



PRESTIGE  
GUARDIANS

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STUDENT HANDBOOK  
AND CODE OF CONDUCT

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Prestige Guardians Ltd.

Drey Coppice, College Road, Bath, BA1 5RR, England, UK

[www.prestige-guardians.co.uk](http://www.prestige-guardians.co.uk)

[+44 \(0\) 1225859998](tel:+44201225859998)



**Welcome to Prestige Guardians! This Handbook has been produced for students from abroad and contains information on Prestige Guardians organisation, policies and procedures.**

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## Message from Leonor Liz-Losada, Director

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Welcome to Prestige Guardians!

Prestige Guardians is a private family run and owned company. We have looked after the interests of many students and their families during the last 8 years and we can offer you the service you want, expect and need.

We have a lot of experience and constantly work very hard every day to make sure all is well with the students we represent. Homestays, flights, visas, mobile phones, storage of luggage, transport, airport transfers, exeat weekends, extra tuition, and half terms are just some areas we deal with every day on behalf of students and their families from many different countries and many different schools. We are here too when occasional problems arise and that is when our experience and knowledge and 24hr access really come into effect.

I know as a past teacher and Deputy Head just how important it is to get everything right.

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## Guardianship and UK law

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### The Law

UK law requires that all boarding schools “promote and safeguard” the welfare of every boarding student, including those over the age of 18. The Home Office, responsible for issuing VISAs, must also have regard to the need to safeguard children and to promote their welfare. All children studying in the UK must therefore have suitable care arrangements in place for their travel, reception on arrival in the UK and living arrangements while here. This is a compulsory requirement and includes the need for an Educational Guardian to be appointed.

During the term time, boarding schools must comply with the “Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards” in the care of their students, and they are regularly inspected. However, there are times when the school is closed and as sponsors of the Tier 4 (Child) VISA, a boarding school must also be able to hand over parental responsibilities to another adult. These times include Fixed “Exeat” weekends, Half Terms, suspensions, exclusions, medical emergencies, weather extremes and other unforeseen circumstances.



## Guardian Requirements of a Boarding School

It is a condition of entry to a school that a parent nominates a guardian who will meet the following minimum requirements:

- Be over 25 years of age.
- Reside in the UK at all times and be able to reach the school within 2 hours travelling time.
- Be a 24-hour point of contact for the school.
- Act with delegated parental authority in the case of emergency.
- Provide both pastoral and educational support.
- Liaise with the school over holiday and exeat weekend arrangements, including informing the school about travel and accommodation, which must be appropriate depending on the age of the student.
- Provide appropriate overnight full board accommodation and care.

## Life in the UK

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Living in the UK may be quite different to the life you are 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 changed, and handshakes were not used. A verbal greeting is always perfectly acceptable, if you prefer 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. Some shops and services have clear instructions that you should respect.

**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 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.

## Homesickness

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The first few weeks in the UK can seem very strange. Compared to your home the weather might be cold, the food too fatty, the English speak very fast and joke a lot! It is common to feel homesick, but as you get used to routines you will feel better. Most students leave school wanting to stay here longer!

## Personal Safety

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Prestige Guardians most important principle is to care for you whilst you are in the UK therefore your personal safety is of the utmost importance to us. Avoid situations in which you feel uncomfortable, don't be afraid to say 'no', respect yourself and other people and speak to us whenever you feel like it – we will always listen and offer support without judging you.

## Tablets & Laptops

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When using your tablet or laptop remember to follow our Online Safety Policy which is available on our website [www.prestige-guardians.co.uk](http://www.prestige-guardians.co.uk) or upon demand and to follow any school guidelines too.



## Valuable Possessions

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Make sure you look after your phone, tablet, laptop, bank cards, cash and any other valuable items. At school you should have somewhere safe to keep those items.

When you go out you should always take your fully charged mobile phone with you and make sure it is switched on, so you can be contacted if necessary.

Be careful when carrying and using your phone when you're out and keep it safe.

## Money

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Make sure you always have some cash with you when you go out as you can't always pay with your phone or bank cards. For example, some taxis only accept cash payments. Keep small denomination notes in your wallet or purse; £50 notes are not always accepted.

Many people in the UK now use Apple Pay through their mobile phones instead of bank cards or cash. It's useful as it means you don't need to carry cash or cards but not all shops and restaurants accept this form of payment, so you need to have a bank card and/or some cash with you if you are shopping or going out.

Look after your cash carefully and don't leave it lying around. If you run out of money and need some urgently to stay safe, call the Prestige Guardians number +44 (0)1225 859998 and we can help.

If you need more money for school trips and events, then speak with your Guardian and he should be able to authorise some on your parents' behalf.

## Electrical Appliances

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You will notice that electrical sockets are different in Britain to most other countries. We prefer you to purchase cables with British style plugs for your electronic goods. If this is not possible then you must use an adaptor or multi-way bar extension lead which is fused. Never fit an international style plug straight into a UK style socket and do not overload sockets with too many electronic gadgets.



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## Medical Issues

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Your school will normally register you with a doctor's surgery and provide medical facilities within the school and explain how to access them.

If you are too ill to stay in the boarding house but not ill enough to be in hospital we will arrange a host family can look after you. If you feel ill whilst staying with your host family tell them so that they can decide if you need to see a pharmacist, doctor, or go to hospital for treatment.

Your parents obviously get worried if you are ill so it's important that you tell us so that we can help you and then reassure your parents that you are receiving appropriate medical care.

If you don't want to say exactly what is wrong with you because it's a personal matter that's fine, you can attend medical appointments by yourself, but please still tell us you are feeling unwell.

If you are outside your school and face an medical emergency, please call 999 or 101 for advice, as well as notifying appropriate adults.

If you have been in contact with someone suffering from Covid-19 or are experiencing typical Covid-19 symptoms yourself (high temperature; new continuous cough and/or change to your sense of smell or taste) you must inform your school or host family immediately.

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## Online Safety Policy

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Prestige Guardians has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and keep them safe.

Our Online Safety Policy is available on our website [www.prestige-guardians.co.uk](http://www.prestige-guardians.co.uk) or upon request and your school will have similar guidelines.

We want you to remain safe online.

Make sure your social media privacy settings are correct, be careful about sharing personal information on the internet, set strict limits on who can track your location, do not chat to strangers online and never take inappropriate photos of yourself and share them.

Taking sexual photos of yourself or others is against the law in the UK and can result in police involvement.



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## WIFI Use

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

Depending upon your age, certain restrictions may be placed upon your usage and it is vital you follow Prestige Guardians Online Safety Policy, which is available on our website:

[www.prestige-guardians.co.uk](http://www.prestige-guardians.co.uk) or upon request.

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## Prevent/ Anti radicalisation Policy

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Along with your school, Prestige Guardians actively works to keep you safe from radicalisation and prevent you from being exposed to extremism. Prestige Guardians upholds fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Our Prevent / Anti Radicalisation Policy is available on our website [www.prestige-guardians.co.uk](http://www.prestige-guardians.co.uk) or upon request.

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## Anti-Bullying & Cyberbullying Policy

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Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, which hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers and tablets.

Both types can be defined by the victim not the perpetrator.

Prestige Guardians does not tolerate any form of bullying and encourages its young people, whether victim or observer, to speak up if they experience it happening. The Prestige Guardians Anti-bullying and Cyberbullying Policy is available on the website [www.prestige-guardians.co.uk](http://www.prestige-guardians.co.uk) or upon request.

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## Student Safeguarding

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### Problems or Worries? Who to Ask for Help

This is a very exciting time for you and we are here to help you to enjoy school and get the most out of your time in the UK. If you do have any problems or worries, you are not alone! We are here to help and support you at any time.

We are aware that, from time to time, you may be worried or upset about something. The



information below tells you about various people available to help you, so that you can choose someone you feel you can trust. The experience of many students is that, no matter how bad the problem may seem to be, it is almost always a great help to talk about it.

## **Is something worrying you?**

Here are some examples of the kinds of thing which can be worrying for young people:

- You think you may be ill and are too afraid or embarrassed to tell anyone;
- You feel depressed, or that life is not worth living;
- You or your friends are being bullied or treated unkindly by another student;
- You think that another student is not eating properly, or may be harming him/ herself;
- You think that another student has done, or is about to do, something seriously wrong or dangerous;
- You are caught in a serious situation that you don't know how to get out of, for example to do with drugs, alcohol, money or sex;
- You feel you are being treated unfairly simply because you are a girl or simply because you are a boy, or because of your colour or religion, or because you have a disability or learning difficulty, or because your sexuality;
- You feel that a staff member from the Prestige Guardians has treated you unfairly (e.g. in a punishment given, or in favouring other students);
- You feel that you are not given enough privacy or independence.

## **What should you do?**

If any of these things are happening, please talk to someone about it, even if you feel you can handle the situation. It may be that what is going on affects other people, or that you are unaware of all the different ways a problem can be tackled.

There are a number of different people who will be very happy to talk to you and to help you try to find a solution to the problem. It may help to talk first with another student who is a trusted friend.

However, sometimes you may also need the help and support of an adult or professional, for example a staff member at Prestige Guardians or a member of staff at school who you feel most comfortable and safe talking to.





We would expect one of these to be the first person you speak to if you have any concerns.

Prestige Guardians staff you could talk to might be:

- Your Guardian and Designated Safeguarding Lead Miss Leonor Liz-Losada +44 (0)7551 081009
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Mr Mark Stricklin +44 (0)7715 123299

However, if you do not feel able to speak to staff members, other people to talk to are:

- Your parents, guardians or other relatives;
- Adults in a position of authority at the school you attend, for example the School Chaplain, Counsellor or Doctor;
- An older student at the school you attend or an older international student
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children 0800 800 5000 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- Childline 0800 1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## **Who else needs to know?**

We understand that you may wish to talk about a problem only if it is kept confidential. This may be possible if your problems do not raise concerns about your welfare, but please be aware that many adults have a responsibility to pass on concerns about your welfare within their own organisation including school or Prestige Guardians, or to other organisations that can help.

Please do not let this stop you from raising complaints or saying when you are worried or upset. Most young people who speak up, say afterwards that it helped them and that the problem did not seem quite as bad once they had a chance to talk it through with someone experienced and helpful.

## **Code of conduct**

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This section of the Student Handbook 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 Prestige Guardians expectations. The guidance is written for the benefit of students, parents and staff.



## NOT ALLOWED

- Staying elsewhere overnight without prior permission from Prestige Guardians, agreed the week before the Exeat or Half Term break.

## PLEASE REMEMBER TO:

- Always show respect
- Be polite
- Please behave appropriately at all times and remember:
  - Alcohol: It is forbidden to all persons under the age of 18 years to consume alcohol.
  - Drugs: The use of non-prescribed drugs is strictly forbidden and the law regarding this is enforced very strictly.
  - Smoking: It is a criminal offence to buy tobacco products under the age of 18. Smoking is forbidden in schools and in most public places.

Breaking any UK laws or school rules could result in suspension or expulsion.

### **Laws regarding the consumption of alcohol**

Prestige Guardians does not permit their students to consume alcohol whilst under their care. In the UK it is illegal for people under 18 to buy alcohol in a pub, off-licence, shop or elsewhere. In most cases, it is against the law for anyone to buy alcohol for someone under 18 to drink in a pub or a public place.



## **Laws regarding the use of drugs and illegal substances**

Prestige Guardians 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.

## **Laws regarding smoking**

Prestige Guardians 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.

## **Laws regarding sexual activity**

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

## **Laws regarding tattoos and body piercings**

Prestige Guardians 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.



## Frequently Asked Questions

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These are students' most FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs). Full answers are inside the Handbook:

- Why do I need a guardian?

As your parents live overseas they are unable to care for you when you are out of school. Prestige Guardians takes on this responsibility particularly during Half Terms and other times that the school is closed.

- Who is my guardian and how do I make contact?

Your Guardian is the Director of Prestige Guardians, Ms Leonor Liz-Losada. She has a team to help her. In office hours ring 01225 859998 or email [mail@prestige-guardians.co.uk](mailto:mail@prestige-guardians.co.uk). In an emergency ring 07551 081009. If you have any reason to make a complaint about any aspect of your guardianship, please do so in writing to the email address above and we will investigate the situation and report back to you and your parents.

The TOP TWO things Prestige Guardians MUST have from you:

1. Your current mobile number and email, especially when these details change!! It is your responsibility to notify us of any change to your contact details as soon as they are in place. It is essential that you leave your mobile switched on, with credit on and fully charged whilst you are travelling, especially when you land at an airport and we have booked a taxi to collect you.
2. What arrangements we need to make for you for each Half Term and Exeat weekend.



## Why do I need a guardian?

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Boarding schools in the UK require all their students whose families live overseas to have a Guardian resident in the UK, normally aged over 25 years. It is also now a UK Visa requirement. Whilst at the 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, when the school must be able to hand over these responsibilities to a properly appointed Guardian. 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.
- assisting you with things you may need - school uniform, sports equipment, pocket money, phone cards, mobile phone, UK mobile sim card, etc.
- helping you arrange your travel both in the UK (taxi, train or bus) and back home (flight bookings, transfers).
- helping you if things go wrong:
  - if you get into trouble at school you may be suspended and asked to leave the school for a period, at short notice.
  - if you have problems with immigration or passports (for example, lost or stolen).
  - if you get ill and need to go to hospital, or away from school.
- being available for you anytime, particularly if you are worried about things like:
  - work
  - school
  - friends
  - your own family. It is not unusual to feel unhappy and maybe homesick when you first start at your school and do not know anyone. You can always contact us if you are feeling alone and isolated from your family.



## Who is my guardian and how is Prestige Guardians organised?

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Prestige Guardian's director and owner Ms Leonor Liz-Losada acts as your guardian, and will take responsibility for decisions made.

Ms Liz-Losada will be the main point of contact for guardianship issues for you during school term. She will also ensure all arrangements are carefully put in place, and that confirmation is sent to you, your parents and your boarding house at school. You may have regular contact with the office and Ms Liz-Losada by telephone 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

## What is Prestige Guardians Policy regarding students making their own arrangements over school breaks?

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We are often informed by students (and/or their parents) that they wish to make their own arrangements for one or more nights' accommodation during Half Terms and Exeat Weekends.

The following policy has been introduced to clarify what is needed from you and your parents should you wish to consider alternative Half Term/Exeat care arrangements:

- Students Aged 18 or over on start date of Exeat or Half Term:  
Parents' Permission is required, during office hours, in writing by verified email. This can also be accepted via reputable overseas agents.
- Students Aged 17 on start date of Exeat or Half Term:  
As above, PLUS we require full address and travel plans.



- Students Aged 16 on start date of Exeat or Half Term:  
As above PLUS we require a named adult, residing in the UK and over 25 years old, who will take responsibility for the student during the stay.
- Students Aged 15 or under on start date of Exeat or Half Term:  
As above PLUS we require full contact with the adult and arrangement confirmed in writing. The adult will need to confirm that they will be taking responsibility for the student during the break.

The above is subject to amendment, if required, to comply with any particular school's policy.

## Other Information for Students

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### Travel

For transfers between the airport and school, Prestige Guardians has drivers available to meet students and take them to any address in the UK. Travel by rail and coach can be arranged for economical long distance transfer. Prestige will check timetables, book tickets and arrange for an escort if required.

If Prestige Guardians has booked a taxi for you to travel, please be certain to keep your mobile switched on, fully charged and with some credit on so that we can contact you.

### Parental Authority - Will Prestige Guardians sign on behalf of your parents?

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 GBP50, and / or if the activity is strenuous or potentially dangerous. Otherwise we will sign, unless your parents have indicated otherwise on the Application Form.



## **Visas and Passports - can you help with visa renewal or if I lose my passport?**

It has become increasingly difficult to offer assistance to you, as we are advised by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) that it is illegal for us to help you renew your visa. However, we have contacts that are able to do this, and we can help put you in touch with agencies that specialise in UK Visa renewal, Schengen Visas and passport renewal.

## **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.

## **Mobile Phones**

Prestige can assist in arranging "Pay as you Go" mobile sim cards or phones, but we cannot enter into monthly contracts.

## **Emergencies**

In case of emergencies, Prestige Guardians will assist 24 hours per day.

During office hours (08:30-17:30 Monday to Friday) please phone +44 (0)1225 859998.

Please use the Office number for all non-emergency calls.

Outside Office Hours, and only in the case of EMERGENCY, please ring mobile number +44 (0)7551081009.