

Overseas Policy: Issue 2 dated 3 October 2018

THE PILGRIMS SCHOOL

Overseas Students – Policy

Introduction

The Pilgrims' School welcomes permanent students from overseas. It may occasionally accept temporary placements for less than an academic year. This policy gives essential information and should be read in conjunction with the rest of the school's policies.

Visits to School

It is essential that overseas pupils and their parents or guardians visit the school prior to a place being offered. This is important so that parents can have full confidence in their choice of school for their boy and so that the school is satisfied that the school is the right place for them. Arrangements for visits should be made through the Admissions Office who can advise about travel and accommodation during a visit to Winchester.

Assessment

The school conducts an assessment for academic and social compatibility. This usually involves a taster day visit to the school, a detailed tour of the boarding house, an assessment and an interview. Very occasionally reports can be submitted and papers sent overseas to be sat in exam conditions, and an interview may be conducted by Skype or Facetime. However, a confidential reference from the candidate's current school and a taster day visit to the school is still required before a place may be offered.

English

Students joining the school from overseas are expected to have a standard of English sufficient to cope with the syllabus which is taught in English. If required, arrangements can occasionally be made for pupils to maintain proficiency in their native language. If additional EAL support is recommended by the school, the cost will be borne by the fee payer.

Visas

The school is an approved Sponsor of Tier 4 visas (see the UK Borders Agency website). Before issue of a sponsorship letter the school will need to see an original passport and proof of parental address: these should usually be presented during the school visit. The sponsorship letter will only be issued once a place has been offered by the school and accepted by the parent and the deposit paid. In certain cases the first term's fees may be requested prior to issue of the letter.

Parental Contact

For overseas boarders it is particularly important that regular contact is maintained with parents and family whilst the boy is at school. The school provides email and skype facilities as well as use of mobile phones for calls or texts. The boarding staff will also keep in regular touch with parents by email.

Travel

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The school is happy to assist with travel arrangements for boys returning home but will normally only use taxi firms who specialise in the carriage of schoolchildren because they have the necessary child protection measures in place. These costs will be passed back to the fee payer.

Holidays

The school routine is very busy during the term and especially for boarders. We therefore encourage boys to return to their family whenever possible. However, this may not be viable during the half term breaks (1 week each term) and exeats (2 weekends per term). During these breaks, boys should normally go to a family friend or relation in UK (see below, ref Guardians).

Guardians

Parents are required to appoint a UK guardian for overseas boarders. The guardian becomes the point of contact with the school and will be used for:

1. The boarder to stay with during short holidays (half term and exeat)
2. The boarder to stay with in the event of illness or unexpected school closure during term time
3. As a local point of contact if the parents are not in communication in the event of illness, emergency or pastoral problems
4. To accompany the boarder on senior school visits, interviews and assessments if the parent or school are unable to do so

It is the parents' duty to appoint a guardian. The guardian must be able to reach the school at short notice at all times, with a maximum journey time of 90 minutes. The school will not appoint a guardian nor make recommendations of any one agency. There is an umbrella body for guardianship agencies called Aegis (www.aegisuk.net) who can assist in locating guardians but The Pilgrims' School is not responsible for the advice they offer. However, the school does have an existing relationship with the following guardianship agencies currently being used by boarding families:

- PJ's Guardianship Services Ltd
- Oxford Guardians
- Quest Guardians Ltd
- Gabbitas

Health

All students will be expected to meet the accepted UK standards for health and immunisations. There may be additional requirements arising from the country of origin and all potential overseas students and their parents will be given an opportunity to discuss this with the school medical staff before entering the school.