

Cotswold Guardians was formed by Anne Sharp in 2004 to help satisfy the growing demand for a caring, professional and personal service for international students studying in the United Kingdom. Anne has spent many years hosting students from overseas, and set up Cotswold Guardians after retiring from thirty years of teaching.



Anne Sharp, Proprietor of Cotswold Guardians

The happiness and well-being of the students in Anne's care is of paramount importance. The intention is to provide an introduction to English culture and tradition, as well as the opportunity to develop interpersonal and communication skills. Cotswold Guardians is based in Gloucestershire, the heart of the Cotswolds, and it has links with schools all over the country.

My main aim is to welcome students to England and provide them with the care and security of a loving family where they can relax within the safe environment of an English home

Anne ensures that every Cotswold Guardians' host family is similarly dedicated to the pastoral care of any student who stays with them, providing a welcoming, safe and caring environment. Anne personally visits all host families and they all undergo extensive safe-guarding checks through the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and safe-guarding training.

## Safeguarding

Cotswold Guardians is committed to safeguarding and child protection. We have comprehensive policies on safeguarding, prevent / anti-radicalisation, low level concerns, complaints, anti-bullying, missing student, online safety, data protection that provide further information and outline our procedures. These can be found on our website <https://cotswold-guardians.co.uk/> We have a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead.. You or your child can raise a safeguarding concern with your contact at the guardianship organisation or directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (contact numbers are included in the table below). Alternatively, you may wish to raise a concern directly with the school your child attends. All schools have their own Designated Safeguarding Lead. Please note that any concern that you or your child raise with us will be taken seriously and will be handled in line with our published procedures.

## Contact Details

There may be times that you need to contact us. We are always here to assist you with any requests or concerns that you may have. You can contact in the following ways:

General enquiries	
Telephone	01285 711789
Email	<a href="mailto:anne@cotswold-guardians.co.uk">anne@cotswold-guardians.co.uk</a>
Emergencies 24/7 Including Safeguarding Concerns	
Telephone	+44 7733 333914
Designated safeguarding Lead	Anne Sharp

## PARENT HANDBOOK

### Change of plan?

There may be occasions when you need to change the arrangements that have been made for an exeat, half-term, holiday, or other periods of homestay. Please ensure that you contact us as soon as possible, and no later than 2 weeks prior.

### Emergencies

Cotswold Guardians will respond to any requests to provide emergency support and accommodation for students. For example, this could be due to a medical issue or suspension. Where possible the student will be placed with their usual homestay, but if this is not possible, they will be cared for by another homestay family who works for our organisation. Cover can not be provided if a student is at risk of self harm and concern has been raised by the school. A parent must be responsible and fly over should this situation arise.

### Host Families

All families and homes are personally inspected and must comply with current legislation covered under the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Clear and appropriate guidelines are given to the host families to ensure the safety, welfare and happiness of the student. The home must be warm and welcoming and provide an environment where the individual can relax, study, and have the opportunity to pursue hobbies or interests.

### Updates on student's welfare and academic progress

We will provide support for you and your child with close communication with the schools and we will monitor general welfare of the child. Cotswold Guardians maintains close communication with all host families to provide support and Anne will personally ensure the welfare and happiness of all students in the care of Cotswold Guardians. Your child's welfare is closely monitored through phone and text during a home stay.

### Expenses

Full details of all expenses can be found in the contract.

### What we expect from students whilst staying with a homestay

Cotswold Guardians expect all their students to be polite and courteous when staying with a homestay. A homestay is not a hotel and the expectation is that your child will be included as part of the family. As such, they will be expected to engage with family members, joining them at mealtimes, and possibly helping with chores such as laying the table. Your child's homestay will explain their own house rules to them when they arrive. Please do ask them if you have any questions.

### Student Finances

We will be happy to advise you setting up a bank account and arrange credit cards for your child if required. Please contact us and we will be able to make the necessary arrangements. Pocket money is the responsibility of the house parent and parent.

### Liability

Please note that the homestay provider and Cotswold Guardians will not be liable for any damage arising from conduct and/or behaviour of any student placed with the homestay by the guardianship organisation.

### Responsibilities during a pandemic

Pandemics can cause major disruption to travel and schooling. It is important in such events that *Cotswold Guardians* take advice from the government, the UK Health Security Agency, and the World Health Organisation. AEGIS also provides guidance for members to follow. This is regularly updated as a situation develops. Usually, in a pandemic it is important to restrict movement so as not to spread the disease further. That means boarding school students would usually remain at school. In the event of a pandemic *Cotswold Guardians* may not be able to offer homestay accommodation for your child as this could place students, homestay families and the wider community at risk. *We* will work with you to find flights to home countries where required. *Cotswold Guardians* will work with schools to meet students' needs during a pandemic. This could be by helping to support students to learn remotely as directed by the school. *We* will work with you and your child's school to find suitable quarantine accommodation for students where required.

## PARENT HANDBOOK

### Life in the UK

Living in the UK may be quite different to the life your child is 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".

**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 and markers to show where shoppers should stand. Please explain to your child that they should respect the instructions given.

**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.

Cotswold Guardians offer an exceptionally high standard of overseas guardianship. Our strengths lie in well-planned individual care with our efficient systems keeping pupils, parents, host families and schools very well informed and aware that support is always available. We endeavour to make the transition from home to boarding school as easy and stress free as possible.

