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# Parent Handbook

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2024-2025

**HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION LTD**  
**13 Hanover Square, London, England, W1S 1HN**

## 1. Welcome and introduction

We are delighted to welcome you and your child to our guardianship program. At Highbridge Education, we pride ourselves on providing outstanding support and care to international students as they embark on their educational journey in a new country. Our dedicated team of professionals is committed to ensuring your child's well-being, academic success, and personal growth throughout their stay.

Our services include the appointment of a personal guardian who will act as your child's local point of contact, offering guidance and support in all aspects of their life here. Additionally, we carefully select homestays that provide a safe, nurturing environment, giving your child the comforts of a home away from home.

We look forward to working closely with you to ensure your child's experience with Highbridge Education is positive, enriching, and memorable.

## 2. Why Does Your Child Need a 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 child's 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.

The guardian's responsibilities include:

- acting on behalf of you as parents in situations where you are unable to do so due to distance or timing;
- looking after your child's welfare in the UK when the school is closed for holidays;
- providing a host family for your child to stay with during half term and exeat weekends when the school is closed;
- assisting your child with things they may need – school uniform, sports equipment, pocket money, phone cards, mobile phone, UK mobile sim card, etc.;
- helping your child arrange travel both in the UK (taxi, train or bus) and back home (flight bookings, transfers);
- helping your child if things go wrong:
  - If they have a problem at school

- if they get into trouble at school and are suspended/asked to leave for a short period of time
- if they have problems with immigration or passports (for example, lost or stolen)
- if they get ill and need to go to hospital, or away from school
- being available for your child anytime, particularly if they are worried about things like:
  - work
  - school
  - friends
  - their own family (it is not unusual for students to feel homesick when they first start school)
  - the host family they stay with (life in the UK may be very different to their own country and we can give your child ideas and guidance to help them settle in more quickly and easily).

Highbridge Education acts as your child's guardian and will take responsibility for decisions made. Highbridge Education have a strong background in education, and experience and knowledge of boarding schools and international students. Highbridge Education will be the main point of contact for guardianship issues for your child during school terms. If requested, your child's dedicated Guardianship Coordinator will visit your child at school. Highbridge Education will ensure all arrangements are carefully put in place, and that confirmation is sent to you, your child and your child's boarding house at school. You and your child may have regular contact with Highbridge Education by phone, WeChat, and email. The centralised administration means that all data and plans are kept centrally, and therefore any queries and problems can be quickly and efficiently resolved.

Please remember to provide us with your current mobile number and email address for us to be able to contact you as quickly as possible if need be.

The Guardianship services Details can be found on our contract, if you are unsure which which services are included, please contact us.

### **Safeguarding**

Highbridge Education is committed to safeguarding and child protection and puts the safety of your child as top priority. Highbridge Education has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL) who can be contacted with any concerns that you have. Their details are:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

John Lee, +44 (0) 7824906975, [manager@highuk.com](mailto:manager@highuk.com)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):

Michelle Lee, +44 (0)7917431865, [info@highuk.com](mailto:info@highuk.com)

Alternatively, you may wish to raise a concern directly with the school your child attends. All schools have their own Designated Safeguarding Lead. Please note that any concern that you or your child raise with us will be taken seriously and will be handled in line with our published procedures.

### Host Families

Our carefully selected and inspected host families look after students during half terms, Exeat and other school breaks. Your child will be welcomed and treated like a member of the family during their stay.

## 3. 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 us in the following ways:

General enquiries	
Telephone (Monday to Friday: 09:00-17:00)	+44 (0)7917431865
Email	<a href="mailto:info@highuk.com">info@highuk.com</a>
WeChat	Me79724
Emergencies 24/7	
Telephone	+44 (0)7917431865
Safeguarding concerns	
Designated Safeguarding Lead John Lee	+44 (0) 7824906975 <a href="mailto:manager@highuk.com">manager@highuk.com</a>
Deputy Designated Lead Michelle Lee	+44 (0)7917431865 <a href="mailto:info@highuk.com">info@highuk.com</a>

## 4. Host Families and Cancellation Charges

HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION 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 your child as closely as possible to the family in terms of their experience, interests, and location. We try where possible to place your child in the same host family for all their 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 HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION to ensure high standards are maintained. HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION 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 your child and are given guidelines and, where necessary, training from HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION on the best practice when hosting an international student. This includes advice on Health and Safety matters but if you have any concerns whilst your child is 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.

Please note, actual guardianship remains with HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION during your child's 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.

### **Homestay Facilities**

Our host families all live in well-maintained houses or flats, often with access to a garden. Students will be provided with their own comfortable bedroom (unless they have asked to share with a friend), storage facilities and a study area. Students will have access to the host's WiFi. Students usually share the bathroom with the host family but are occasionally provided with a private bathroom if staying in a superior homestay.

Students are welcome to join the family in the communal areas of the house. Students will be given 3 meals per day which are often eaten together with the family. Laundry facilities are available to students staying longer than 1 week.

### **House Rules**

Every host family has their own house rules which will be given to your child upon arrival. Your child will need to respect and follow them accordingly. In addition, students must also follow HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION's homestay rules which can be found in the Student Handbook and which will also be sent to your child before their stay.

### **Curfews**

Your child is given strict guidelines to follow if they go out while staying with their host family. They are told to inform the family of where they are going and when they will return. They are also told to always have the host family's and HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION's phone numbers with them at all times in case there is a problem or they are delayed in returning home.

15 and under Must be accompanied by an adult member of the host family

16 & 17 Must return by 10pm at the latest

18 and over Must return by 11pm at the latest

If your child would like to stay out all night (for example, at a friend's house), we must receive written permission from you in advance.

### **Transport Arrangements**

For transfers between the airport and school, or between the host family and school, HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION have a team of designated and reliable drivers available to meet students and take them to the arranged address in the UK.

If you have booked an airport transfer for your child, the driver will be waiting at arrivals holding a sign with your child's name.

Travel by rail and coach can be arranged for economical long-distance transfer. HIGHBRIDGE EDUCATION will check timetables, book tickets and arrange for an escort if required (children under 16 years of age are not allowed to travel unaccompanied).

### **Booking a Host Family and Transfer**

To book a host family, please provide us with all holiday arrangements and homestay requirements, as detailed as possible. We will then match your child with a suitable host family and send you a family profile for your approval. Once you have agreed, we will book the family according to the

term dates provided by the school. If you are not happy with the host family choice, you will be asked to clarify the requirements, and we will begin another search accordingly.

Homestay fees start at £90 per night and you will be notified of the exact fee when the homestay profile is sent to you. Please note that if a student leaves the homestay after 12pm on the last day, an additional night's fee will be charged.

If you would like us to arrange a taxi transfer for your child to the homestay/airport, please let us know when you confirm the host family.

Please note that we need as much time as possible to arrange homestay and transfers for students so please inform us of your child's holiday plans well in advance, at least 1 month before. This includes half terms, exeat weekends, Christmas and Easter, as well as travel plans when they arrive in the UK and leave at the end of the year.

### **Changes to Bookings**

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

If less than two weeks' notice is given for any changes to accommodation bookings, two weeks or the total stay of accommodation fees is chargeable (whichever is shorter).

If less than two days' notice is given for any changes to transfer bookings, the full transfer fee is chargeable.

### **Cancellations**

Should you wish to cancel your child's accommodation booking, two weeks' notice prior to arrival in writing is required for a refund to be considered. If a refund is to be made, any administration fees plus 10% of the accommodation fees will not be refunded.

Should you wish to cancel your child's transfer booking, two working days' notice in writing is required for a refund to be considered. If a refund is to be made, any administration fees plus 10% of the transfer fees will not be refunded. 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 child's emergency fund account.

### **Homestay Arrangements in an Emergency**

Highbridge Education will respond to any requests to provide emergency support and accommodation for students. For example, this could be due to a medical issue or suspension. Where possible the student will be placed with their usual homestay, but if this is not possible, they will be cared for by another homestay family.

If a parent cannot be contacted, Highbridge Education will arrange services for the student, e.g. accommodation or taxi transfers. In these cases, Highbridge Education will charge from the Emergency Fund Account. In the cases, the parent agrees to pay the fees for the additional services.

### **Missing Student Policy**

As your child's dedicated guardian, we need to always know their whereabouts. If they go missing from school or homestay accommodation and we cannot reach them, we will report them to the police as a missing person. Therefore, you must always inform us if there are any changes to your child's accommodation/travel plans.

Host families are expected to report unexplained student absences or other situations affecting student safety to Highbridge Education immediately. If a student is reported to us as missing, we will take all necessary actions to locate the student.

### **Liability**

Highbridge Education has a Student Behaviour Code of Conduct which students are expected to keep to at all times. The homestay provider and Highbridge Education cannot be liable for any conduct of the students.

More details about homestay accommodation and the services provided can be found in the Student Handbook.

## **5. Updates on student's welfare and academic progress**

### **Academic Mentoring**



Highbridge Education 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 our students know what they would like to do in the future, our education consultants will help them to prioritise the areas they want to focus on and monitor their progress. We will also give the students termly tutorials where they can discuss their strengths and areas to develop.

### **Tutoring**

We have a team of qualified and experienced tutors on hand to provide valuable one-to-one support to students upon request. Our tutors all have areas of expertise and can offer tutoring at all levels, from 11+ entrance exams to GCSE, A-level and degree students in a wide range of subjects. Sessions can be arranged face-to-face throughout the UK or online. We aim to keep all of our students motivated as they prepare for each exam. As well as past paper practice, they will have the opportunity to take control of their own learning in order to maximise their potential.

*The provision of academic and pastoral updates regarding your child's progress at school and welfare at school and with the host family will be arranged in line with the service you have booked. Details can be found on our contract.*

## **6. Life in the UK**

Living in the UK may be quite different to the life your child is used to. Every country has its own customs, and it may take them a while to get used to these. Please do not worry, this is most 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.

**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 people at the table to have their meals in front of them before you start to eat. Knives and forks are used to eat the vast majority of main courses, although some British families may use other cutlery to suit the cuisine. Knives and forks are placed together on the plate to indicate that the diner has finished. It is not considered polite to eat with your mouth open or speak whilst eating. Similar to 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.

## 7. What we expect from students whilst staying with a homestay

Highbridge Education expects all their students to be polite and courteous when staying with a homestay. A homestay is not a hotel, and the expectation is that your child will be included as part of the family. As such, they will be expected to engage with family members, joining them at mealtimes, and possibly helping with chores such as laying the table. Your child’s homestay will explain their own house rules to them when they arrive. Please do ask them if you have any questions.

## 8. Student handbook and Student Behaviour Code of Conduct

Highbridge Education has a student handbook and student behaviour code of conduct. These include lots of information that will prepare your child for life in the UK. We ask that you go through these with your child so that they are aware of our expectations.

## **9. Student Finances**

If you have set up an emergency fund account for your child. We will keep their funds safe and use it to pay for services such as accommodation and transfers during their stay. When the guardianship package ends, we will return any unused fund back to you.

Schools usually take care of pocket money for students. The housemaster will keep your student's pocket money safe and release funds to them when needed. Your child should not keep large amounts of cash in their room in case of theft.

We will help you set up a bank account and arrange credit cards for your child if required. Please contact us and we will be able to make the necessary arrangements.

## **10. Responsibilities during a pandemic**

Pandemics can cause major disruption to travel and schooling. It is important in such events that Highbridge Education takes advice from the government, the UK Health Security Agency, and the World Health Organisation.

In the event of a contagious pandemic, Highbridge Education will do everything possible to keep our students and host families safe and well. We will continuously monitor the situation and follow the advice of Public Health England (PHE) and AEGIS. We will work with schools to meet students' needs during a pandemic. This could be by helping to support students to learn remotely as directed by the school.

If necessary, we will help you with travel arrangements to help your child fly home. We can arrange quarantine facilities for your child if needed, usually with a host family. If your child needs to leave the school, e.g. for half term, we can arrange accommodation and transport for them providing they are not displaying any symptoms or have not been in contact with anyone displaying symptoms or with a positive test result.