



Durham
Cathedral
Schools
Foundation

INTERNATIONAL PUPIL POLICY

1. Policy Aim

- 1.1 It is of great importance that Durham Cathedral Schools Foundation (DCSF) has pupils from overseas, that they are welcomed into the way of life at our Schools, that both the pupil and all other members of the Schools are able to communicate with each other, and that the pupil feels safe and supported while away from home.

The aim of this policy is to ensure there is awareness of the Schools' international pupils, and to make clear the requirements of the pupil, his/her parent(s)/carer(s) and the staff, not only to DCSF but to the UK Visa and Immigration Authority (UKVI).

DCSF commits in this Policy to observing the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate on any grounds

2. Relationship to Guidelines, Procedures, other Policies and Legal Requirements

- 2.1 This Policy aims to comply with the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations (England) 2010 (paragraph 12 of Schedule 1), UKVI (United Kingdom Visa and Immigration) regulations, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024), and it will be applied in conjunction with all DCSF policies but in particular the Safeguarding Policy, Gender Identity Policy, Curriculum Policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, IT Policy and Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers.

- 2.2 English language ability requirements: Although we offer expert tuition in English as an Additional Language (EAL), some ability to communicate in English is needed if the applicant is to cope with the demands of full-time education in this country. This is particularly important for those applying for admission into the Sixth Form. **The minimum score on the IELTS required for admission into Durham School Sixth Form is 5.5.** Most universities in the English-speaking world require a score of 6.0 or higher, depending on the course. More selective universities set a 7.0 as a minimum for admission.

If, during a routine re-test, a pupil does not achieve the minimum requirement, his/her place at DCSF could be revoked, or we may require the pupil to re-sit the year.

- 2.3 All international pupils with English as an Additional Language who wish to study at DCSF must undertake an interview as part of the admissions process to determine an appropriate level of English.

- 2.4 An international pupil may attend DCSF with a Child visa issued by the UKVI following DCSF issuing a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), or be in the UK on a Family Visa, or be living with a parent in the UK on a Parent Carer of a Child Visa; only children up to the age of 12 are eligible for this latter option. Over the age of 12, a pupil on a Child Visa cannot live with parents, however they can live with a Guardian who is over the age of 25 and has settled status in the UK or they can live with a Guardian in a Private Foster Care setting which must be approved by the Local Authority.

School must have updated copies of all visa details of the child and parent, if the parent is in the UK. If an international pupil has been issued with an electronic share code to show the visa details, this must be given to School prior to the pupils starting their studies. All pupils on a Child or Student visa will be issued with a share code after 1st January 2025. All other visa details and correspondence from the Home Office must be given to the Admissions Department prior to starting at the school.

- 2.5 An international pupil is a pupil who does not hold a UK passport.

3. Policy Statements

- 3.1 **Native language usage:** Reading, writing, speaking, and listening to English all the time can be tiring and overwhelming for a non-native speaker. We want our overseas pupils to be able to use their native language with friends and family, and to continue to stay connected with their home life and culture. However, during the school day, DCSF requires pupils to use only English in public areas of the Schools.

From the time they wake up until after prep (usually 7am – 8.30pm), boarding pupils will be expected to use English with everyone, including other international pupils who may speak the same language. We want our pupils' English to improve very quickly and this policy will help them make friends with British pupils, excel in their studies, and make the most of life in the UK.

3.2 Travel arrangements for international pupils:

- 3.2.1 **Our responsibilities:** Under the administration of the UKVI, DCSF has a 'Basic Compliance Assessment', and as such we have a responsibility by law to be aware of the whereabouts of all our non-UK pupils who we sponsor whilst travelling to and from School, during half-terms, Christmas, Easter and the Summer Holidays. Pupils may be staying with parents at home or in the UK, staying with a Guardian or host family or travelling home outside the UK.

As such, both parents of an international pupil need to give consent for their child to travel to and from DCSF and they must complete the Parental Consent Letter prior to starting School and the Travel Form for each Holiday and return it to the Assistant Head (Co-Curricular and Boarding) at least a week prior to School closing.

3.2.2 Travel to and from School: Parents of international pupils are advised not, under any circumstances, to allow their underage child to travel internationally alone from their home country to DCSF. He/she must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Each airline has its own policy on how old a child must be before travelling alone (usually between 12–16 years old), and parents are responsible for checking relevant policies before booking a flight.

At the start of the School year, transport can be provided to our Schools for pupils arriving at Newcastle or Teesside airports on the day the school opens. Prior to this, they must stay with their Guardian and the Guardian will be responsible for bringing them to School.

DCSF will take no responsibility for booking flights or organising travel between School and the airport or train station, however a bus can be arranged to take international pupils to Newcastle Airport on the last day of each term, otherwise, the parent or guardian will be responsible for this.

On initial arrival at School, every international pupil must present their documents issued by UKVI including their Share Code and show proof of entry into the UK (stamp in passport or luggage tag or travel ticket). Short stay international pupils will not be issued with visa details but must still present their passport to the Assistant Head (Boarding and Co-Curricular) or International Admissions Officer. This is relevant for all international pupils across DCSF.

3.2.3 Start and end of term: International pupils are required to be at School by the time term starts until term is finished. We understand that sometimes emergencies and travel mishaps occur, but it is not acceptable to plan to leave school early and/or return late. If there are exceptional circumstances (for example, a family bereavement), permission must be sought by the parent or guardian of the pupil and be granted by the Housemaster/mistress and the Principal/Headmistress of the School.

It is very important that international pupils arrive and depart on the correct date. Missing lessons, especially at the beginning and end of term, causes many problems and is not permitted. Permission for any absence from school during term dates must be sought by parents from the Principal/Headmistress in advance.

The school is not responsible for looking after and accommodating pupils during non-term time e.g., the holidays.

If pupils book flights that leave before School ends and/or return after it resumes, they may be in violation of their visa agreements, and their places at the School may be revoked.

3.3 Guardians

Guardians for overseas pupils are a key part of the pupils' experiences in British education. Any boarder who lives more than two hours drive from School must have a Guardian. Many of our full boarders live overseas and they must have a guardian living no more than two hours' drive from School in the UK. The guardian will act as a first point of contact with DCSF when necessary and is a person with whom pupils can stay during the

holidays or on other occasions such as illness, a pandemic, exclusion from School or when the School is closed.

All boarders whose parents are overseas MUST have a guardian appointed by the parents. Guardians must be available at all times to respond to the needs of both the pupil and DCSF as they arise. A guardian may be:

- a) Appointed through a Guardianship Company accredited through AEGIS or from the Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) Certified Guardian Scheme. They will provide guardianship for a pupil during their time at DCSF.
- b) A family friend or relative who lives within two hours of the School.

Being a guardian is a considerable responsibility, and it is not a role to be taken lightly. Guardians perform the role of the parent whilst the child is in the UK, and must act in the best interests of the pupil at all times. It is important that all parties understand clearly what their responsibilities are and that these are agreed in writing and DCSF has full details of the guardianship agreement. The contact details for the guardian are stated on the Guardianship Form completed by parents and the Guardianship Acceptance Form must be completed by the guardian.

Educational guardians are not legal guardians, and the Children's Act (1989) does not permit parents to surrender their parental responsibility to others. What a parent may do is to arrange for some or all of the parental responsibility to be met by one or more persons acting on their behalf, when a child is entrusted to a school.

In addition to abiding by all of the laws in the UK, guardians of DCSF pupils must:

1. Be within two hour's travel time of the school
2. Be at least 25 years of age
3. Be finished with full-time education
4. Be fluent in English and, ideally, the pupil's native language
5. Be available to contact at any time
6. Be available to take pupils to appointments outside of school, if necessary
7. Be available to provide transport and care in the case of infectious illness or injury, exclusion from school or the immediate closure of school due to unforeseen circumstances until a return to school is possible
8. Offer a room with a bed, wardrobe, desk and storage facilities with access to wifi, bathroom and kitchen facilities and comfortable living space within their house
9. Provide three meals a day
10. Provide transport to and from School
11. Provide laundry facilities during the time of the stay.
12. Follow the guidance of DCSF in case of an emergency relating to the child either on the School site or on a School trip, in absence of the parents.

DCSF expects a guardian to come to parents' evenings to represent the pupil's parents and to be in communication with teachers, House staff, the English as an Additional Language department (if applicable), as well as the pupil's family. If the Guardian is not available due to work commitments or holidays for example, the parents must ensure

that an alternative is in place for their child. This must be communicated to the Assistant Head (Boarding and Co-Curricular)

If a guardian is nominated by parents and this is not through a certified Guardianship Agency either through AEGIS or the BSA, DCSF may carry out checks to determine their suitability.

Please note that if parents are unable to appoint a relative or friend in this country who can act as a guardian, DCSF can provide details of the BSA Certified Guardian Scheme, but our policy stipulates that we do not recommend individual guardians.

If an international pupil regularly stays with their Guardian both in the holidays and and / or at a weekend, a Senior Member of staff at DCSF will carry out a home visit.

3.4 Visas and legal documentation

The School must have a copy of the Passport, Birth Certificate, Child Visa and Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), Family Visa, or Parent Carer of a Child Visa if applicable. If an entry date is not stamped in the passport, the date of entry to the UK must be checked and recorded through seen evidence such as an e-ticket, boarding pass or airline luggage tag. EEA nationals must provide School with the 'share code' they have so that immigration status can be confirmed and this information will be recorded.

The parents are responsible for ensuring the passport and visa are in date.

For all international pupils, not boarding at DCSF and either living independently (over the age of 16) or in a private foster care arrangement or living with a close relative with settled status, a home visit will be organised by a senior member of staff to check the living arrangements for the pupil are in line with UKVI regulations, sponsor guidance and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024). Parents of international pupils not boarding at DCSF must ensure that DCSF is made aware of any changes to their address in the UK or their living arrangements.

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1068745/Sponsor-guidance-Appendix-D-04-22.pdf)

If the international pupil will be cared for in the UK in a private foster care arrangement, these details must be provided by the parents and DCSF will inform the Local Authority in the area the pupil is living. A record of this communication must be kept by DCSF. The person acting as the private foster carer will be classed as the guardian for this pupil.

4 Oversight

This policy is overseen by the Education Committee of the Governing Body and will be reviewed at least annually.

Policy reviewed 03/03/2017

K J McLaughlin [Headmaster]

Policy reviewed 06/03/19

04/03/2020

J M Burns [Deputy Head Pastoral]

06/05/2021

KL Rochester [Head of Boarding & International Pupils]

30/05/2022

KL Rochester (Assistant Head Co-Curricular and Boarding) 6/6/2023

KL Rochester (Assistant Head Co-Curricular and Boarding) 10/10/2024