different pocket/place to use in an emergency.

When you go out, you should be vigilant of what is happening around you. Keep your belongings close and ideally walk with no headphones so that you can hear traffic and others around you. Try not to use your phone when out and about unless it is necessary as this distracts you and could tempt opportunist thieves.

It is best to go out with a friend or adult, rather than alone. Always let your homestay know if you are going out and what time you expect to return. If for any reason you are running late. Please let your homestay know. Make sure that your homestay has your mobile number, and that you have their number in your phone.

If you lose your debit or credit cards, or think that they have been stolen, then contact your bank immediately who will be able to stop your card.

TIP: We recommend that you register your belongings, such as mobile phones and bicycles, with Immobilise. This is free of charge and will help you if your things get stolen. Visit www.immobilise.com

Pickpockets and Bag Snatchers

Unfortunately, pickpockets (people who take things from your pocket or bag) can be in popular tourist areas and crowded places. **Make sure your bag is always closed and never carry your wallet or purse in a bag on your back.**

Do not leave your bag on the floor or over the back of a chair in cafes or restaurants – instead, keep it on your lap or tie it to the furniture.

If someone tries to take your bag by force, just give it or throw it down on the ground. If possible, empty the contents onto the floor and tell them to take what they want. Never fight over your possessions; they can be replaced.

Most students who lose a bag say that the worst thing is losing their address book or the numbers on their phone. Therefore, it is a good idea to keep a copy of these and your bank card numbers at home. If your bag is stolen, always tell the police because there is a possibility that your bag will be found and the police can then return it to you.

Cashpoints

When withdrawing cash at cashpoints, be careful not to let anyone see you entering your PIN. Be careful if someone tries to help you, they may not be honest. If someone is standing too close or tries to distract you, cancel the process or wait until you have finished and you have both your cash and the card before you turn away from the machine.

Taking out Insurance

We strongly recommend that every student takes out a comprehensive insurance which covers reimbursement of school fees as well as theft, damage and medical costs.

Electrical Appliances and Safety

Please be aware that electrical appliances need to be handled safely as they can pose a risk of fire if not used appropriately. Specifically, overseas phone chargers and laptop power devices may pose a significant fire risk so if possible, purchase UK versions. Please do ask us for advice on the best appliances to purchase, we are happy to help!

Fire Prevention and Precautions

- Cook safely – do not leave food you are cooking unattended, take care with electrics in the kitchen (keep them away from water) and do not put any metal in the microwave.
- Stub cigarettes out properly and dispose of them carefully. Do not smoke indoors.
- Make sure all fire exits are kept clear.
- If there is a fire:
 - At school: follow the school's fire safety. This usually means heading to the nearest fire meeting point outside.
 - At your host family: go to the nearest exit immediately.
 - If you are the first to notice a fire, pull the alarm or shout "FIRE FIRE". Call 999.
- If a fire escape is blocked:
 - Put bedding around the bottom of the door to block out smoke.
 - Call 999 then open a window and shout "HELP FIRE".
 - If you are on the ground or first floor, try to escape through a window.
 - Use bedding to cushion your fall and lower yourself down carefully. Do not jump.
 - If you cannot open the window, break the glass in the bottom corner. Make jagged edges safe with a towel or blanket.
- Fire extinguishers are helpful for putting out small fires. To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the word "PASS":
 - **P**ull the pin. Hold the fire extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you and remove the pin to unlock it.
 - **A**im low. Point the nozzle at the base of the fire.
 - **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
 - **S**weep the nozzle from side to side.

Food Hygiene

- Wash your hands before and after handling food.
- Keep food preparation surfaces clean.
- Wear closed-in shoes to protect your feet, in case of hot spills or breakages and tie back long hair.
- Store food appropriately.
- Wash vegetables and fruit under cold water before use.
- Do not run around the room where food is being prepared.
- Wipe up food spills immediately.
- Handle knives and other sharp equipment with care.

- When using a knife, always cut away from yourself or downwards on a chopping board.
- Turn handles of saucepans away from the front of the stove when cooking.
- Use oven mitts when taking hot dishes from the oven or microwave.
- Wash kitchen and eating utensils after use in hot soapy water.

In an emergency

In emergencies you can call the police, fire brigade or ambulance on 999. This number should only be called when there is an emergency. The telephone operator will ask you what service you require and will ask you for some details, such as what has happened, and where you are.

For less urgent issues there are two separate numbers you can call, one for the police, and one for medical advice:

Police (non-emergencies): 101

Medical information NHS: 111

You can dial any of the above numbers from a landline telephone or mobile phone.

Safeguarding

If you are ever concerned about your safety, we are here to help. If you have any worries, feel that you have been asked to do something that you feel uncomfortable doing, or have been hurt in any way by another student or an adult, you should tell a trusted adult, even if the person has asked you not to tell anyone.

UKG has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL) who can be contacted with any concerns that you have. They are trained to help you. Their details are:

DSL: Annie Fang, +44 (0) 20 3576 8880, service@ukguardianship.com

DDSL: Jonas Lim, +44 (0) 20 3576 8880, contact@ukguardianship.com, Kit Yau, admin@ukguardianship.com

24-hour emergency number: +44 78 3446 5463

Alternatively, you can speak to any member of the guardianship organisation staff, your homestay or staff in school, and they will listen and help you.

UKG has a safeguarding policy that is available on our website at <https://ukguardianship.com/uk-guardianship/handbook-and-policies/>. This explains our procedures in detail.

List of useful contacts

There may be times when you would like advice from organisations, rather than from us. Whilst we would encourage you where appropriate to share with us any concerns so that we can help you, you could also contact the following organisations:

ChildLine: Childline is a counselling service for children and young people up to their 19th birthday. You can contact them with any problem or concern. They can be contacted on 0800 1111.

Local Safeguarding Partnership: The Local Safeguarding Partnership plays a critical role in protecting the welfare of children and young people in the locality. It is often the first point of contact for any non-emergency safeguarding concerns. The guardianship organisation's Local Safeguarding Partnership is Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and they can be contacted on 0300 123 4043.

The Children's Commissioner: The Children's Commissioner's role is to stand up for the rights of children. You can make contact via their website, <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us/contact> or by telephone: 020 7783 8330.

Prevent / Anti-Radicalisation

The ChildLine Website explains radicalisation as follows:

“Radicalisation is when someone starts to believe or support extreme views. They could be pressured to do things illegally by someone else. Or they might change their behaviour and beliefs.

“This could happen if they feel:

- isolated and lonely or wanting to belong
- unhappy about themselves and what others might think of them
- embarrassed or judged about their culture, gender, religion, or race
- stressed or depressed
- fed up with being bullied or treated badly by other people or by society
- angry at other people or the government
- confused about what they are doing
- pressured to stand up for other people who are being oppressed.

“Someone who has been radicalised might believe that sexual, religious, or racial violence is OK. They may be influenced by what they see online. And they might have links to extreme groups that preach hate like Nazi groups or Islamic extremists like Daesh, also known as ISIS or IS.

“Having extreme views can be dangerous. And this can often lead to harmful and illegal activities involving violence, attacks, discrimination or hate - which the person could be arrested or sent to prison for. This can affect them and their future.”³

If you are worried about the behaviour of someone you know, or if you think that someone is trying to radicalise you, seek help. UKG has a member of staff, known as the Prevent Lead, who is trained to deal with any concerns you may have:

Prevent Lead: Annie Fang, +44 (0) 20 3576 8880, service@ukguardianship.com

Alternatively speak to a trusted adult in your school, such as the DSL, a member of guardianship organisation staff, your parents or your homestay. You could also speak to ChildLine on 0800 1111. If you think someone is in serious danger, you can call 999 for urgent help.

Further information on Prevent, Radicalisation can be found in the UKG Prevent Policy. You can find this on our website at <https://ukguardianship.com/uk-guardianship/handbook-and-policies/>.

The ChildLine website has further information that you may find useful:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/>

Safe Use of the Internet

The internet is a wonderful tool, providing us with a huge amount of information as well as access to our friends and family who can be many miles away. However, we need to take care to keep safe whilst using the internet as there are some people who are trying to trick us, such as into giving them our personal details. Please take great care whilst using the internet. Your school will teach you how to use the internet safely. It is important that you adopt good online safety practice and report misuse, abuse or access to inappropriate materials.

Good online safety practice includes:

- ✓ Not giving out personal details such as addresses and telephone numbers to strangers, even if they say they are your own age
- ✓ Not sending digital pictures to strangers
- ✓ Not responding to unkind messages - tell a trusted adult

³ <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/>

- ✓ Never giving out internet passwords to anyone
- ✓ Following the online safety guidelines that your school teaches you both in and out of school.

Further advice can be found at <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk> or <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/>

How to report concerns:

- Tell a trusted adult, such as UKG DSL, your guardian, homestay, teacher, or parent.
- If you are worried about online abuse or the way someone has been communicating online you can report them to Child Exploitation & Online Protection command (CEOP) <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre>. CEOP is a law enforcement agency who helps keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online.
- You can also call ChildLine who will offer advice and listen to any concerns. Their number is 0800 1111

Remember to stay SMART

Safe Do not give your personal details to anyone online (e.g., full name, contact details).

Meet Do not meet with people who you have met online as it can be dangerous.

Accept Do not accept messages, emails or open files from people you do not know or trust as some can contain viruses or nasty messages.

Reliable Some information may be untrue or people can lie about who they are. Always check information with other websites, books or a member of staff.

Tell If something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, tell your parent, host parent or a staff member.

Bullying / cyberbullying

Bullying is unkind and will not be tolerated by your school or UKG. If you experience bullying during your stay in the UK, please do tell a trusted adult as soon as possible who will be able to help you and make the bullying stop. This would usually be a teacher or your house parent if bullying occurred in school, or your guardian, homestay or a member of the guardianship organisation staff if bullying was experienced during your stay with a host family. Bullies often are unkind because they are unhappy themselves, so by telling an adult they will be helped too.

Bullying may include:

- Name calling or teasing
- Making unkind comments on social media or sending unkind messages
- Hurting someone physically
- Stealing items from an individual
- Threatening a person
- Spreading unkind rumours
- Unkindness may happen online - this is called cyberbullying

Your school will provide you with guidance on how to spot and handle bullying. ChildLine also offer some advice for children on bullying and cyberbullying. You can find this here

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-cyberbullying/>

Read the full Anti-Bullying Policy at <https://ukguardianship.com/uk-guardianship/handbook-and-policies/>

Laws in the UK

Smoking: UKG prohibits students from smoking whilst in their care. In the UK, it is illegal to buy cigarettes if you are under the age of 18.

Drinking: UKG does not permit their students to consume alcohol whilst under their care, including when they are staying at a homestay. In the UK it is illegal for people under 18 to buy alcohol in a pub, off-

licence, shop or elsewhere. In most cases, it is against the law for anyone to buy alcohol for someone under 18 to drink in a pub or a public place.

Drugs: UKG prohibits students from using recreational drugs and illegal substances whilst in their care. In the UK you can get a fine or prison sentence if you:

- take drugs
- carry drugs
- make drugs
- sell, deal or share drugs (also called 'supplying' them)

If you are under 18, the police are allowed to tell your parent, guardian or carer that you've been caught with drugs.

Sexual Activity: UKG prohibits students from engaging in sexual activity whilst in their care, even if they are over the age of consent. In the UK the age of consent is 16. That means that it is illegal to have sex with someone under the age of 16.

Shoplifting: People who are caught stealing from shops will probably have to go to court and may have to pay a fine (money).

Weapons: It is illegal to carry any weapon for defence, including gas and sprays. You will be arrested if the police stop you and you have a knife.

Tattoos and Body Piercings: UKG prohibits students from having a tattoo or body piercing whilst in their care. In the UK, it is illegal to tattoo a young person under the age of 18, even if they have parental consent. There is no legal age of consent for body piercing, and so it is legal for someone under the age of 18 to have a piercing as long as they have consented to it. Children under the age of 16 cannot legally consent to a genital (or in the case of girls, nipple) piercing, as it's considered to be indecent assault.

Cycling: You cannot ride a bike on a pavement/footpath. You can only ride a bike on designated bicycle paths or on the road. You must have lights if you cycle at night. A helmet is not compulsory but is strongly recommended.

What to do in case of an arrest

1. If you are arrested, the police will usually take you to a police station, hold you in a custody cell then question you. The police will search you and take away your possessions while you are in the cell.
2. The police can hold you in custody for up to 24 hours. After 24 hours, the police must either charge you with a crime or release you.
3. The police must explain your rights, which include free legal advice, telling someone where you are, medical attention if required, a written notice of your rights (e.g. food and toilet breaks) in your language or provide you with an interpreter.
4. If the police ask you questions, you can choose to answer or not. However, please note that you may harm (damage) your defense if you do not answer their questions.
5. The police do not need your permission to take photographs of you, fingerprints, a DNA sample (mouth swab or hair root) or a skin swab from your hands/arms.
6. The police do need your permission to take a blood or urine sample from you (unless you are suspected of drink or drug driving).
7. If you are under 18, the police must try to contact your parent or guardian and find an adult to help you.

Legal Problems

For free legal advice you can go to a Citizens' Advice Bureau - www.citizensadvice.org.uk

11 - Being asked to Leave the Guardianship Programme

If you do not follow UKG's Rules or Policies, we may terminate the contract and cease the service without giving you a refund. We may ask you to leave for the following reasons:

- **Not attending your classes**
- **Abusive behaviour**
- **Not following all rules relevant to your stay in the UK**
- **Damage to school or homestay property / Unsocial behaviour / Criminal activity. We could also ask you to pay for any damages to school property and/or accommodation.**

If you break the rules or do not follow the Policies, we will:

1. Give you an official verbal and written warning and notify your parents. This aims to stop you from repeating any offence.
2. Permanently exclude you from the services and notify the school, if you repeat the offence or break any other rules.

No refund or alternative arrangements will be available.

Alternatively, in severe cases, we may terminate the contract immediately.

