

UK

Independent

Colleges

Guardianship

Student Handbook

2024-2025

WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear Student,

Welcome to UK Independent Colleges Limited (UKIC)!

We are thrilled to have you with us, and we are committed to ensuring that your journey in the UK will be safe, comfortable, and highly enriching. As your guardians during your study period, we stand by your side, providing support, advice, and guidance.

OUR SERVICES

Here at UKIC, we offer a wide range of services designed to meet your needs and help you to adapt to your new environment. We handle everything from arranging for suitable accommodations, providing advice on local culture and customs, to organising recreational activities. Our goal is to ensure you have a well-rounded experience, both academically and socially. We also liaise with your school or college to monitor your academic progress, attend parents' evenings, and provide detailed termly reports to your parents.

OUR TEAM

Our team consists of professionals who are experienced in taking care of international students. We believe in making your stay as pleasant as possible, helping you overcome any challenges that may arise. All of our team members are ICEF qualified agent, British Council accredited UK agent and UK Counsellor.



Mr Min Zhang, Founder and Director, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Prevent Lead - With 15 years of experience in international education, Mr Min Zhang is our esteemed leader who ensures that UKIC stays true to its mission.

British Council UK Agent Certificate Code: 11776
British Council UK Counsellor Certificate Code: 11777
Tel: +44(0)7508118886
Email: info@primecolleges.co.uk

Mr Zhi XU, Senior Educational Consultant, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Data Controller - With a deep understanding of the UK education system, Mr Zhi XU is here to guide you academically, helping you navigate school life successfully.

Tel: +44(0)7300012772
Email: uk3@primecolleges.co.uk

WELCOME TO THE UKIC FAMILY

As you embark on this new journey in the UK, we want you to know that you are not alone. We are here to help you every step of the way. So, don't hesitate to reach out to us if you need any assistance or if you just want to chat. Welcome to our family, and here's to a wonderful, exciting, and successful academic journey in the UK!

Warm Regards,

Min Zhang
Director, UK Independent Colleges Limited (UKIC)
Tel: +44(0)7508118886
Email: info@primecolleges.co.uk

ROLE OF THE GUARDIANSHIP ORGANISATION (UKIC)

Our primary role as UK Independent Colleges Limited (UKIC) is to be your guide and support system while you study in the UK. We will oversee your welfare, academic progress, and overall experience.

Welfare Management: We ensure your well-being and safety throughout your stay. We coordinate with your schools, homestays, and other third parties to address any concerns or problems you might have. We also assist in medical emergencies, ensuring you receive the necessary care promptly.

Academic Support: We liaise with your school, track your academic progress, attend parents' evenings, and share termly reports with your parents. We're here to help you navigate the school system and offer support and advice to help you achieve your academic goals.

Cultural Adaptation: We provide guidance and advice to help you adapt to the UK's culture and lifestyle, organising cultural immersion activities and providing you with the necessary tools to integrate seamlessly into your new environment.

Communication Bridge: We act as the communication bridge between you, your parents, your school, and your homestay family. We ensure everyone is informed about your progress and welfare.

ROLE OF THE GUARDIAN

Your Guardian is your primary contact person at UKIC. They are your go-to person for day-to-day assistance and are dedicated to supporting you throughout your academic journey.

Personal Support: Your Guardian is available to help with any queries or issues you may face, whether academic, personal, or logistical.

Advocacy: Your Guardian will represent your interests in all matters with your school and homestay. They will ensure your needs are met and your rights are respected.

Regular Check-ins: Your Guardian will regularly communicate with you to check on your well-being and progress, providing a consistent line of communication between you and UKIC.

ROLE OF THE HOMESTAY

Your homestay plays a crucial role in providing a comfortable, safe, and nurturing environment where you can live and study effectively.

Accommodation: The homestay provides you with a clean, comfortable, and fully-furnished room where you can rest, study, and relax.

Meals: The homestay provides nutritious meals daily, catering to dietary needs where necessary.

Cultural Immersion: Living with a local family, you get the opportunity to learn about British culture, customs, and lifestyle first-hand, enriching your overall experience in the UK.

Support and Care: The homestay family is there to offer emotional support, care, and a friendly environment, making sure you feel at home during your stay.

Safety and Supervision: The homestay family ensures your safety and wellbeing at all times, providing responsible adult supervision in line with UKIC and AEGIS guidelines.

Remember, UKIC, your Guardian, and your homestay are all part of your support network in the UK, working together to ensure your successful and enriching study experience in the UK. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us whenever you need assistance or have concerns.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A STUDENT

UKIC has a Student Behaviour Code of Conduct which outlines the positive behaviour it expects from students. Please see the stand-alone code of conduct for further details. The guidelines are covered in the relevant sections of this handbook, such as your behaviour when staying with a homestay (see the Homestay section) and UK laws (see the Living in the UK section).

Abusive Behaviour

We do not accept any abusive behaviour by students, staff or visitors (this includes unkind words, messages and actions, verbal, mental and physical abuse, taking or damaging someone else's things, violence or anger towards another person, talking to/about people in an unkind way, teasing, harassment, bullying).

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. Any concerns you have will be taken seriously. You can contact in the following ways:

General enquiries	
Telephone (Monday to Friday: 09:00-17:00)	+44(0)7508118886
Email	info@primecolleges.co.uk
WeChat	PrimeArts
Emergencies 24/7	
Telephone	+44(0)7508118886
Safeguarding concerns	
Designated Safeguarding Lead Min ZHANG	+44(0)7508118886 info@primecolleges.co.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Zhi XU	+44(0)7300012772 uk3@primecolleges.co.uk
Emergency Numbers in the UK (Free)	
Emergency: Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance	999 (or 112)
Police (Non-Emergency)	101
NHS (National Health Service, Non-Emergency)	111

Keeping in touch

We will keep in regular contact with you throughout your stay in the UK to check that you are happy at school and with any homestay arrangements we have made for you. Please do talk to us if you have any questions, concerns or if you simply want to chat. We are here to help.

ARRIVING IN THE UK

Please remember your passport and any other relevant paperwork. Contact us before your travel day if you are unsure of what you need to take with you.

Student Visas

All students from the EU and EEA require a visa to study in the UK.

If you are from another country, you will need a visa and, most of the time, will need to organise it before you travel. The most common visas are Student Visa (General) and Student Visa (Child).

If you do need a visa to study, you must:

- get it before you travel
- follow the rules
- think about your passport expiry dates
- not stay after your visa expires

For the most up-to-date information, please visit this website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

BRP Cards

International students who apply to come to the UK will have eVisas. Your visa decision letter will provide explanations and instructions on eVisas in details or you could browse further information on the GOV.UK(Website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa>).

Registering with the Police

The police registration scheme ended on 4th August 2022. Students no longer need to register with the police upon arrival to the UK.

Arriving at the Airport

If UKIC has arranged an airport transfer for you, our designated driver will meet you at the arrivals hall and will be holding a sign so you can find them easily. DO NOT leave the airport alone. If you have trouble finding the driver, please call our office or emergency number and we will help you.

Bank Account

Opening an account in the UK can be difficult, but your school may be able to help. To open an account, you will need a 'bank letter' from the school, your passport/ID and proof of your address.

If you open a bank account, keep your account numbers, PIN and cards safe at all times. Do not give this information to anyone.

If your bank card is lost or stolen, you must report it to the bank immediately so they can cancel the card and send you a new one.

Remember, if you change your address, you must inform the bank.

National Insurance Number

You will need a National Insurance (NI) number to work in the UK.

The easiest way to get an NI number is to call Jobcentre Plus on 0345 600 0643. Opening times: Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 18:00. You will need to make an appointment. You can also find further information here <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>

Take your passport, a letter confirming you have been offered work or are registered with an agency and a 'Certificate of Enrolment' letter from the school. During your appointment, please ask them how long you will have to wait for your NI number, it is normally sent in the post.

If you have a biometric residence permit (BRP), you might have a National Insurance number already - it will be printed on the back of your BRP if you do.

LIVING IN THE UK

Living in the UK may be quite different to what you are used to. Every country has its own customs and it may take you a while to get used to the new way of life. 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 changed, and handshakes were not being used, although many people are starting to use this form of greeting again. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, 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 be aware of maintaining a suitable distance. In the UK this is currently 1m plus. Shops in the UK are currently limiting the number of people allowed inside at any one time, so you may need to queue more often than in usual times. Some shops and services have clear instructions and markers to show where you should stand. Please 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.

KEEPING SAFE

We expect your stay in the UK to be a safe and happy one. The UK has a diverse population and is very welcoming. There is lots to do- from visits to art galleries and museums, to a wide range of outdoor activities. However, as is the case in all countries, you need to be aware of how to keep yourself safe just in case you find yourself in a difficult situation:

Personal safety and the care of valuable possessions and cash / credit cards

When you go out, you should be vigilant of what is happening around you. Keep your belongings close and ideally walk with no headphones so that you can hear traffic and others around you. Try not to use your phone when out and about unless it is necessary as this distracts you and could tempt opportunist thieves. It is best to go out with a friend or adult, rather than alone. Always let your homestay know if you are going out and what time you expect to return. If for any reason you are running late. Please let your homestay know. Make sure that your homestay has your mobile number, and that you have their number in your phone.

Please take care of your valuable possessions, including any money or credit cards. When out, ensure that money and cards are carefully stored, such as in a zipped pocket or bag. This is especially important in crowded areas, as pick pockets may be in operation.

If you lose your debit or credit cards, or think that they have been stolen, then contact your bank immediately who will be able to stop your card.

In an emergency

In emergencies you can call the police, fire brigade or ambulance on 999. This number should only be called when there is an emergency. The telephone operator will ask you what service you require and will ask you for some details, such as what has happened, and where you are.

For less urgent issues there are two separate numbers you can call, one for the police, and one for medical advice:

- Police (non-emergencies): 101
- Medical information NHS: 111

You can dial any of the above numbers from a landline telephone or mobile phone.

Safeguarding

If you are ever concerned about your safety, we are here to help. If you have any worries, feel that you have been asked to do something that you feel uncomfortable doing or have been hurt in any way by another student (often called peer on peer abuse) or an adult, you should tell an adult you trust, even if the person has asked you not to tell anyone. Any concern you raise will be treated seriously.

UKIC has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) who can be contacted with any concerns that you have. They are trained to help you. Their details are:

- DSL: Min ZHANG, +44(0)7508118886, info@primecolleges.co.uk
- 24 hour emergency number: +44(0)7508118886

Alternatively, you can speak to any member of the guardianship organisation staff, your homestay or staff in school, and they will listen and help you.

UKIC has a safeguarding policy that is available on our website www.primcolleges.co.uk. This explains our procedures in detail.

List of useful contacts

There may be times when you would like advice from organisations, rather than from us. Whilst we would encourage you where appropriate to share with us any concerns so that we can help you, you could also contact the following organisations:

ChildLine: Childline is a counselling service for children and young people up to their 19th birthday. You can contact them with any problem or concern. They can be contacted on 0800 1111

Local Safeguarding Partnership: The Local Safeguarding Partnership plays a critical role in protecting the welfare of children and young people in the locality. It is often the first point of contact for any non-emergency safeguarding concerns. The guardianship organisation's Local Safeguarding Partnership is Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership and they can be contacted on 0117 903 6444.

The Children's Commissioner: The Children's Commissioner's role is to stand up for the rights of children. You make contact via their website, <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us/contact> or by telephone: 020 7783 8330.

Prevent / anti-radicalisation

The ChildLine Website explains radicalisation as follows:

“Radicalisation is when someone starts to believe or support extreme views. They could be pressured to do things illegal by someone else. Or they might change their behaviour and beliefs.

This could happen if they feel:

- isolated and lonely or wanting to belong
- unhappy about themselves and what others might think of them
- embarrassed or judged about their culture, gender, religion, or race
- stressed or depressed
- fed up with being bullied or treated badly by other people or by society
- angry at other people or the government
- confused about what they are doing
- pressured to stand up for other people who are being oppressed.

Someone who has been radicalised might believe that sexual, religious, or racial violence is OK. They may be influenced by what they see online. And they might have links to extreme groups that preach hate like Nazi groups or Islamic extremists like Daesh, also known as ISIS or IS.

Having extreme views can be dangerous. And this can often lead to harmful and illegal activities involving violence, attacks, discrimination or hate - which the person could be arrested or sent to prison for. This can affect them and their future."

If you are worried about the behaviour of someone you know, or if you think that someone is trying to radicalise you, seek help. UKIC has a member of staff, known as the Prevent Lead, who is trained to deal with any concerns you may have:

Prevent Lead: Min Zhang, +44(0)7508118886

Alternatively speak to a trusted adult in your school, such as the DSL, a member of guardianship organisation staff, your parents or your homestay. You could also speak to ChildLine on 0800 1111. If you think someone is in serious danger, you can call 999 for urgent help.

Further information on Prevent, Radicalisation can be found in the UKIC's Prevent Policy. You can find this www.primecolleges.co.uk.

The ChildLine website has further information that you may find useful: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/>

Safe use of the internet, access to Wi-Fi

The internet is a wonderful tool, providing us with a huge amount of information as well as access to our friends and family who can be many miles away. However, we need to take care to keep safe whilst using the internet as there are some people who are trying to trick us, such as into giving us their personal details. Please take great care whilst using the internet. Your school will teach you how to use the internet safely. It is important that you adopt good online safety practice and report misuse, abuse or access to inappropriate materials.

Good online safety practice includes:

- Not giving out personal details such as addresses and telephone numbers to strangers, even if they say they are your own age
- Not sending digital pictures to strangers
- Not responding to unkind messages- tell a trusted adult
- Never giving out internet passwords to anyone
- Following the online safety guidelines that your school teaches you both in and out of school.

Further advice can be found at <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk> or <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/>

How to report concerns:

- Tell a trusted adult, such as UKIC DSL, your guardian, homestay, teacher, or parent.
- If you are worried about online abuse or the way someone has been communicating online you can report them to Child Exploitation & Online Protection command (CEOP) <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre>. CEOP is a law enforcement agency who helps keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online.
- You can also call ChildLine who will offer advice and listen to any concerns. Their number is 0800 1111

Please discuss Wi-Fi access with your homestay. Some families have packages where they have a limit on the data they may use in a month; therefore, streaming films for example would be inappropriate. Please note that homestays may have filters on their internet and may use parental controls to prevent access of inappropriate sites. Some homestays may turn off the Wi-Fi at bedtime. You should use your own devices rather than the family's home computer.

Bullying / cyberbullying

Bullying is unkind and will not be tolerated by your school or UKIC. If you experience bullying during your stay in the UK, please tell a trusted adult as soon as possible who will be able to help you and make the bullying stop. This would usually be a teacher or your house parent if bullying occurred in school, or your guardian, homestay or a member of the guardianship organisation staff if bullying was experienced during your stay with a homestay family. Bullies often are unkind because they are unhappy themselves, so by telling an adult they will be helped too.

Bullying may include:

- Name calling or teasing
- Making unkind comments on social media or sending unkind messages
- Hurting someone physically
- Stealing items from an individual
- Threatening a person
- Spreading unkind rumours
- Unkindness may happen online- this is called cyberbullying

Your school will provide you with guidance on how to spot and handle bullying. ChildLine also offer some advice for children on bullying and cyberbullying. You can find this here <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-cyberbullying/>

Keeping safe in a pandemic

Your safety is our priority. We have a separate policy that outlines our procedures to help keep you safe during a pandemic. This can be found on our website. Whilst restrictions have eased in the UK following the Covid-19 pandemic, you are still advised to consider several measures, including wearing a mask in crowded situations (such as in a busy shop or whilst travelling on public transport) and sanitising hands when required. We advise that you keep a mask and a bottle of hand sanitiser in your bag when you go out.

LIVING WITH A HOMESTAY

UKIC expects all their students to be polite and courteous when staying with a homestay. As mentioned previously, it is expected that you say “please” and “thank you” when asking for and receiving items. Your homestay is not a hotel and the expectation is that you will be included as part of the family. As such, you will be expected to engage with family members, joining them at mealtimes, and possibly helping with chores such as laying the table. Your homestay will explain their own house rules with you when you arrive. Please do ask them if you have any questions.

Mealtimes

You will be provided with three meals a day:

- **Breakfast-** Typical food includes cereal, porridge, toast, croissants, fruit, or yoghurt. You may be offered a cooked breakfast such as poached, boiled, or scrambled eggs, or bacon and eggs.
- **Lunch-** this is usually a light meal, such as a salad, sandwich, or soup.
- **Dinner-** this is usually the main meal of the day and will usually be a two-course meal. The main course will usually be hot. Dinner is usually served around the table and all family members usually attend.
- **Snacks-** your host family will provide you with snacks and drinks in-between meals if you so wish. Typical snacks include a biscuit, slice of cake or fruit. Your homestay will explain how you can access these.

You should ensure that UKIC is aware of any special dietary requirements or allergies. If you have any special requests, please do let your homestay know.

Most homestays will prepare meals for you (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). You may want to help the family in their meal preparations or cook something yourself. Please do talk to your homestay about this and they will advise you how to use the kitchen and the necessary safety rules. If you have your own food that you wish to eat during your stay, please let your homestay know so that this can be stored safely (for instance in a fridge if required).

Use of the bathroom

Students are asked to be respectful of the family routines. If you are sharing a bathroom, please be considerate with the time taken to shower and bathe as others may need to use the facility. Please leave bathrooms tidy. Some families may have limits on the amount of hot water available each day due to their boiler capacity. Please discuss the best

times for showering or taking a bath. It is not usually necessary to shower or bathe more than once a day. Please ensure that you lock the door of the bathroom when in use and ensure that you are suitably clothed when travelling to and from the bathroom.

Laundry arrangements

If you are staying with a homestay for more than one night, they will provide you with laundry facilities. In most cases the homestay will undertake to do the laundry for you. Depending upon your age and maturity, the homestay may give permission for you to do your own laundry if requested and agreed.

HOMESICKNESS

When you arrive in the UK, you might miss your home, family, and friends. These feelings of missing familiar surroundings and family are perfectly normal and are called homesickness.

Signs that you may be feeling homesick include:

- A strong desire to go home
- Feeling lonely
- Feeling sad
- Feeling anxious
- Lack of motivation
- Loss of confidence
- Feeling depressed
- Experiencing mood swings
- Feeling insecure
- Finding simple tasks difficult
- Physical symptoms, such as headaches and nausea

If you feel homesick please do not worry, there are many people who can help you manage your feelings. Talk to your house parent, teacher, parent, guardian, or any member of guardian staff who will listen and will be able to support you and offer advice. School life will be very busy and there will be many activities arranged to enable you to have fun and make new friends.

Electrical appliances and safety

Please be aware that electrical appliances need to be handled safely as they can pose a risk of fire if not used appropriately. Specifically, overseas phone chargers and laptop power devices may pose a significant fire risk so if possible, purchase UK versions. Please do ask us for advice on the best appliances to purchase, we are happy to help!

What to do in a medical emergency

You will be required to register with a doctor whilst staying in the UK. This is usually arranged by the school. If you have private medical insurance, please provide us with the details. Depending on your period of stay, it may also be advisable to register with a dentist.

Please do let your homestay or the guardianship organisation know if you feel unwell. They will look after you. This may include making a doctor's appointment for you, or in an extreme emergency taking you to hospital. If you feel unwell at school, please let your house parent, matron, nurse or teacher know and they will look after you.

The National Health Service has a helpline that can be used. This number is 111.

In an emergency, an ambulance can be called on 999.

Permission for visiting the local area / shops / travelling further afield / excursions

Schools frequently need a parent or guardian to sign for parental permission for you to participate in school activities and excursions or if you want to visit the local area, shops etc. Our policy is to forward these to your parents for approval if the cost is over 20 GBP, and / or if the activity is strenuous or potentially dangerous. Otherwise we will sign, unless your parents have indicated otherwise on the Application Form.

When being with a homestay, students aged 16 and over should be aware that you need to inform your hosts and UKIC if you would like to go out by yourselves or with friends to visit the local area. If you would like to travel further afield (e.g. to another city), UKIC must be informed in advance and we will seek permission from your parents.

If members from your homestay would like to take you out for an excursion (e.g. a day trip or cinema/theatre visit), please let us know.

Please see the Homestay Accommodation section above for curfew details when staying with a host family.

Curfew / bedtimes

Students who have permission to go out on their own will be required to return to homestays by the following times:

- 15 and under Must be accompanied by an adult member of host family
- 16 & 17 9pm at the latest
- 18 and over 10pm at the latest

All students who are permitted to go out unaccompanied by their homestay must take their mobile phone (fully charged) with them and keep this switched on. It is important that if students do go out unaccompanied, that they let the homestay know where they are going and roughly know long they will be out. If for any reason they are delayed, students must contact the homestay to inform them.

UKIC suggests that student bedtimes should be as follows:

- 12 and under 9pm
- 13 – 15 10pm
- 16 – 17 10:30pm
- 18 and over 11pm

Any deviation to these times should be discussed with the homestay.

ENGLISH LAWS

Laws regarding the consumption of alcohol

UKIC does not permit their students to consume alcohol whilst under their care, including when they are staying at a homestay. In the UK it is illegal for people under 18 to buy alcohol in a pub, off-licence, shop or elsewhere. In most cases, it is against the law for anyone to buy alcohol for someone under 18 to drink in a pub or a public place.

Laws regarding the use of drugs and illegal substances

UKIC prohibits students from using recreational drugs and illegal substances whilst in their care. In the UK you can get a fine or prison sentence if you:

- take drugs
- carry drugs
- make drugs
- sell, deal or share drugs (also called ‘supplying’ them)

If you are under 18, the police are allowed to tell your parent, guardian or carer that you’ve been caught with drugs.

Laws regarding smoking and vaping

UKIC prohibits students from smoking and vaping whilst in their care. In the UK, it is illegal to buy cigarettes if you are under the age of 18.

Laws regarding sexual activity

UKIC prohibits students from engaging in sexual activity whilst in their care, even if they are over the age of consent. In the UK the age of consent is 16. That means that it is illegal to have sex with someone under the age of 16.

Laws regarding tattoos and body piercings

UKIC prohibits students from having a tattoo or body piercing whilst in their care. In the UK, it is illegal to tattoo a young person under the age of 18, even if they have parental consent. There is no legal age of consent for body piercing, and so it is legal for someone under the age of 18 to have a piercing as long as they have consented to it. Children under the age of 16 cannot legally consent to a genital (or in the case of girls, nipple) piercing, as it is considered to be indecent assault.

MOBILE PHONES

The UK has several network providers. We will be able to help you register with a phone provider and help you purchase SIM cards- please contact us for further details.

Mobile phones are extremely useful devices, especially when you are a long way from home and want to stay in contact with your family and friends. However, it is important that you use them safely. Childline offers useful advice on their website:

- “Use a passcode on your phone: This can help to protect your data if someone tries to steal or access it. Nobody should be able to guess your passcode, so do not set it to something other people will know, like your birthday.
- Keep your phone with you: Store your phone in a safe pocket so that it is hidden from sight. Be careful when you take it out in public places and do not let other people use it unless you know and trust them.
- Do not use public WiFi: Public WiFi may not always be secure, especially in places like cafés. Connecting to it means that someone might be able monitor the sites or apps you are using.
- Check what data your apps can use: Lots of apps will ask for permission to use your data when you install them. They might want to view things like your location, contacts, photos and even messages. Be careful about what you agree to and check what permissions your apps have in the ‘settings’ menu of your phone.
- Add an ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact number to your phone: If you lose your phone or something happens, it can be hard for someone to contact you. Add the phone number of someone you trust, like your parent or carer to your lock screen or on the back of your phone with a sticker.
- Be careful who you add or talk to: When you talk to someone online, you do not always know who they are or whether they’re being truthful. If you are talking to someone online, be careful about what you share.
- Think before you share or save something: Once you share a message, photo or video you lose control of it. Someone else can save or screenshot it, and they can share it with other people. Sharing or saving nudes can be illegal.”(<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/mobile-phone-safety/>)

Please also be courteous when using your mobile phone whilst at your homestay. This includes not using it at the mealtime, or when the family are engaging in discussion with you. You should not ask to use the homestay telephone unless there is an emergency, or you have agreed this in advance with the homestay.

TRAVELLING AROUND

You may need to travel during your time in the UK. This will include travelling to and from your homestay, to and from school, to the airport or any places that you wish to visit. If you require transport please let us know. Transport is usually arranged by your school or guardianship organisation. They use trusted drivers who have had the necessary safety checks. Occasionally guardianship staff or homestays may be permitted to provide transport for you. You will be provided with details of who is going to collect you in advance. You will be given the name of the driver and the registration number of the car, along with the time that they will arrive. Please ensure that you are ready at the stated time. Never go with anyone other than the named person/registration number provided, even if they say that this has been arranged with school/guardian. If you are in any doubt ask a trusted adult, such as a member of school staff, or your guardian.

When you are travelling in a car please sit in the back where possible and use the seat belts provided. If you are under 12 and below 135cm in height you will be required to use a booster seat. This is a legal requirement.

If you wish to use public transport, please ask us for permission. We will help you with booking tickets if permission is granted.

The British Council has some useful advice for keeping safe on public transport. It can be found here: <https://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/learners/uk-life/be-safe-uk/staying-safe-public-transport>

When you are walking or cycling, you need to take care to keep safe.

When walking:

- Use pavements to walk on.
- Use Zebra or pelican crossings where possible to cross the road, but do not assume cars will stop if they see you waiting. Make sure that it is safe before you cross.
- Stay alert and listen for bikes and runners- this means not wearing headphones when out walking
- Look both ways to check that it is safe to cross
- If there isn't a safe crossing, find a good place to cross away from parked cars where you can see what is coming on both sides of the road.
- The Think! Website provides the following advice for cyclists:
- Ride decisively and keep clear of the kerb.
- Look and signal to show drivers what you plan to do, make eye contact where possible.
- Avoid riding up the inside of vehicles, as you might not be seen. If a vehicle is indicating to the left hang back at the junction to reduce the risk of a collision.
- Always use lights after dark or when visibility is poor. Wear high-visibility and reflective clothing and accessories at all times
- Wear a correctly fitted cycle helmet that is securely fastened and conforms to current regulations.
- Your local council can help you plan your journey by providing maps showing dedicated paths and routes.
- Where possible, try to maintain social distancing when you cycle, for example when waiting at crossings and traffic lights.
- Where using bikes (private, docked or dockless) wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands before and after cycling.

MANAGING YOUR MONEY

If your parents gave you some cash to bring to the UK, UKIC will ask your boarding house parent to keep the cash for you. You may ask for a certain amount of cash from your house parent with permission from your parents each time. If you live in a host family, we strongly suggest not to keep any cash in your room.

We will help you set up a bank account if required. Please contact us and we will be able to make the necessary arrangements.

KEEPING YOUR PASSPORT, BRP SAFE AND POLICE REGISTRATION

Your passport and BRP are important documents. You should ensure that these are always kept safe. Usually schools will keep these for you but there will be times when you need to travel with them, for instance, when travelling to and from the UK. Please take care not to lose them as this could result in travel delays.

RELIGION IN THE UK AND ACCESS TO PLACES OF WORSHIP

The population of the UK is diverse, and many religions are practised. You may wish to access places of worship during your stay. If so, please do let us know, and we will make the necessary arrangements.

LEARNING TO DRIVE

If you are over 17 and planning to spend some time in the UK after your schooling, you may want to learn to drive. You must apply for a provisional licence first and then apply for lessons. When the driving instructor feels you are ready, they will suggest that you apply for your test. There is a theory test and a practical driving test, and both must be passed before you will be awarded your licence. Please let us know if you would like to learn to drive, and if your parents agree, we will help you to make the necessary arrangements. Further information can be found on the government website <https://www.gov.uk/driving-lessons-learning-to-drive>

SCHOOL RULES

Your school will explain to you their rules and expectations of how you should behave. Please pay regard to these expectations when staying at your homestay as well.