



The Parent Handbook



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Welcome and introduction

Greatway was started by **Yingxia Zhang** (known as **Stephanie Zhang**) in 2001. Her family still runs several English language schools in China. In 2013, she and her husband, Daniel Foulkes, set up Greatway UK. Stephanie now lives and works in the UK and she is also one of the owners of **inlingua Cheltenham**, a busy and friendly international language school in the beautiful Cotswolds. Stephanie and her team provide a supportive and lively atmosphere for students to integrate into British life and get the most out of their school programme in the UK.



She has worked with some of the most prestigious boarding schools in the country for many years and has built up strong links with the admissions and academic staff working at these schools. Our team will work together with teachers, parents and host families to make sure that we take care of our visiting students. We hope that each student will have a safe, fun and memorable experience staying at one of our partner schools, learning English and exploring the United Kingdom. We are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, academic progress, and personal development of international students during their time studying in the UK. This handbook explains the role of each key party involved in the guardianship process, helping you understand how we support your child while they are away from home.



The Greatway team

Greatway: The Guardianship organisation

Our Role and Responsibilities

As your chosen guardianship provider, our main priority is your child's welfare. We serve as a trusted point of contact between parents, students, schools, and homestay families. We act in loco parentis, meaning we take on the parental role while your child is studying in the UK.

What We Provide:

- **24/7 Emergency Support:** Round-the-clock assistance for any issues that may arise, from medical emergencies to travel disruptions.
- **Designated Guardian:** A named member of staff assigned to oversee your child's welfare and maintain regular communication with parents and the school.
- **Regular Student Check-ins:** Scheduled welfare calls and termly student reports to keep you updated on your child's progress and wellbeing.
- **Parental Liaison:** Clear, regular communication with parents to provide updates and respond to any questions or concerns.
- **School Communication:** Attending parent-teacher meetings (in person or online), academic reviews, and assisting with disciplinary or behavioural matters.
- **Travel Support:** Assistance with travel arrangements, including airport transfers and holiday planning.
- **Emergency Homestay Placement:** Arranging alternative accommodation in case of illness, suspension, or school closure.
- **Safeguarding Oversight:** Ensuring that your child is safe, secure, and happy in their environment, and that all accommodations meet our safeguarding standards.

The Homestay

The role of the host family:

Homestay families play a vital role in creating a warm, supportive, and culturally enriching environment for students when they are not in boarding accommodation. We carefully select and vet all homestay families to ensure a safe and welcoming home.

Responsibilities Include:

- Safe and Supportive Home: Providing a clean, comfortable room, nutritious meals, and a caring atmosphere where the student can relax and feel at home.
- Cultural Integration: Helping the student adapt to British life, customs, and language in an informal, family setting.
- Emotional Support: Offering encouragement, listening to concerns, and ensuring the student's mental and emotional wellbeing.
- Communication with Guardianship Organisation: Reporting any concerns regarding the student's health, behaviour, or emotional state.
- Emergency Care: Willingness to host the student during unexpected events such as illness, school closure, or travel delays.
- Compliance with Safeguarding Requirements: Undergoing regular background checks, home inspections, and safeguarding training to ensure the highest level of safety.

The School

The Role of the chosen Educational Institution

The school is central to the student's academic development and pastoral care. As part of the guardianship arrangement, we work closely with the school to monitor your child's progress and wellbeing.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Academic Instruction:** Delivering high-quality education, tracking academic progress, and providing student reports.
- **Pastoral Care:** Monitoring the emotional, physical, and social wellbeing of students within the school setting.
- **Communication with Guardians and Parents:** Alerting the guardianship organisation and parents to any academic, behavioural, or health concerns.
- **Emergency Procedures:** Acting as first responders to medical or safeguarding incidents during school hours.
- **Liaison with the Guardian:** Collaborating with us on disciplinary matters, travel permissions, or issues requiring parental involvement.
- **School Holidays and Exeats:** Notifying the guardianship organisation of term dates, exeats, and requirements for holiday accommodation.

Safeguarding

Greatway 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 provided upon request.

We have a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy. You or your child can raise a safeguarding concern with your contact at the guardianship organisation or directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Alternatively, you may wish to raise a concern directly with the school your child attends. All schools have their own Designated Safeguarding Leads. 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.

Statement of services

At Greatway we are dedicated to supporting international students throughout their educational journey in the UK. Our comprehensive guardianship package is designed to provide peace of mind for parents and to ensure students are well cared for both academically and personally. On the following page you will see full outline of the services we offer as part of our guardianship programme.

Statement of services

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Core Services Provided

24/7 Emergency Support: A dedicated emergency phone line for urgent situations, available at all times and with additional first language support when required.

Dedicated Guardian Assignment:

- Each student is assigned a personal guardian who will act in loco parentis while the student is in the UK.

Regular Welfare Monitoring:

- Termly student welfare reports
- Scheduled check-ins via phone, video call, or in person
- Immediate follow-up on any reported concern.

Academic Oversight:

- Attendance at parent-teacher meetings (virtually or in person)
- Support with academic planning and subject choices (if needed)
- Liaison with school on behavioural, academic, or pastoral matters

Travel & Accommodation Support:

- Assistance with travel planning and holiday arrangements
- Airport transfers arranged (with vetted drivers or hosts)
- Emergency homestay placement during school closures or suspensions

Travel Arrangements

Travel is an important part of the guardianship service, especially for international students arriving in and travelling within the UK. To ensure safe and efficient transfers, Greatway provides full support for travel arrangements at key times during the academic year.

Who Will Meet the Student?

Depending on the circumstances, students may be met by:

- **A member of our guardianship team**
- **A trusted and DBS-checked professional driver** (licensed and experienced with student transfers)
- **The assigned homestay family**, when appropriate and pre-arranged
- **School transport services**, if coordinated in advance

All parties involved in transport are fully vetted, briefed, and trained to ensure the student's safety and comfort at all times.

Modes of Transport Used

We arrange the most suitable and safe method of transport based on location, timing, and cost:

- Private Car / Chauffeur Service: Preferred for airport transfers and late arrivals/departures.
- Train Travel: For older students, usually accompanied or supervised depending on age and confidence level.
- Taxi Services: Only trusted taxi firms that meet safeguarding standards.
- School Buses: Used when the school offers reliable transfer services.

All transport providers used are **DBS-checked**, insured, and approved by our organisation.

Required Travel information for Parents

To ensure smooth arrangements, we require detailed travel information in advance of each term or holiday.

Parents must provide:

- Full flight or train itinerary, including flight number, arrival/departure airport and times
- Student's travel preferences (e.g. requires escort, allergies, passport details)
- Emergency contact details for travel days
- Written permission for unaccompanied travel (if applicable)

Who is responsible for organising Transport?

Travel time	Responsibility for Arranging Transport	Notes
Start of Term	Parents (inbound) / Guardianship Organisation (if requested)	Parents (inbound) / Guardianship Organisation (if requested)
End of Term	Guardianship Organisation	We will confirm travel arrangements well in advance
Half-Terms / Exeats	Guardianship Organisation	Including homestay drop-off/pick-up or airport transfer
Emergency Travel	Guardianship Organisation	E.g. illness, suspension, or family emergency
Weekend Visits / School Trips	School or Parents	Must notify guardian in advance for approval or support

Deadlines for Travel Information

To ensure safe and timely arrangements, we ask that travel details be submitted by the following deadlines:

- **Start / End of Term:** At least **3 weeks before departure**
- **Half-Term / Exeat Weekends:** At least 2 weeks in advance
- **Emergency / Last-Minute Travel:** As soon as possible, we will always support urgent needs.

For specific term dates, consult your child's boarding school website.

Travel information should be sent to:

Email: stephanie@greatwayeducation.com

Phone: +44 (0)7539428055

Required Travel information for Parents

Travel Safety & Supervision

- Students under 16 will not be permitted to travel unaccompanied unless written parental consent is received and approved by the guardianship team.
- Our drivers and chaperones will wait at Arrivals with a named sign and ensure handover is completed with the student.
- All travel movements are monitored and recorded, and parents are updated when the student is collected and arrives at their destination.

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 in advance.

Failure to provide travel information on time may result in additional charges or difficulty securing a preferred transfer option.

Emergencies

Greatway 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.

Homestay Accommodation

Our Commitment

Your child's safety, wellbeing, and happiness are our highest priorities. All homestays are carefully checked, approved, and monitored in line with UK safeguarding requirements. At Greatway, we ensure that every student placed in accommodation outside of school is welcomed into a safe, comfortable, and nurturing home environment during half-terms, exeat weekends, and school holidays. All our accommodation options are carefully selected to support the wellbeing and development of international students during their stay in the UK.

Key features:

- A welcoming home environment with a fully vetted and DBS-checked host family
- A private bedroom for the student
- Shared or private bathroom (depending on the household)
- Access to shared family spaces (e.g. kitchen, living room, garden)
- Full-board meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Support with laundry and basic cleaning

Homestays are matched with students based on personality, dietary needs, and preferences, to ensure a comfortable cultural experience and a strong sense of belonging.

Greatway expects 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.

Homestay Accommodation

Requesting a homestay

You (or your child's education agent) complete a Homestay Request Form and send it to us.

We will ask for:

- Your child's personal details and age
- School name and term dates
- Arrival and departure details
- Dietary, medical, religious, or cultural needs
- Any preferences (e.g. pets, allergies)
- This helps us find the most suitable home for your child.

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Homestay Accommodation

You (or your child's education agent) complete a Homestay Request Form and send it to us. We will ask for:

Step 1: Student information

- Your child's personal details and age
- School name and term dates
- Arrival and departure details
- Dietary, medical, religious, or cultural needs
- Any preferences (e.g. pets, allergies)

This helps us find the most suitable home for your child.

Step 2: Reviewing the Request

We review the information to ensure:

- Your child is fully covered under our guardianship care
- The dates match the school term
- Any special needs can be met safely and appropriately

If we need more information, we will contact you.

Step 3: Selecting a Suitable Homestay

We match your child with a host family from our approved homestay network.

All homestay families:

- Have been personally visited and assessed
- Have valid DBS (police) checks for all adults in the household
- Meet AEGIS safeguarding and accommodation standards
- Live within a reasonable distance of the school

We also consider your child's personality, needs, and preferences wherever possible.

Step 4: Sharing Homestay Details

Before confirming the placement, we send you:

- A profile of the host family
- Address and contact details
- Information about the home and house rules

Homestay Accommodation

Step 5: Confirmation and Payment

Once approved:

- We issue a Homestay Confirmation
- Fees are invoiced according to our published fee schedule
- Payment is required before arrival unless otherwise agreed

Step 6: Arrival and Settling In

- The host family welcomes your child on arrival (or at an agreed meeting point).
- Your child is shown around the home and informed about:
- Daily routines
- House rules

Emergency procedures

- We confirm with you that your child has arrived safely.

Step 7: Ongoing Care and Support

Throughout the stay:

- We maintain regular contact with your child
- We carry out welfare checks in line with AEGIS requirements
- Your child has 24/7 emergency contact details

If any concerns arise, we act quickly and keep you informed.

Changes or Emergencies

- If a homestay change is needed, we will discuss this with you.
- In rare emergencies, we may move your child immediately to ensure their safety.

Emergency Accommodation

When urgent placement is required (e.g. illness, suspension, school closure, or travel disruption), we will arrange emergency accommodation immediately.

This may include:

- A trusted homestay with availability at short notice
- One of our designated emergency carers
- Overnight stays with a staff member (if necessary and appropriate)

Emergency accommodation will always meet our safeguarding and safety standards.

Updates on student's welfare and academic progress

At Greatway, regular and transparent communication is central to our guardianship service. We are committed to keeping parents informed of their child's **pastoral wellbeing, academic performance, and general progress** throughout the school year — whether the student is at school or staying in homestay accommodation.

Academic Progress at School

We work closely with the student's school to monitor and report on academic development. Our guardians are proactive in maintaining contact with school staff and act as a bridge between the school and the family.

We provide:

- Attendance at parent-teacher meetings (in person or virtually) on behalf of parents
- Termly academic summary reports written by your child's guardian, based on school reports and direct communication with teachers
- Immediate notifications of academic concerns, including underperformance, learning support needs, or behavioural issues
- Support with subject choices, exam preparation, or academic planning (if appropriate and agreed)
- Communication and coordination with school **Housemasters/mistresses, tutors, or heads of year**

These updates are shared via email and guardians are available for follow-up discussion by phone or video call.



Pastoral Care & Welfare Monitoring

Your child's wellbeing is our highest priority. We provide regular updates on their emotional, physical, and social welfare, whether they are in school or staying in a homestay.

While at School:

- Regular check-ins with the student via phone, message, or video call (frequency based on age and service level)
- Communication with school pastoral staff (e.g. boarding house staff, school nurse)
- Immediate reporting of any issues such as illness, homesickness, bullying, or disciplinary action
- Ongoing support and encouragement to help students settle in and adapt to life in the UK

While in Homestay:

- Feedback from the homestay family on the student's behaviour, wellbeing, and participation in family life
- Follow-up from guardians during or after the homestay period to check on the student's comfort and happiness
- Prompt communication with parents if concerns arise during homestay stays
- Ensuring homestay environment remains safe, supportive, and appropriate through routine monitoring

A short **post-homestay welfare report** may be provided after extended holiday placements or at parent request.

Communication with Parents

We believe in open, respectful, and proactive communication with parents. Your assigned guardian will act as your main point of contact and will:

- Respond to emails and messages promptly
- Keep you informed of significant changes or concerns
- Arrange calls or meetings at mutually convenient times
- Offer reassurance and practical advice when needed

If you ever feel you're not receiving enough information or would like more detail, you are always welcome to contact us directly.

Expenses

At Greatway we aim to be transparent and fair in all matters relating to costs incurred on behalf of your child during their time in the UK. This Expenses Policy outlines how additional charges are managed, what they may include, and how they are billed.

The guardianship fee covers a wide range of core services (as outlined in the Statement of Services), but some situations may incur additional costs. These are always handled responsibly and with your prior approval where possible.

Types of Additional Expenses

You may be asked to cover the cost of the following:

Travel & Transport

- Airport transfers (to/from homestay or school)
- Taxi fares for appointments, emergencies, or weekend travel
- Train or coach tickets
- Escort fees if a staff member must accompany the student
- Congestion charges, parking fees, or tolls (if applicable)



Homestay Costs

- Daily or nightly rate for homestay during exeats, half-terms, holidays
- Supplement for special dietary needs (if requested by homestay)
- Entertainment or activity costs during homestay (e.g. cinema, outings) — if agreed

Medical or Wellbeing

- Over-the-counter or prescription medication (if not covered by NHS)
- Medical appointments (private GP, dental, optical, physio)
- Counselling or therapy sessions (if agreed in advance)

Expenses

School-Related Costs

- School uniform, sports kit, or equipment
- Academic materials (e.g. calculators, revision books)
- Exam registration fees (if not included in school tuition)
- Pocket money advance (if requested by parents)

Other Occasional Costs

- Visa renewal appointments or support services
- SIM cards, mobile phone credit
- Emergency accommodation outside of normal provision
- Courier charges for documents (e.g. passports, visas)

How Expenses Are Managed

We work on a **pre-funded expense model** to allow for smooth service without delays or disruption.

Personal Expense Account / Float

- Parents are asked to maintain a pre-paid expense fund (float) of approximately £300–£500, depending on the age of the student and expected needs.
- This fund is held in trust by Greatway and used solely for your child's expenses.
- You will receive a statement of account showing all transactions and current balance.

Approval Process

- Wherever possible, we will seek parental approval in advance for any expenses over £50 (unless emergency).
- In urgent situations (e.g. medical emergencies), we will act in the best interests of your child and notify you as soon as possible.

Expenses

Invoicing & Reimbursement

- A detailed expense report is sent termly or on request, showing all charges deducted from the expense account.
- If the fund drops below £100, we will request a top-up to maintain sufficient balance.
- Any unused balance will be refunded at the end of the guardianship period or offset against your final invoice.

What's Not Covered by the Guardianship Fee

Please note the guardianship fee does not include:

- School tuition, boarding fees, or registration
- Flights and international travel
- Visa application costs
- Private tutors
- Personal spending money



Transparency & Accountability

We keep accurate records of all purchases, receipts, and communications regarding expenses. Our team is committed to:

- Avoiding unnecessary costs
- Choosing cost-effective travel and services
- Consulting parents wherever possible

If you have a preferred spending limit, service provider (e.g. taxi company), or specific instructions about your child's personal budget, we are happy to accommodate your preferences.

Student Finances

- From the pre-paid deposit agreed, your child will have a Top-Up card for pocket money. For any amount over £50, Greatway will require parental consent.
- We will help you set 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.

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”. Due to the coronavirus, greetings have changed, and handshakes are not currently being used. A verbal greeting is perfectly acceptable, whilst maintaining social distancing.

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. Due to the coronavirus, spaces between people waiting in the queue are currently larger, so please ensure that your child is aware of the need to maintain a suitable distance. In the UK this is currently 1 metre or more. Shops in the UK are currently limiting the number of people allowed inside at any one time, so your child may need to queue more often than in usual times. 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.



Life in the UK

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.



Liability

Please note that the homestay provider and Greatway 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 Greatway takes advice from the government, 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 Greatway may not be able to offer homestay accommodation for your child as this could place students, homestay families and the wider community at risk. Greatway will work with you to find flights to home countries where required. Greatway 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. Greatway will work with you and your child's school to find suitable quarantine accommodation for students where required. Greatway has a policy that outlines the procedures we are following during the Covid-19 pandemic. This can be available upon request.

Stay in Touch

Reminder: We are here to assist — but timely communication is essential to ensure your child's travel is smooth and stress-free. Notify us immediately of any last-minute changes to flights or plans. Ensure your contact details are up to date for the travel period.

Thank you for your cooperation! We look forward welcoming you!

Parent travel Checklist

Book Flights or Travel	✓
Book your child's flight/train tickets to and from the UK.	
Ensure arrival/departure times fall within reasonable hours (e.g. between 8am–9pm for airport pickups).	
Consider jet lag and school schedules when booking travel.	
Submit Travel Information to Greatway (see deadlines above)	
Include:	
Full flight/train itinerary (dates, times, airline, flight numbers)	
Arrival/departure airports and terminals	
Luggage details (if excess baggage or special items)	
Student's passport details (if not already on file)	
Emergency contact for travel day	
Special instructions or requests (e.g. medical needs, nervous traveller, escort required)	
Provide Consent for Travel (If Needed)	
For students under 16 , submit written parental consent for:	
Unaccompanied travel	
Use of taxis or trains	
Being met by a driver or homestay	
Confirm whether your child may use public transport	
Confirm Homestay or Accommodation Needs	
Let us know if your child will need a homestay during:	
Exeat weekends	
Half-term or end-of-term breaks	
Unexpected school closures	
Provide any changes to your child's dietary or medical requirements.	
Prepare Your Child for Travel	
Ensure your child has:	
Valid passport and visa	
UK SIM card or mobile phone access	
Guardianship emergency contact number saved	
Provide your child with:	
A copy of travel itinerary	
Emergency contacts (guardian, homestay, school)	
Any COVID-19 or health documentation (if required)	