



## Stamford American INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

### **SAIS Guardianship FAQs**

This FAQ guide is designed to help SAIS families understand what Guardianship means at Stamford American International School and to choose a Guardian who can provide holistically supportive, reliable care for their child. A suitable Guardian not only ensures the child's safety and wellbeing but also encourages academic progress, nurtures personal growth, and offers consistent and safe care.

This guide also outlines the requirements of SAIS's Guardianship Policy, helping families feel confident that their chosen Guardian meets our school's expected standards of care.

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#### **1. What does 'Guardianship' mean?**

**Guardianship** means that a student lives with someone other than their parents or legal carers for most of the school term (at least 90% of the time, including weekends). In these situations, a Guardian takes on the everyday responsibility of caring for the student, making sure they are safe, supported, and well looked after. A Guardian should also take a genuine, personal interest in the student's wellbeing and progress, both in and out of school.

Terms used to describe living away from parents fall under the umbrella term 'guardianship' but can mean several different residential life opportunities. These are explained below:

- **Living with extended family** - A student living with their maternal or paternal grandparents, aunts or uncles (including those by marriage), or other blood-related family, such as siblings over the age of 21 who have an existing relationship with the child and who possess the skills and capacity to fulfil guardianship responsibilities.
  - *\*\* There may be exceptional circumstances where a student under 12 may be living with an extended family member. For New families, please contact our Admissions department. For existing families, please contact the Guardianship Team.*
- **Boarding** - Students above the age of 12 may choose to stay in our preferred boarding partner Oldham Hall.

- **Homestay** - A student who lives with an adult (who may be a paid homestay guardian or a paid employee of the parents who has the legal right to act as a guardian) while attending school and whose parents live permanently out of the country in which the student attends school.
  - For homestay to be suitable for the student, the school must be satisfied that the placement is in the best interests of the student and the school can adequately support the student academically, socially, and emotionally.

*\*\* There may be exceptional circumstances where your family situation does not fit into these categories clearly. Please contact our Guardianship Team to discuss further.*

## 2. How do I know if a Guardian is suitable for my child?

### SAIS Guardianship Criteria:

- Be **over 25** years of age
  - 21 years of age if an extended family member.
- Be a **Singapore Citizen/Permanent Resident**.
  - For extended family members, Employment Pass and Long Term Visit Pass holders will be considered.
- Resides at the **same address** (legal domicile) as the student (*except for Oldham Halls residents*).
- Be able to communicate effectively in English, both spoken and written.
  - For extended family members, a communicator should be identified if the Guardian is unable to communicate with school staff in English.
- Adhere to a **limit of 6** live-in students (total, from any school), with an additional cap of 6 boarding students in Oldham Hall.
- Must be willing to **work in partnership** with Stamford American and comply with the school's expectations.
- Should have **no criminal** record related to violence, or offenses against children and vulnerable adults.

The parent is encouraged to verify the suitability of a Guardian through their own due diligence, including background checks. Such actions are the sole responsibility of the parent.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities of the Extended Family Guardian.

It is important that all stakeholders are clear on the expectations of the Extended Family Guardian and that the chosen extended family member/s have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

- Must have a Singaporean phone number, current email address and be contactable and responsive.
  - If the extended family guardian cannot communicate in English, a communicator must be arranged by the family.
- Has an existing and positive relationship with the child
- Is invested in the child's safety and wellbeing, and encourages academic progress, nurtures personal growth, and offers consistent and safe care.
- In the event that Stamford American staff requires the student be collected from school, the guardian must be available to do so within a reasonable timeframe.
- The guardian should support the student to maintain their attendance and academic requirements, and to participate fully in school life, for example field studies and school activities.

It is important that the school be informed of who will be the main point of contact in case of academic or behavioral concerns.

#### **4. What Safeguarding issues should I consider?**

Parents may wish to consider the following:

- The appropriateness of mixed or single gender properties, including instances where the Guardian is of a different gender than the student.
- The Guardian must be permanently residing at the same address as the student (unless the student resides at Oldham Hall). The Guardian's address must reflect the address that the school has registered for the student, as stated in the student's visa. For students residing at Oldham Hall, Guardians must live locally and stay in regular contact with the student. They are expected to be supportive and available.
- The school and parents are to be informed at least three (3) working days in advance via email if the Guardian is traveling out of the country with a definite return date. For stability in care of the student, parents may wish that the absence is brief, for example, no more than seven (7) days during the school term dates. Full details of a responsible adult acting as a temporary Guardian during this absence should be shared with the school and the parent via the loco parentis form.
- No CCTV/surveillance equipment in student bedrooms and bathrooms.
- No other adults, that are unrelated to the Guardian and unknown to the child, should live in the same address.

#### **5. What should I look for when considering a Homestay?**

##### Student Wellbeing

- The Guardian demonstrates personal interest in the progress and welfare of the student
- The student can access medical, health, and well-being support when needed, with the Guardian's assistance
- Meals meeting the student's dietary needs are provided

- The Guardian must reside at the same address as the student
- Students have access to a laundry service
- Age-appropriate curfews and lights out times are established
- The living environment, including food, living arrangements, and daily routines, is suitable for the student's cultural or religious practices.

#### Accommodation

- The accommodation has suitable toilet and washing facilities that ensure privacy and are easily accessible.
- The accommodation is furnished for the age and needs of the student, with good lighting, ventilation, clean, temperature-controlled and well-maintained
- Adult accommodation is separate from students
- Bedding is clean, regularly laundered, and sufficiently warm or cool
- Student accommodation is protected from access by unauthorized persons
- Surveillance does not intrude on student privacy (e.g. CCTV cameras are **not** in student bedrooms, bathrooms or private areas)
- Roommates are of the same age, or no more than 2 years older or younger
- No other adults, unrelated to the Guardian and unknown to the child, should reside at the same address
- Sleeping accommodation has a lock on the inside of the door to allow privacy for the student (which is accessible by a responsible adult during an emergency)
- There is secure storage for student's personal items
- The accommodation meets good health and safety requirements. This includes, but is not limited to first aid kits, fire safety plans and furniture and fixtures (lightings, fans and Aircon etc) with risk assessments in place.

#### Support for Study

- Students have access to an appropriate study area
- There are quiet times allocated for study, with adult supervision and support.
- Guardian demonstrates interest in the academic progress of the student, and can adequately support the student academically
- Wi-Fi is available and the Guardian considers parental filters to support safe access and use
- Age appropriate device management protocols are implemented, (i.e. device curfew times, suitable lockers to keep devices to prevent use after lights out)

### **4. How do I know if my child is ready to live in a homestay?**

A positive homestay experience often depends on how ready your child is. Parents may wish to consider the following questions to help them decide:

- Has my student lived away from parents in the past? This can include living in previous boarding/homestay arrangements.
- Does my student have any additional needs or mental health needs, and may need extra support? This can include a history of suicidal ideation or self-harm, drug/alcohol misuse or other risk-taking behaviors

- Is my child able to follow daily routines, communicate their needs, cope with everyday challenges, and make safe, responsible choices while living away from home under the supervision of someone who is not their parent?
- What is my student's attendance like? All students must maintain at least a 90% attendance record.
- How is my student's academic performance? Students must meet minimum criteria to pass all classes.

If you are worried about one or more of these issues, you may consider consulting with the Stamford American Guardianship Team to discuss your child's suitability for Guardianship.

## **5. What is the essential information that the Guardian needs to know about the student?**

Here are some important needs to consider. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Food allergy
- Medicine allergy
- Medical condition - including physical or mental health
- Blood type
- Student medical insurance
- At least one local emergency contact, in addition to parents and the guardian- should either be uncontactable
- Areas for academic development, including any subjects that may require additional support.
- Any identity related needs, for example Religious or cultural needs

## **6. How do I notify the school about my child's Guardian?**

If the student does not reside with a parent, the family must notify the school:

- Step 1:
  - New student: contact Admission team at [admissions@sais.edu.sg](mailto:admissions@sais.edu.sg)
  - Existing student: contact the Guardianship team at [guardianship@sais.edu.sg](mailto:guardianship@sais.edu.sg)
- Step 2:
  - Parents must complete the school Guardianship Agreement Form to add the Guardian to the student's school records.
- Step 3:
  - The Guardianship Team may arrange a meeting with the Guardian. The Guardianship Team may additionally arrange a meeting with the parent, student, and Guardian when necessary.

**Any change in a student's guardian, address, or return to parental care must be reported to the Guardianship Team at [guardianship@sais.edu.sg](mailto:guardianship@sais.edu.sg)**

