BOARDING SCHOOLS — GUIDE

Guardianship and visas for international boarders

Separate school care arrangements from immigration permission. Check the UK Child Student route and US F-1 school requirements with official sources.

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Arrange care and immigration as separate tasks. A school place does not explain who will care for the child when the house closes. A guardian agreement does not itself grant immigration permission.

This guide describes selected official guidance fetched on **2026-11-10**. Check the linked rules again before applying. It is not legal advice.

UK Child Student route

GOV.UK says the Child Student route is for children aged **4 to 17** who want to study at an independent school. Its overview lists an unconditional offer from a licensed Child Student sponsor, a suitable place to live, sufficient funds and parental or legal guardian consent among the requirements. Source: GOV.UK, Child Student Visa, fetched 2026-11-10.

The same page says an application from outside the UK can be made no earlier than **6 months** before the course starts. An application from inside the UK has a different window. Do not use the outside-UK date for an in-country application. Use the actual course start date and the current official instructions.

GOV.UK's accommodation page describes permitted living arrangements. Full boarding is one option. If the child will stay elsewhere during closures, check that arrangement against the guidance and with the school. Source: GOV.UK, Where You Will Live , fetched 2026-11-10.

Ask the school for the house closure calendar, approved collection procedure and emergency contact process. If a guardian service is proposed, ask about hosts, transport, safeguarding checks, insurance, complaints and limits of responsibility. These are questions for due diligence, not a claim that every arrangement follows the same law.

US F-1 planning

DHS says private schools can be SEVP-certified for international students in their school programmes. Its guidance distinguishes private schools from public secondary schools. For F-1 students, the public secondary school route has a **12-month** limit; DHS says that limit does not apply to attendance at a private SEVP-certified school. Source: DHS, Kindergarten to Grade 12 Students, fetched 2026-11-10.

Ask the school's designated school official about the Form I-20, financial evidence and the correct visa process. Do not assume association membership proves SEVP certification.

DHS states that students can enter during the **30 days** before the official programme start date

recorded in SEVIS and must report to the school by the start date on the Form I-20. Treat this as an entry window, not a visa application deadline or a travel booking recommendation. Source: DHS, Getting to the United States, fetched 2026-11-10.

Other destinations

Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Ireland and New Zealand have their own immigration and care arrangements. This guide does not set out those rules. Ask the school for the official government route and check it for the child's nationality and circumstances.

Keep copies of the offer, care plan, school contacts and travel documents. Share sensitive records through the school's approved route. Resolve an unclear care arrangement before committing to travel.

Frequently asked questions

Does a school offer guarantee a visa?

No. Use the official immigration process and ask the school which documents it can issue. Admission and immigration decisions are separate.

Does a school guardian replace a parent?

Ask what the proposed arrangement covers and obtain the written agreement. Do not assume a commercial service has legal parental authority.