

Gold Re-accreditation of: Oxford Guardians Ltd.

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The gold inspection report falls into the following sections:

1. About the Guardianship Organisation
2. Review of the quality standards
3. Lead Inspector Overview
4. Conclusion



About the Guardianship Organisation

Oxford Guardians Ltd was founded in 2009 by the current owner and Director. She had worked in education for many years and saw guardianship practice that she felt was less than ideal, and decided that she could do better for her students. The aim of the organisation is to provide a very individual service to their students, with care tailored to individual needs. To this end Oxford Guardians Ltd employs 26 Local Guardians so that each student can have a local contact. In person visits also play an important part in what Oxford Guardians Ltd. offers.

Currently they have just over 70 students in their care; 11 of whom are day students. Their students come from China, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan and Iran, with an increasing number coming from Europe too.

Review of the AEGIS Quality Standards

Standard One: Statement of company aims, principles and practice	Met
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The guardianship organisation has a clear statement of aims, principles and practice which is made available to all relevant parties. Oxford Guardians Ltd. is successful in meeting their aims and principles.

Standard Two: Management of the Guardianship Organisation	Met
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Suitable safer recruitment procedures are in place, and checks are undertaken on staff, volunteers and homestays. The guardianship organisation has demonstrated that they have access to a sufficient number of staff who act as local guardians to meet the needs of the students within their care. Clear job descriptions are provided as well as appropriate induction for all positions. Suitable contracts are in place for staff, homestays and parents and the guardianship organisation has an appropriate code of conduct that provides guidance on behaviour that it expects from all members of staff and homestays working within the organisation. Comprehensive handbooks have been produced for students, parents, and homestays.

Oxford Guardians Ltd. has up-to-date professional indemnity, public and employer's liability insurance in place that is sufficient to cover the scope of their business. A suitable system is in place to ensure that all homestays are aware of the need to inform their home and car insurers of the fact that they are hosting students. Record keeping is efficient, with all required documentation stored in a suitable manner. Suitable emergency procedures are in place. These include a 24-hour emergency contact number and emergency plan that outlines how Oxford Guardians Ltd. will deal with reasonably foreseeable emergencies. Suitable arrangements are in place for any student who cannot be accommodated by their school due to illness, disciplinary action, or any other cause.

Due regard is paid to protecting data and following the correct procedures for information sharing. This is outlined in the guardianship organisation's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. This is available via the organisation's website. Oxford Guardians Ltd. is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and has appointed a data controller. Consent is sought before using any photographs of students on their website or in any publicity material.

Suitable financial arrangements are in place to ensure that transactions are prompt in line with contractual agreements. Policies are reviewed at least annually, and all policies include a publication and review date.

Standard Three: Students	Met
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Prior to arrival, students have the opportunity to meet their appointed local guardian at a virtual meeting before coming to the UK. Oxford Guardians Ltd. holds an introductory meeting following arrival with all students, including those on emergency packages.

Oxford Guardians Ltd. has comprehensive student handbooks that are written in appropriate language for the age of the reader. This includes important information on safeguarding and who to turn to should they have any concerns. Students are provided with a suitable induction on or shortly after their arrival in the UK. This includes spending time going through the student handbook to ensure that they understand the contents.

Oxford Guardians Ltd. checks in with students on a regular basis to ensure their wellbeing, including those on emergency packages. Contact is made with students during and after stays with homestays. A record of this communication is maintained, and any concerns are followed up appropriately.

Suitable arrangements are in place to help support students' mental health. Staff and homestays are made aware of the problems students may face, how to identify them and what to do with any concerns. Oxford Guardians Ltd. has a clear procedure in place for staff and homestays to follow should any mental health concerns be identified, including for when a student is removed from a school setting.

The guardianship organisation maintains suitable student files that include all required information. These are stored securely, in line with data protection principles. Permission is obtained from parents to hold this information and pass it to homestays and schools as appropriate.

Standard Four: Travel Arrangements	Met
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Systems for organising student travel are efficient and suitably documented. Permissions for travel are sought and recorded. Any travel arrangements organised by the guardianship organisation are shared with the relevant parties. Oxford Guardians Ltd. ensures that any taxi firms used are licenced and obtains confirmation that suitable safeguarding checks have been

conducted on the drivers who will provide transport to their students. The guardianship organisation ensures that laws for wearing seatbelts and use of car seats and booster seats where required are adhered to when students are transported.

Standard Five: Homestays	Met
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Comprehensive checks are undertaken on homestays and all members of their household before placing students with the homestay. Full details are gathered on all homestay members who are either permanently resident or temporarily living away from home. A homestay profile is produced using this information to provide students and their parents with an insight into what life will be like whilst staying with the family. Suitable checks are undertaken to ensure that student accommodation is provided in line with the AEGIS requirements. Oxford Guardians Ltd. ensures that homestays provide suitable meals, drinks and snacks throughout their stay as well as suitable laundry facilities if students are resident for more than one night. Guidance is provided to homestays on online safety and internet provision. The guardianship organisation ensures that homestays are clear on the expected code of conduct when hosting students. Training is provided at least annually and includes a safeguarding update. Due consideration is given to health and safety requirements and checks are undertaken on the accommodation before any student is placed within the household and thereafter on an annual basis. These cover all of the areas AEGIS requires. Comprehensive notes of this visit are recorded and stored appropriately within the homestay file. Homestays are made aware that they are expected to cooperate with an inspection that Oxford Guardians Ltd. is subject to by AEGIS or any statutory body.

Standard Six: Safeguarding, Child Protection and Welfare	Met
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Oxford Guardians Ltd. has a suitable Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy that is shared with relevant parties and available via the organisation's website. The policy is updated at least annually or more regularly as required and is implemented appropriately. Students are provided with appropriate safeguarding information for their age. The guardianship organisation has a Designated Safeguarding Lead as well as a deputy. Both have suitable training for their roles that is reviewed every two years. Other members of staff, volunteers and homestays have received appropriate training for their role. This is renewed every three years. A suitable record of training is maintained. In-house update training is also provided regularly to ensure that homestays and staff are aware of the most up-to-date guidance.

Oxford Guardians Ltd. has suitable procedures for whistleblowing and reporting low level concerns. There is a suitable policy covering anti-radicalisation and the *Prevent Duty* as well as ones for anti-bullying including cyberbullying and online safety. Procedures to follow in the event of a missing student meet the AEGIS requirements. Suitable guidelines are in place to cover the positive behaviour it expects from its students. These are tailored to the age of the students.

Standard Seven: Complaints	Met
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Oxford Guardians Ltd. has a suitable policy that outlines the procedure for recording and responding to complaints in a timely manner. This is available via the organisation's website. The policy covers an informal and formal resolution stage as well as a further stage for referring the matter to AEGIS if the complaint cannot be resolved by the guardianship organisation. Records are kept of any complaints, along with any action taken as a result of those complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld.

Standard Eight: Day Students, Prolonged Stays with Hosts and Private Fostering	Met
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Oxford Guardians Ltd. understands the legal requirements for private fostering and explains these to the school and homestay, liaising with them to ensure that the local authorities are informed of such an arrangement within the expected timescales. They adhere to the regulations regarding private fostering in place within their local area as directed by their local authority. Suitable records are kept of any correspondence with the local authority fostering team, with permissions secured to share such information as necessary with students, parents/agents, homestays, and partner schools. The guardianship organisation carries out regular visits to homestays who accommodate day students who are over the age of 16.

Standard Nine: Liaison with Partner Schools	Met
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Oxford Guardians Ltd. keeps in regular contact with the student's school in line with the requirements of the parents. They have fostered effective means of communication with the most suitable person in the school, informing them whenever they are visiting the site. Schools are provided with an appropriate statement of service. Oxford Guardians Ltd. liaises with the school regarding the needs of the individual student and their wellbeing, including any required medication. Where appropriate, they also liaise with school staff regarding travel and homestay arrangements.

Lead Inspector Overview

Oxford Guardians Ltd. is a well-established and experienced guardianship organisation. Their aim is to provide a personalised and bespoke experience for each of their students. The Director and founder has a wealth of expertise in education and, as well as the expected welfare services, can offer key educational advice as well. Oxford Guardians Ltd. typically offers three levels of service but is more than willing and able to tailor a guardianship package to meet the needs of individuals.

The Director is ably supported by her experienced team, all of whom have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Oxford Guardians Ltd. employs 26 local guardians who can offer very immediate and local contact and care. This enables Oxford Guardians Ltd. to be successful in achieving their stated aims and fulfil their commitments to regular visits.

Their website and supporting documentation are clear, informative and welcoming. Through regular meetings, the staff ensure that all employees with a responsibility for the organisation's students are kept up to date with any relevant information and concerns. This is particularly important as key staff share the 24-hour emergency contact responsibility.

Currently, Oxford Guardians Ltd. has just over 20 host families that they regularly work with, and they know them well. All host families that are deployed have been subject to the necessary pre-appointment checks. These are all stored safely on the secure online data management system and other password protected drives. These systems allow for all aspects of Oxford Guardians Ltd.'s record keeping to be stored securely and to be accessible only to those who need it.

Although Oxford Guardians Ltd. has many students in schools in many parts of England and Wales, it is their priority to know them as individuals, sharing pertinent information wherever possible in order to personalise the experience for the student. This is facilitated using the online data management system. All aspects of the students' care are considered, including mental health and Oxford Guardians Ltd. has a detailed policy citing how they would respond to a mental health issue.

Travel arrangements are well organised. Travel details are logged for all journeys whether they are organised by the parents, school, or by Oxford Guardians Ltd. All relevant parties are informed of the details. Some journeys are organised by the schools, but where Oxford Guardians Ltd. organise the transport, they use reputable and fully checked drivers. The online data management system produces useful visual timelines that enable the user to see what is planned.

Prior to a student arriving in the UK for the first time, a video call is offered in order to meet parents and students on-line to explain how the arrival system works. The appointed Local Guardian then visits the student during the first ten days at their school. During this visit the Local Guardian will make sure that the student has a handbook and understands its contents and knows who to contact if they need support.

Oxford Guardians Ltd. employ many 'native speakers' offering a range of languages such as Russian, Farsi, Chinese and Thai. This facility enables Oxford Guardians Ltd. to support families for whom communicating in English is a challenge.

Oxford Guardians Ltd. has just over 20 host families they are currently deploying. The recruitment process is thorough, enabling both parties to be sure that hosting is right for them. The initial visit serves as an induction, covering information about safeguarding, codes of conduct and what accommodation is required. Follow up visits include the completion of checklists to ensure that the standards of provision are being upheld. This is all recorded appropriately on the checklist and then transferred to the host's file. Oxford Guardians Ltd. works hard to ensure that students are matched with a host that will suit them. All parents whose children use a host, and who responded to the AEGIS survey, said that they were happy with the host family arrangements. Oxford Guardians Ltd.'s documentation, including policies, handbooks and record keeping, are extremely comprehensive and of a very high standard.

Keeping the students safe is of paramount importance to Oxford Guardians Ltd. There are three key staff trained to level 3 in safeguarding, one of whom is the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the other two can deputise if necessary. Host families are required to re-do their safeguarding training every three years in line with the AEGIS standards. An annual meeting is held for all host families, generally in August, where safeguarding updates and reminders are shared.

Oxford Guardians Ltd. has an effective complaints policy and the facility to maintain records. Through regular communication with parents and students, the Director reports that owing to that good communication and positive relationships, complaints are resolved informally.

In line with their service level agreements, the Local Guardians keep in contact with schools and attend when required. In-person visits play a very important part in the service that Oxford Guardians Ltd. offers. Across a year, visits to students, either at school, or to a homestay can range from 7 to 21. Comments received from schools as part of the accreditation process were extremely positive and particularly complimentary about the level of communication and the services offered.

Oxford Guardians Ltd. is a very professional organisation who provides a caring and personalised educational guardianship service to their students and families. They are recommended for AEGIS Gold re-accreditation without hesitation.

Conclusion

AEGIS is satisfied that Oxford Guardians Ltd. meets the quality standards and have awarded AEGIS gold re-accreditation on 9th June 2025. Re-accreditation will be due in June 2029.