



# **Amber Guardianships**

**Thank you for choosing our guardianship services!**

## **Students Welcome Pack**

# **2024-2025**

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<b>Safeguarding Children Partnership for Hammersmith &amp; Fulham, Kensington &amp; Chelsea, Westminster</b>	<b>+44 77 3931 5388</b>
<b>Police Emergency Numbers in the UK (Free Number)</b>	<b>999</b>
<b>Police Non-Emergency</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>Emergency Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>NHS (National Health Service, Non-Emergency)</b>	<b>111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.</b>

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# Welcome and Introduction

We are delighted to welcome you to Amber guardianships. Our priority is our students and while you are in the United Kingdom (UK) we will be the first line of contact.

Most boarding schools in the UK require their students whose families live overseas to have a Guardian resident in the UK, normally aged over 25 years. Tier 4 visa rules state that children must have a UK Guardian. Whilst at a boarding school, your housemaster or housemistress will take responsibility for academic progress and welfare, but there are times during the term and more especially outside term time for example, exeat weekends (occasional weekends when the school closes), half terms, medical emergencies, etc, when the school must be able to hand over these responsibilities to a properly appointed Guardian.

## Guardian Responsibilities

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 fully inspected host family for you to stay with during half term and fixed Exeat weekends when the school is closed. Amber Guardianships understands how important it is for you to feel safe and comfortable whilst staying with your host family and that is why we always try to ensure you stay with the same host family each time. This means you can start to develop a positive and open relationship with your host family and make the most of living in the UK when not at school.
- Assisting you with things you may need, like school uniforms, sports equipment, pocket money, phone cards, mobile phones, UK mobile sim cards, etc.
- Helping you arrange your travel both in the UK (taxi, train or bus) and back home (flight bookings, transfers);

Being available for you anytime by:

- responding to you at any time of the day or night in an emergency;
- settling you into school and supporting you if you feel unhappy or homesick;
- visiting you at least every half-term and phoning you regularly to make sure you are happy and helping you with anything of concern;
- talking with your school if you have a concern over your academic progress or are worried about a pastoral matter;
- helping to care for you if you become sick; or if you get ill and need to go to hospital, or away from school;
- helping you if you receive sanctions from the school and need to find alternative accommodation for a while;

- assisting you through UK airport check-in procedures and meeting you when you arrive back in the airport at the start of each term, or, if you have problems with immigration or passports (for example, lost or stolen)
- organising visits to school or university Open Days to help you plan your future.
- attending an annual school parent meeting with you and providing written feedback to your parents;
- sourcing extra tuition if needed.
- supporting you in school functions such as productions, concerts or sports matches;
- helping you open a bank account, register with health providers or the police.
- providing you with pocket money if needed;
- storing luggage for you during the school holidays.

**The most important thing for you to do is to stay in regular contact with your Guardian and to contact them whenever you need help or support so that relatively small problems can be sorted out before they become big problems.**

## Amber Guardianships

Amber Guardianships and all the staff strive to achieve equal opportunities across its service scale. We believe that everyone should be treated equally and given the same opportunities.

We have zero tolerance for abusive behaviour and will support any member of the organisation who is a victim of such events.

Students under our care can expect:

- Honesty and accuracy in all information and publicity about our services;
- A warm friendly service from all our members of staff, including support and advice when required;
- To stay in clean and comfortable homestay accommodation,

We expect our students:

- to read through this Student Handbook to learn about our services and advice on studying in the UK,
- to abide by all school rules and homestay rules to ensure the school and homestay accommodation remain safe and happy places and all students gain the best possible experience from their stay,
- to inform us of any change of address or contact details,
- to follow Safety policies and to not use any computers inappropriately or to download inappropriate material,
- to respect other people's cultures, traditions, and beliefs and to avoid behaviour or language that may cause offence,

- to be polite and respectful when speaking to all students, staff members and visitors,
- Each student will have a folder and it will be reviewed regularly. If there are any changes in a student's personal/family situation, please let us know immediately.

## Designated Guardian

You will be assigned a dedicated Guardian 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 guardian will be available by phone, WeChat, WhatsApp and email in cases of emergency.

If requested by your parents, you will be visited by your designated Guardian. PLEASE REMEMBER to attend the meeting!

## Contact with Amber Guardianships

As your dedicated guardian, we always need to know your whereabouts. 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.

We 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 Amber Guardianships by social media (WeChat, WhatsApp), or telephone and email. If you would like to talk to a member of our staff in your native language, then this can often be arranged. Please notify us as soon as possible of any change to your contact details.

## Living in the UK

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.

Amber Guardianships will be the main point of contact for guardianship issues for you during school terms. We will:

- Amber 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 Amber by telephone, WeChat, WhatsApp and email. If you would like to talk to a member of Amber in your native language, then this can often be arranged.
- You must provide your current mobile number and email to Amber Guardianships, 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.

## 2.1 Before Departure

### 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.

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

- get it before you travel
- follow the rules
- Remember to bring your passport. Think about your passport expiry dates – you must 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 apply to come to the UK for longer than 6 months, you will need a biometric residence permit (BRP). Your visa decision letter will tell you if you need to collect a BRP card and will tell you where you can collect it from. You must collect it before your vignette sticker in your travel document expires or within 10 days of arriving in the UK. Your school should be able to help you with this.

### Registering with the Police

Some international students will need to register their stay with the police. You must do this in the first week of your arrival in the UK. The stamp in your passport will tell you if you need to register or not. If you are not sure, please ask the school.

**Please check Appendix 1 for the checklist before departure.**

## 2.2 Arrival in the UK

### 2.2.1 Arriving at the Airport

If Amber Guardianships 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. Please be certain to keep your mobile switched on so that we can contact you.

DO NOT leave the airport alone, until you have met the driver. If you have trouble finding them, please call our office or emergency number and we will help you.



### 2.2.2 Passport/Tickets

Soon after you have arrived in the UK, our Local Guardian will ask to check your passport validity, and will request to take a photocopy of your ticket. Please assist them with this, it is in order to help us to organise your transport for your return journey home.

Depending on the school policies it could be that the school takes your passport from you when you arrive and stores it safely for you in the school safe until a time when you need to use it. Please be as helpful as you can with this- it is for your benefit and it helps to ensure that your passport is not lost!

### 2.2.3 Bank Account

Opening an account in the UK can be difficult, but your school may be able to help. To open a bank 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.

### 2.2.4. Insurance

We strongly recommend that every student takes out comprehensive insurance which covers reimbursement of school fees as well as theft, damage and medical costs. Please ask us for our recommended partners who specialise in student travel insurance.

## 2.3 Settling in

Your first few weeks in the UK will be unsettled, you will be learning to live a very different life in your new school, coping with many cultural differences such as the different type of food, sorting out your timetable at school and most importantly, making new friends, and trying to use English all of the time!

It is not unusual to feel unhappy and maybe homesick when you first start at your school and do not know anyone. Relax and take some time, you should feel better after a few days.

Remember you are not alone with this feeling, and you can discuss any problems with your Local Guardian.

If the situation gets worse and you have physical symptoms such as frequent crying, difficulty sleeping and changes in appetite, to nausea, dizziness and headaches, or mental symptoms include depression, anxiety and lack of concentration, speak to your housemaster or Local Guardian.

If you need some advice or support, you can always contact us.

### 2.3.1 British 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](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)

### 2.3.2 Religion

There are many places of worship in the UK. For more information about places of worship speak to the school housemaster. Your school might expect you to attend religious services on a daily or weekly basis or might organise for you to attend other places of worship in the locality if you wish to. If you want to be able to attend religious services or events whilst staying with your host family, inform Amber Guardianships in advance and we can try to organise that for you. Your host family might attend religious services, but you will not have to accompany them if you do not wish to

### 2.3.3. 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 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>

### 2.3.4 Manners and Customs

British people say “please”, “thank you” and “sorry” very frequently so make sure you do the same. People queue in the UK – if you are waiting for something (e.g. to pay in a shop, to buy a ticket, to use the toilet in a public place or to get on a bus) and there are other people waiting, you will need to join the queue and wait for your turn.

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.

### 2.3.5 Abusive Behaviour

We do not accept any abusive behaviour by staff, students 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).

## Links to useful websites

[www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com) (Official Tourist Office site with information about the UK Advice for international students)

Information for students coming to study in Britain

[www.UKcisa.org.UK](http://www.UKcisa.org.UK)

[www.UKstudentlife.com](http://www.UKstudentlife.com)

News in the UK and around the world

[www.bbc.co.UK/news](http://www.bbc.co.UK/news)

## 2.4 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. Please ensure you gain permission from your parents first.

## 2.5 Laws in the UK

### *Alcohol*

It is forbidden to all persons under the age of 18 years to consume alcohol.

### *Drugs*

Amber Guardianships 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.

### *Smoking*

Amber Guardianships 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.

Smoking is forbidden in schools and in most public places, such as stations, bars etc.

SMOKING IS ALSO ILLEGAL ON ALL FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND IS FORBIDDEN IN ALL SCHOOLS REGARDLESS OF YOUR AGE.

### *Sexual activity*

UK law does not permit sexual intercourse in which one or both partners is under the age of 16. Most schools' rules go further than this and state that any sexual activity between students, of any age, will be treated as a serious offence. Whilst young people are in the care of Amber Guardianships the same principles apply regardless of the young person's age.

It is an offence for a person to intentionally touch another person sexually without reasonable belief that they consented. Touching covers all physical contact, whether with a part of the body or anything else, or through clothing.

### *Tattooing and body piercings*

Amber Guardianships 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.

### *Shoplifting*

People who are caught stealing from shops will probably have to go to court and may have to pay a fine.

### *Weapons*

It is illegal to carry any weapon for defence, including gas and sprays.

### *Mobile phone*

Please ensure the use of mobile phones follows school rules. Some UK schools have decided that pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school.

### *Hair dye*

DON'T come to school with an extreme haircut or brightly dyed hair. Examples of extreme hairstyles include lines or patterns shaved into the haircut, Mohican, no-guards, dip-dyed hair, contrasting hair colours etc.

### *Cycling*

You cannot ride a bike on a pavement/footpath. You can only ride a bike on designated bicycle paths or on the road.

Your bicycle must have proper lights. A helmet is strongly recommended.

*Driving*-In the UK you must be 17 years of age in order to apply for a provisional driving licence. We must have written permission from your parents via your agent if you wish to learn how to drive whilst you are studying in

the UK. Some of you may not be allowed to learn to drive in the UK due to the nature of the contract that you have signed with your agent.

## 2.6 Warning Letters

If your behaviour causes disruption either at school or in a host family, School/Amber Guardianships will issue a warning letter to your parents.

## 2.7 Suspension/Expulsion

Breaking any UK laws or school rules could result in suspension or expulsion. If you are expelled from school, you will lose your visa and must return home immediately.

## 2.8 What to Do When Arrested

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.

- 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.
- The police must explain your rights, including free legal advice, telling someone where you are, giving medical attention if required, a written notice of your rights (e.g. food and toilet breaks) in your language or providing you with an interpreter.
- If the police ask you questions, you can choose to answer or not. However, please note that you may harm (damage) your defence if you do not answer their questions.
- 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.
- The police do need your permission to take a blood or urine sample from you (unless you are suspected of drink or drug driving).

If you are under 18, the police must try to contact your parent or guardian and find an adult to help you.

## 2.9 Legal Advice

For free legal advice you can go to a Citizens' Advice Bureau - [www.citizensadvice.org.UK](http://www.citizensadvice.org.UK)

## Living with a Host family

Amber has 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 Amber Guardianships to ensure high standards are maintained. Amber also undertakes 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 Amber Guardianships 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.

Students are expected to respect their host family's way of life in return for being accepted as a family member. Hosts are encouraged to include students in family life and to arrange activities and excursions.

### 3.1 Student Code of Conduct at Host Family

#### 3.1.1 Statement

This Student Behaviour Code of Conduct outlines the positive behaviour it expects from students. It also provides information about specific laws in the UK. The aim is to provide guidance in key areas of Amber Guardianships expectations. The guidance is written for the benefit of students, parents /agents, staff and homestays.

#### 3.1.2 Code of Conduct

Amber Guardianships expects our students to be polite and courteous when staying with a homestay. In the UK, it is expected that you say "please" and "thank you" when asking for and receiving items. Your homestay is not a hotel, and we expect 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.

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

#### 3.1.3 Responsibility and Duties of Host

Amber Guardianships appoints fully inspected host families who will exercise the same levels of care as a responsible parent for you when you are unable to board at school but remain in the UK, at Exeats (occasional weekends when the school closes), half-term holidays or on other occasional days.

Amber Guardianships understands how important it is for you to feel safe, comfortable and 'at home' whilst staying with your host family and that is why we always try to ensure you stay with the same host family each time. This means you can start to develop a positive and open relationship with your host that you can make the most of living in the UK when not at school.

The host family's responsibilities are to protect, care for and provide food and lodging for you on a day-to-day basis and to exercise the same levels of care as a responsible parent. Our host family is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of our students. We expect our host families to provide a safe and welcoming environment for you, support and make you feel like part of the family. They will:

- Understanding your needs when staying with the host in the UK.
- Have a genuine interest in your progress and welfare.
- Take day to day responsibility for you while you are residing with the host family.
- Care for you as would a responsible and caring parent.
- Respect your opinions, rights, religion, culture and privacy, and be sensitive to your needs.
- Provide the proper accommodation for you including your own comfortable, clean, separate and private room.
- To provide meals and accommodate any dietary needs.
- To help with travel and transport.
- To allow access to all communal areas of the home.
- To treat you as a member of the family rather than a paying guest.
- To encourage you to speak English as much as possible in the home. They will speak clearly, slowly and be patient, giving you plenty of opportunities for conversation.
- So far as practical and possible, assimilate you into the host family.
- Provides pastoral care and deals with minor problems or difficulties if they occur.

Ideally, you should be treated as one of the family and will therefore need to know the 'house rules'. For instance, you might expect to help clear up after a meal or put your dirty clothes in the laundry basket. As a minimum you are expected to make your own bed and keep their room tidy, just like you would at school.

Amber Guardianships suggests our host family discuss their expectations with you at the start of your stay. For example, the house rules, routines, the mealtimes, asking what your extra needs are etc. As your host family gets to know you more, they will be better at appreciating the sort of things you might like to do during your stay with you.

Amber Guardianships encourages you to communicate openly with your host, be sociable, respect their house and enjoy the time you spend with them.

However, if you find things are really not working out, then contact your Guardian and she will support you to find a solution.

### 3.1.4 Services provided

#### *Meals*

For breakfast you should get toast and cereal, and perhaps a cooked breakfast on occasion. If you are late getting out of bed, you may miss breakfast!

Lunch is normally light, perhaps soup, jacket potato, salad, sandwiches, cheese on toast and fruit or yoghurt. Most host families take their main meal in the evening, and dinner should include fish, chicken or red meat, with vegetables and a dessert. The evening meal is often between 18:00 and 20:00, but please check the times of meals with your host.

Do be prepared to taste and try something different in the UK. However, it is very important to discuss any allergies or dislikes with your host family.

Please do not take any food from the host's kitchen without asking your host family first as it is considered to be impolite.

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

Your host family may be very interested in your own country's food – offer to cook!

#### *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!

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.

#### *Your Room*

Your right to privacy is very important to us. Whilst staying with your host family you will have your own bedroom, unless you have specifically asked to share a room, and a bathroom with a lock. Your host family will respect your right to privacy in both places but will also encourage you to join in with the family at certain other times. You'll also use your host family's kitchen and living areas (dining room, sitting room) but you are not expected to go into their bedrooms, en-suite bathrooms or office rooms.

#### *Bathroom*

You will probably need to share the bathroom with your host family, and they will tell you about the most convenient time for you to use the bathroom and shower in the mornings and evenings.

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.

Make sure the shower curtain is on the inside of the shower cubicle to avoid flooding the bathroom.

#### *Laundry*

Hosts are happy to help you with any washing you may have, especially during a longer break like half term. Ask your host if they would mind doing the washing for you (or offer to do it yourself) and where to put your dirty clothes. They will usually wash them and return them to you.

### **3.1.5 Personal Hygiene**

Students should maintain a healthy lifestyle and a high standard of hygiene in order to prevent the spread of infection.

- hands must be washed before and after meals.
- hands must be washed after using the toilet.
- sanitary products should be disposed of the bins provided.



- hand sanitation should be frequently used.
- shield the mouth when coughing or sneezing or use a tissue.

Remember to shower regularly (every one or two days), brush your teeth twice per day, and wash your clothes regularly.

### 3.1.6 Internet Access and Host Computers

When using your tablet or laptop remember to follow our E- Safety Policy which is given to you before the induction, and to follow any school guidelines too. Your guardian will go through this policy with you during your induction period. When staying with your host family, follow any house rules that they might have, such as only using your devices in the communal rooms, not using them at mealtimes and only using them for a limited amount of time.

Most families have a wireless broadband connection, and many are happy for you to use this for reasonable access to the Internet from a laptop computer (such as social networking). Please do not use the family's Internet connection to download or stream songs, TV shows, games or movies.

You should NOT expect to use the host family's own computer.

Unrestricted Access - There is increasing concern about the dangers to young people of free and unrestricted access to the Internet without appropriate controls. Amber Guardianships has guidelines for host families to limit access in the best interests of the student. For example, wireless Internet will sometimes be switched off overnight.

### 3.1.7 Telephone

Your hosts' telephone is for you to receive calls from family and close friends only. To preserve your host's privacy, please do not give your host family's telephone number to casual acquaintances.

If you need to make and receive many social calls, you are advised to consider purchasing a pay as you go mobile phone once you have arrived.

In order not to inconvenience your host, you are advised to limit the number of calls you receive and restrict them to a reasonable length.

### 3.1.8 Curfews

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 Amber emergency phone number with you and that the family has your mobile number. Your phone should have enough battery and be always switched on. If you are delayed, you must phone the host family to let them know.

- 15 and under Must be accompanied by an adult (21 years+) member of host family
- 16 & 17 10pm at the latest
- 18 and over 11pm at the latest

Bedtimes are at the discretion of the host. Please remember family members **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 Amber has already received specific permission, in writing, from your parents (see 3.4 Alternative Accommodation Arrangements).

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

### **3.1.9 Alternative accommodation Arrangements**

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

#### *Students Aged 18 and over*

Parent Permission in writing in advance is required, during office hours.

#### *Students Aged 16 & 17*

Parent 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.

#### *Students Aged 15 and under*

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

Your host family will almost certainly offer to take you out on trips, please offer to pay your own share of the expenses, meal etc.

### **3.1.10 Changes and Cancellation to Bookings**

Should you wish to change your accommodation or transfer booking, an additional administration fee may be charged. Any fees incurred due to the change will be chargeable.

In the event that a parent needs to cancel or alter previously booked homestay accommodation, 4 weeks' notice is required in writing. Failure to comply with this will render the parents liable to pay cancellation fees. Cancellation of a host family more than 7 days and up to 4 weeks incurs a 50% charge and less than 7 days incurs a 100% charge.

Bank transaction charges will be deducted from the refund amount if the transfer is made to an overseas account.

Please note that if a host family or transfer is booked and then subsequently changed or cancelled, the fees will be charged to your student deposit account.

# School Life

## 4.1 School Rules

Each school has their own rules. In general, they include the following:

- English speaking 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.
- Your school will have a policy regarding internet use – it is important that you follow it.

These vary depending upon which school you attend but will all encourage you to show care, consideration, mutual respect and tolerance. These values are similarly upheld by Amber Guardianships and we encourage all our young people to support them.

## 4.2 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.

## 4.3 Facilities

Many if not all schools offer a huge variety of ‘extra-curricular’ opportunities to take part in out of school including clubs, choirs, languages etc. and particularly smart sports facilities which can not only be enjoyed but also provide you with an opportunity to integrate and socialise with more English-speaking students.

Some of these clubs are held after school. If you do decide to take part in a club, please tell your host family, and ensure that you can get home if you miss your transport.

## 4.4 Dress code

Uniforms are worn in all English schools. All students at Year 11 and under will be expected to wear full school uniform. Students in Year 12 and 13 are not always required to wear uniform, but there is a certain standard of dress code that you are expected to follow.

Hairstyles such as dreadlocks and brightly coloured hair dye are not acceptable at any English school.

Generally, for girls the only jewellery that is deemed as acceptable during the school day, is that of a pair of single earring studs. Other visible body piercings are generally not accepted!

## 4.5 Integration

It is a possibility that there are more students from your home country attending your schools. Please try and socialise with as many other students as possible from your very first term in the school. If you are with a student of your own nationality whilst you are with English speaking students, please ensure that you try to speak as much English as possible or it might be considered rude. Do not take comments personally or what you may interpret as strange looks, they are probably curious and would like to make friends with you so please do try to talk to them.

## 4.6 Social Activities

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 helps you to adapt to your new way of life. You might meet new people too, and this will help you feel more welcome. It is also a good idea to join any excursions or entertainment the school or host family organise.

Visitors & friends – Your school will have guidelines about having visitors and friends coming to visit you so make sure you know what those are. When staying with your host family, ask them if it is okay for a friend to visit. Normally you would spend time with your friend in the communal areas of the house rather than in your bedroom.

**Everyone wants to see you do well and enjoy your new life. Amber Guardianships is here for each student in our care to help them overcome any difficulties and to help them ease and settle into their new lives.**

## 4.7 Parental Authority

Schools frequently need a parent or guardian to sign for parental permission for you to participate in school activities and excursions. 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 Amber Guardianships Application Form.

## 4.8 Exam Fees

If you sit exams whilst you are studying in the UK, you will be responsible for paying the exam fees. In the case of private boarding school students, these will be added to your school account for payment by your parents.

# Safety

## Safety and Security Advice

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

## 5.1 Fire safety

Students are urged to be aware of the dangers of fire and take precautions and extra care when using electrical appliances. Remember the rules for using electricity the right way.

If you want to bring your own electrical equipment with you, please bear in mind that everywhere in the UK is 240 volts. However, overseas phone chargers and laptop power devices pose a significant fire risk so if possible, purchase UK versions.

- To save energy and for safety, remember to turn off lights, chargers etc. when you are not using them.
- Do not plug a bunch of stuff into one outlet or extension.
- Do ask an adult for help if you need to use something that uses electricity.
- Do keep electrical stuff like a mobile phone away from water.
- Do take some time to agree on a fire escape plan to make sure you are clear what to do in the event of an emergency. This means knowing where the fire exits are and making sure furniture or stored items do not block them.
- Turn off all electrical appliances not designed to be left on.
- Make sure all electrical appliances not designed to be left on are disconnected.
- Close all internal doors. Make sure all fire exits are kept clear.
- 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, Kitchen Foil in the microwave.
- 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”:
- Pull the pin. Hold the fire extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you and remove the pin to unlock it.
- Aim low. Point the nozzle at the base of the fire.
- Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly.
- Sweep the nozzle from side to side.

## 5.2 Personal Safety

- Keep your personal belongings safe
- Students have responsibility for their own possessions, such as mobile phones and laptops.
- Students are advised to insure your valuable possession. Before you leave to come to the UK you need to insure all your possessions against theft, loss or damage. We would recommend you make arrangements for extra insurance.
- Be extra careful with money, cash and online.
- Mark your belongings, and it could make the process easier to get back.
- Dial \*#06# for your unique mobile registration (MEI) number, this is the first thing police will check for when recovering stolen property. Register your mobile’s IMEI and the serial numbers of your electric equipment on [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com). This is a free UK property register, supported by police forces.
- Keep personal details safe.
- You do not have to carry your passport or BRP card with you in the UK. Keep a safe record of information such as passport details and bank cards. Be suspicious of calls or messages that ask for any personal information.

### 5.3 Withdraw cash from ATM Cashpoints

When withdrawing cash at ATM 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.

Remember to collect both your cash and the bank card before you turn away from the machine. Pickpockets can be in popular tourist areas and crowded places. Be vigilant.

Make sure your bag is always closed and never carry your wallet or purse in a bag on your back.

Keep a copy of your bank card numbers at home. Let the bank know immediately if the card has been lost or stolen. Please remember to keep an eye out for unusual transactions on your statement and report to the bank immediately.

### 5.4 E-Safety – stay SMART

- While the internet is a wonderful learning tool for students, it can pose great risks if not used safely.
- Do not give/post your personal details to anyone online (like your address, email address or mobile number, full name and contact details).
- Do not meet with people who you have met online as it can be dangerous.
- Do not accept messages, emails or open files from people you do not know or trust as some can contain viruses or nasty messages.
- Some information may not be true. Always check information with other websites, ask advice from a member of staff.
- Think carefully before posting pictures or videos of yourself.
- Never give out your passwords.
- Don't befriend people you don't know.
- Don't meet up with people you've met online.
- Remember that not everyone online is who they say they are.
- Think carefully about what you say before you post something online.

If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried: leave the website, turn off your computer if you want to and tell a trusted adult (your parents, host family or staff member) immediately.



## 5.5 Road Safety and Street Awareness

Only cross at crossings and look both ways. Look for all vehicles, including bicycles.

Wait for the traffic to stop – you can press the button on the traffic lights and wait for the green man.

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.

A useful site for student safety in the UK  
[www.educationUK.org/global/articles/safety](http://www.educationUK.org/global/articles/safety)

Always follow the law when travelling in the UK. Wear seat belts in cars, taxis and coaches or wherever they are fitted.

Use of Public transport – If you want to travel somewhere at a weekend or attend an Open Day at another school or university then contact Amber Guardianships and we can either organise a Guardians driver for you or, if you are aged 16 or over, book public transport tickets or a taxi for you. We'll also organise transport for you to travel to and from a UK airport at the start and end of terms and to get to and from your host family.

## 5.6 Medical

At school-Most private schools have their own doctors and nurses, if you feel unwell whilst in boarding you must tell your houseparent who can then organise a doctor's appointment for you if required.

If you bring some medicine from your home country, you must tell your school as soon as you arrive. It may need to be sent to the school medical centre for safekeeping.

At the host family-the host will look after you if you are unwell or have an accident. The host will usually contact your guardian, then contact their GP (doctor) and book an appointment for you (your school doctor will have already registered you with the NHS). The guardian will notify your parents to update your situation. If the illness is more serious and your doctor refers you to the hospital, the host family will contact Amber Guardianships and we will inform your parents.

Dental treatment is generally not free in the UK, if you think that you may need dental treatment ask your host family/houseparent to help you to make an appointment and discuss the cost with the dentist before you agree to the treatment. However, if you have medical insurance this cost may be covered.

Optical treatment- same as for dentistry.

## Safeguarding policy: A Summary

Amber Guardianships has a legal duty of care and safeguarding towards young people who use our services. We have a Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedure in place to help protect our students from harm and for reference in case something goes wrong. Missing Student, E-Safety, Prevent and Whistleblowing Policies

are also available and can be provided to you by us in hard copy. It is important that these policies are read carefully and in conjunction with this Safeguarding Policy.

All staff members are responsible for students' safeguarding. If you would like to speak to someone or report a safeguarding issue, please contact:

**24 hours/7 days emergency phone number for Amber Guardianships: +44 79 3968 2757, +44 75 3476 9764**

**AG Office number: +44 20 7734 0274 (Monday to Friday 9:30-18:30)**

Useful telephone numbers and websites: NSPCC: 0808 800 5000 - [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Child-line: 0800 1111 - [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

**The Amber Guardianships Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is given before the student's arrival and our guardian will go through it with the student during the induction before arriving at the UK.**

## 6.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children has a role to play in safeguarding children. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, Amber Guardianships requires all staff and host family members to make sure their approach is always a child-centred one. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Every student should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment.

Amber Guardianships will:

- Ensure Safeguarding Student Handbook and Child Protection Policy are given before arrival.
- Treat all students with care and respect according to their needs and without discrimination of any kind.
- Be alert to signs of abuse within Amber Guardianships, the host family environment or within the school or college attended by the student.
- Deal in a timely and appropriate manner with every suspicion or complaint of abuse.
- Parents must send a consent / registration form where rules and contact details are provided.
- Under 16s are kept separate from older students in different homestay accommodation.
- Use a transfer provider who only uses licensed and DBS-checked drivers.
- Make regular contact with students.
- Only places under 18 students with families where the main host passes the Amber host inspection check.

- Ensures that under 18s return by curfew times by educating the students, parents and host families. (If a student does not return home by the specified time, the host must call the student and if necessary, inform Amber Guardianships via the emergency number).
- Work closely with all agencies and bodies concerned with the protection and welfare of children and any school or college attended by the student to ensure that all allegations of abuse are dealt with justly and promptly;
- Ensure that, so far as possible, actions taken to protect a student, do not in themselves cause the student unnecessary distress. Such actions may include consultation with the police, which may result in criminal proceedings.

## 6.2 PREVENT Policy

Amber Guardianships aims to ensure that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity. Everyone plays an important part in it. All students are expected to look after each other and raise concerns with our prevent lead if necessary.

Amber Prevent Lead is Louisa Cheung

Office number: +44 2077340274

Mobile: +44 7534769764

Anti-Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321

Reporting terrorist material online at [https://eforms.homeoffice.gov.uk/outreach/terrorism\\_reporting.ofml](https://eforms.homeoffice.gov.uk/outreach/terrorism_reporting.ofml)

### How does Amber Guardianships PREVENT?

- Raising awareness and educating.
- Promoting equal opportunity and tackling discrimination to learn to understand others, to value diversity and promote shared values.
- Promoting a safe and supportive international environment via clear expectations of accepted behaviours and those, including radicalisation and extremism, that will not be tolerated.
- Promoting British values, culture and traditions, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and respectful tolerance of different faiths or beliefs.
- Providing information and School Rules upon arrival.
- Recognising the signs: - students talking about exposure to extremist materials or views outside school - changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming isolated - fall in standard of work, poor attendance, disengagement.

## Procedure

### The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If radicalisation behaviour is suspected or witnessed it must be reported to the school. Parents will be kept informed, where necessary.
- In the occurrence of any radicalisation behaviour, the following disciplinary steps will be taken:
  1. The giving of an official verbal and written warning, in the hope to cease offending.
  2. In the event of a second occurrence (even if the victim or offence differs from the first), permanent exclusion from the services. No refund or alternative arrangements will be made. If the abuser is a staff member, the action to be taken will follow the 'disciplinary procedures' within the staff.

## 6.3 Bullying/Cyberbullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

Cyber bullying, online bullying is bullying that takes place online, such as sending threatening or abusive text messages, creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos, trolling, shaming etc.

Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phones.

If you experienced bullying or cyberbullying, remember it is not your fault. Try to relax such as listening to music or playing sports).

You should speak to a trusted adult, such as your teacher, your Local Guardian or Amber Emergency helpline.

Amber Guardianships might contact Childline to gain professional support.

## 6.4 Anti-radicalisation

It is part of the Amber Guardianship's duties to protect children from the risk of radicalisation. Students should be:

- aware of images speeches or videos that promote terrorism or encourage violence.
- aware of content encouraging people to commit acts of terrorism.
- aware of increased online radicalisation, includes articles websites made by terrorist or extreme organisations, or videos of terrorist attacks.

The general risks of radicalisation affecting children and young people may vary from area to area, and according to their age. Local Guardians are in an important position to identify risks within a given local context. If you are concerned, please speak to your school or local guardian.

Amber Guardianships understand these risks so that we can respond in an appropriate and proportionate way. To prevent priority areas, the local authority will have a Prevent lead who can also provide support. Amber may also contact the local police force. This is to gain professional advice if needed.

### **Recognising risks and vulnerabilities of radicalisation**

Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) guidance states that children and young people can be drawn into violence or exposed to messages of extremist groups by many means, including family or friends' influences, direct contact with extremist groups of organisations, and through the internet.

The risk of radicalisation may be combined with other vulnerabilities including:

**Identity Crisis** – Distance from cultural/religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them;

**Personal Crisis** – Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;

**Personal Circumstances** – Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;

**Unmet Aspirations** – Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;

**Criminality** – Experiences of imprisonment; poor resettlement / reintegration; previous involvement with criminal groups.

### **Potential risk indicators include:**

- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession of violent extremist literature or accessing extremist websites
- Behavioural changes
- The expression of extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means
- Association with known extremists
- Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders
- Using extremist views to explain personal disadvantage
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

Some children may be at risk due to living with or being in direct contact with known extremists.

Please contact the school or call our emergency helpline if you have any concerns. As radicalisation and extremism are forms of child abuse, Amber Guardianships is aware of the duty to report cases or concerns in line with the company's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## 6.5 Staff will do and not do

What our staff must do

DOs:

- Actions:

Behave appropriately (actions, dress code, language), work in an open environment, be alert for signs of abuse, maintain a safe, professional distance in all relationships with students, treat young and vulnerable people with dignity and fairly, actively prevent learners from accessing any form of inappropriate material, educate students

- Accommodation: inform students in advance if you wish to clean or inspect their bedrooms. If sharing the same accommodation with under 18s, prepare a bathroom rota in order to ensure they have privacy.

DON'Ts:

- Actions:

Don't leave young person alone if they are under your supervision, socialise with young or vulnerable learners on occasions when it does not constitute part of your normal duties (on or offline), use any visual, audio-visual or written material that exposes young people to harm (be it physical, emotional or sexual), give young or vulnerable people prescription drugs or medication (without their parent's consent), drink alcohol, smoke or use drugs when working with under 18s (nor make jokes with reference to them).

## Complaints

Many complaints can be resolved quickly and informally. You can speak to any member of our staff about your complaint, no matter how small.

## Being asked to Leave the Guardianship Programme

If you do not follow Amber 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 / Antisocial 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:

- Give you an official verbal and written warning and notify your parents. This aims to stop you from repeating any offence.
- 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.

**Lastly, welcome to the United Kingdom. We, Amber Guardianships hope that you have a fantastic time both at your new school and whilst staying with your host family. We hope that you make a lot of friends during your stay in the UK and that these friendships last a lifetime!**





## Appendix I Student Checklist

### ***Pre-Departure***

- Make sure that you have applied for and received your visa
- Gather official documents that you may need, such as school records and medical certificates.
- Take out travel/health/personal insurance

### ***Hand Luggage***

1. Please bring all original copies as well as scanned copies of passports etc. in the case of an emergency (HKID for Hong Kong).
2. Make sure that you bring with you your passport, visa and flight tickets as you will need all of these in order to check in/bag drop.
3. CAS and letter of acceptance from your new school.
4. Evidence of you/your parents' ability to pay your school fees.
5. Previous qualification certificates if requested by the school.
6. Insurance Documents.
7. Address and contact details of the school that you will be attending, plus information about the person that will meet you in the UK when you arrive and the date and time of your arrival.
8. Money- a small amount of money either in the form of sterling, travellers cheques or a credit card (please try to keep this in either a money belt or an extremely secure inside pocket of your bag)- make sure if you are using travellers cheques that you note down the numbers of the cheques.
9. A list of any important items that are in your baggage, just in case anything gets lost and you have to make an insurance claim.
10. Any medical documentation including any medical certificates/vaccination certificates and any doctors' letters if required.
11. Please remember that most airports have restrictions on sharp and flammable objects. Many also require liquids to be in containers of 100ml or smaller, packed in a clear plastic bag. Check with your airline before travelling.
12. Make sure that you check what the weight and size restriction for hand luggage is with your airline.

### ***In 'Hold luggage'***

1. All weather clothing and shoes- remember an umbrella and shoes that are comfortable for long distance walks.
2. Casual clothes for after school and weekends.

3. Plug adapter for any electrical items that you are bringing with you
4. Posters, family photos, souvenirs- anything to make your new room feel more like home!
5. Any previous school books/work that may help you when studying at your new school
6. Make sure that you select a backpack/suitcase that you can carry. Do not over pack your suitcase- there will be many opportunities to buy anything extra that you may need when you are in the UK
7. Your new school will advise you as to the school policy for bringing your own computer, phone, music system etc. If you do decide to bring any of this equipment with you then you should also bring the receipt with you showing when and where you bought the item. The receipt will help to prove to UK Customs Officials that you are going to be using these items yourself and that you do not intend to sell them onto others. This way your items will be exempt from customs duty.
8. Please remember when you are packing that there are certain items that you are not allowed to bring into the UK. For example, there are strict rules for importing certain foods from overseas. Please see the links below for further information or ask the British Mission/Embassy/High Commission/ Consulate General in your own country:
  - [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/531649/Bringing\\_food\\_into\\_the\\_UK\\_leaflet.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/531649/Bringing_food_into_the_UK_leaflet.pdf)
  - <https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods/arrivals-from-outside-the-eu>
  - <https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods/banned-and-restricted-goods>
  - <https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods/declaring-goods>

### ***Excess Baggage***

Many students acquire extra school equipment and of course clothes, thus they can incur extra baggage charges on their return journey home. Please ensure that you have saved some money throughout the year to pay for this as Amber Guardianships cannot pay it.

Your Guardianship coordinator will help you to assess how much extra your baggage will cost, but this will only be an estimate, as some airlines are more flexible than others. It might be a good idea at this point to consider sending home large parcels via the post office before departing (especially at the end of the school year) as this is often less expensive than the cost of excess baggage.