Student Handbook

APRIL WELL LIMITED — Company No. 11924473

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This handbook is publicly available. It may be shared with parents, agents, partner schools and inspectors on request.

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Welcome and introduction from the guardianship organisation

April Well Limited is a UK-based education guardianship organisation. We support international students who attend boarding schools and colleges in the United Kingdom. Our role is to work together with your parents and your school to make sure that you are safe, well cared for and able to enjoy your time in the UK.

April Well is a small organisation, which means that we can get to know you and your family well. We provide 24/7 emergency support and regular communication with your school and parents. April Well does not provide routine or long-term homestay accommodation and does not run a separate network of host families. Most students live in boarding accommodation at their schools or with their parents. However, if there is an emergency or exceptional situation, April Well may help to arrange or coordinate short-term emergency accommodation in line with our Emergency Procedure and safeguarding policies.

This handbook gives you information about life in the UK, about how to keep safe and about how April Well can help you. Please read it carefully and ask us or your school if there is anything you do not understand.

The guardianship organisation

April Well is your education guardianship organisation in the UK. April Well:

- keeps in touch with your school and, where appropriate, with you;
- is available as a point of contact for you, your parents and your school;
- provides a 24/7 emergency contact number;
- helps to coordinate practical arrangements such as travel and school meetings where this has been agreed; and
- takes any safeguarding or welfare concern seriously and follows clear procedures to keep you safe.

Your guardian

Your parents have asked April Well to act as your UK education guardian. This means that April Well represents your parents in the UK when they cannot be here. We work closely with your school and your parents to help you with day-to-day matters and to support you in an emergency.

Your responsibilities as a student

April Well 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. Some guidelines are also covered in the relevant sections of this handbook. If emergency accommodation is arranged, the responsible adult will explain the age-appropriate curfew/return time, meals and dietary arrangements, laundry, and safe use of the kitchen and bathroom before your stay. Tell them about allergies and other needs. Follow appliance and hot-water instructions and respect privacy. Ask April Well if anything is unclear or unsuitable.

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 us in the following ways:

General enquiries	
Telephone (office hours 09:00–17:00, UK time)	+44 (0)7930 416543
Email	info@aprilwell.co.uk
WhatsApp	+44 (0)7930 416543
Emergencies 24/7	
Telephone	+44 (0)7930 416543
Safeguarding concerns	
Designated Safeguarding Lead Xiaoying Chi	Email: info@aprilwell.co.uk 24/7 safeguarding contact: +44 (0)7930 416543

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 that you feel safe and supported. Please talk to us if you have any questions, worries or if you simply want to chat. We are here to help.

The process for arriving in the UK

Please remember your passport, visa (if required) and any other relevant paperwork, such as your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), school offer letter and medical documents. Keep these documents in your hand luggage, not in your suitcase. If you have an eVisa, check before travel that your UKVI account and eVisa details are correct and linked to the valid passport you will use. Ask your parents or school for help with access and any travel share code needed.

When you arrive in the UK, you should follow the signs for “Arrivals” and then “Border Control”. At Border Control you will need to show your passport and answer any questions from the immigration officer. After Border Control you should collect your luggage from the baggage carousel and then go through Customs.

Before you travel, you will be told who is meeting you, the agreed meeting point and how to recognise them. This may be a member of school staff, a family member or another adult named in advance. April Well will confirm the identity and suitability of any third-party adult it arranges or

approves, complete the safeguarding checks required for their role, and record approval before the journey. You will be told about any change to the agreed arrangements.

If you cannot find the person who is meeting you, do not leave the airport with anyone else, even if they say they are there to collect you. Instead, go to a safe place in the arrivals hall and contact your school, your parents or April Well using the telephone numbers saved on your phone. Airport staff can also help you to make a call if needed. Stay where you are until you have spoken to a trusted adult and have clear instructions about what to 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”. If you feel uncomfortable shaking hands, a verbal greeting is perfectly acceptable.

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.

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 accidently 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 on the plate 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 school staff / trusted adult know if you are going out and what time you expect to return. If for any reason you are running late. Please let school staff / trusted adult know. Make sure that your school staff / trusted adult 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

Urgent medical advice: 111 in England, Scotland and Wales; in Northern Ireland ask a trusted adult to contact the local urgent-care or GP out-of-hours service.

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 child-on-child 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.

April Well has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who can be contacted with any concerns that you have. The DSL is trained to help you. Their contact details are:

DSL: Xiaoying Chi – 24/7 telephone: +44 (0)7930 416543 – Email: info@aprilwell.co.uk

Alternatively, you can speak to any member of April Well staff, or to staff in school, and they will listen and help you. If the DSL cannot be reached or your concern is about the DSL, tell your school DSL or contact children's social care directly using the numbers below. You can also contact the Southwark LADO (the officer dealing with concerns about adults working with children) on 020 7525 3297 or 020 7525 0689. Elsewhere, ask your school for the relevant local authority contact. Call 999 for immediate danger; do not wait for April Well to reply.

April Well has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy that explains our procedures in detail. You can request a copy from info@aprilwell.co.uk. If you are unhappy with our service, you or a trusted adult can request and use our Complaints Policy. It explains how to complain and contact AEGIS if the complaint remains unresolved. Safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately, rather than waiting for the complaints process.

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

Children's social care / MASH: The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub receives concerns about individual children. In Southwark, call 020 7525 1921 (Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm). The *Southwark Safeguarding Children Partnership* coordinates local safeguarding arrangements; it is not the referral team.

Out of hours social worker: 020 7525 5000 (option 3)

Website: safeguarding.southwark.gov.uk

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 illegal things 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." [1]

[1] https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/

If you are worried about the behaviour of someone you know, or if you think that someone is trying to radicalise you, seek help. April Well has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Xiaoying Chi, who is trained to deal with safeguarding and Prevent concerns:

DSL: Xiaoying Chi / Phone number: +44 (0)7930 416543 / Email: info@aprilwell.co.uk

Alternatively speak to a trusted adult in your school, such as the DSL, a member of guardianship organisation staff, or your parents. 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 and radicalisation can be found in the April Well Prevent Policy. You can request a copy from info@aprilwell.co.uk.

The ChildLine website has further information that you may find useful (see footnote below).

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 them our personal details. We also need to be careful of misinformation and disinformation (false information). These are most commonly referred to as 'fake news' or 'hoaxes'. The NSPCC explains that Misinformation is where false information is shared by accident without the intent to cause harm. For example, sharing inaccurate photos, quotes or dates online because you believe them to be true. Disinformation is false information shared deliberately to mislead and cause harm. For example, fabricated news stories and political propaganda.

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 the April Well DSL, a member of April Well staff, a teacher at school, your house parent or your parents. This includes pressure to share nude or semi-nude images, AI-generated or altered images, and threats or blackmail. Do not forward

sexual images of anyone under 18, even as evidence; ask a trusted adult for help immediately. Your safety comes first, even if you think you have broken a rule.

- 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 follow your school's rules about Wi-Fi and internet use. Some schools or families may have filters on their internet and may use parental controls to prevent access to inappropriate sites. Access to Wi-Fi may be turned off at certain times, for example at night. You should use your own devices rather than someone else's computer unless you have permission.

Bullying / cyberbullying

Bullying is unkind and will not be tolerated by your school or by April Well. If you experience bullying during your stay in the UK, please tell a trusted adult as soon as possible so that they can help you and make the bullying stop. This could be a teacher, your house parent, a member of staff at school, your parents or a member of staff at April Well. Bullies are often unkind because they are unhappy themselves, so by telling an adult they will also be helped.

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/

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, school nurse, parent, or any member of April Well staff who will listen and 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 let your guardianship organisation or another member of staff at school know if you feel unwell. You or the school can also contact April Well so that we are aware and can support you. 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.

For urgent medical advice in England, Scotland or Wales, call 111. In Northern Ireland, ask your school or a trusted adult to contact the local urgent-care or GP out-of-hours service.

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

Permission for visiting the local area / travelling further afield

You must always follow your school's rules about going out. You should not leave the school site without permission. If you would like to visit the local area, you must ask your house parent or another member of staff and follow any rules they give you (for example, where you can go, what time you must be back and whether you must go with a friend).

If you want to travel further away, for example to another town or city, this must be agreed in advance by your parents, your school where applicable, and April Well. You must never make your own overnight arrangements or stay away from school without written permission. Give April Well the address, dates and contact details of the responsible adult, and written parental permission and school permission where applicable, before an overnight stay.

English laws

Laws regarding the consumption of alcohol

April Well does not permit its students to consume alcohol whilst under its care, including when you are staying in school accommodation. 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. Our conduct rules may be stricter than the law; legal rules can differ between UK nations.

Laws regarding the use of drugs and illegal substances

April Well prohibits students from using recreational drugs and illegal substances whilst in their care. This does not prohibit lawful use of prescribed medicines as directed. UK penalties depend on the substance and circumstances, including unlawful possession, production or supply. The following activities can involve drug offences:

- 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

April Well prohibits students from smoking or vaping whilst in their care. It is illegal to sell tobacco or non-medicinal nicotine vapes to under-18s. From 29 October 2026, the UK-wide under-18 sales restriction covers vaping and nicotine products, except exempt medicinal products and medical devices. From 1 January 2027, tobacco, herbal smoking products and cigarette papers must not be sold to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009. These are sales restrictions; April Well's smoking/vaping ban applies regardless.

Laws regarding sexual activity

April Well 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

April Well 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, apart from narrow medical exceptions. Body-piercing rules differ across the UK and by body part; consent alone does not make every piercing lawful. In Wales, intimate piercing of under-18s is prohibited even with parental consent. Other intimate piercings may also breach sexual offences laws. April Well's prohibition remains applicable regardless of local minimum-age rules.

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."[2]

Please also be courteous when using your mobile phone at school or when you are staying with another family, for example during visits to relatives or family friends. This includes not using it during mealtimes, lessons or when adults are speaking to you. You should not ask to use someone else's telephone unless there is an emergency or you have agreed this in advance.

[2] https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/mobile-phone-safety/

Travelling around

You may need to travel during your time in the UK. This will include travelling to and from school, to the airport or to any places that you visit. Transport is usually arranged by your school or by your parents. April Well may help to confirm arrangements or advise on suitable options.

You will be given details of who is going to collect you when you travel, where to meet them and any other important information. Never go with anyone other than the named person or vehicle registration number provided, even if they say that this has been arranged with the school or your guardian. If you are in any doubt, ask a trusted adult, such as a member of school staff, or contact April Well.

When you are travelling in a car please sit in the back where possible and use the seat belts provided. Children must normally use an appropriate child car seat until age 12 or 135cm tall, whichever comes first. Ask the responsible adult to arrange the correct seat for your size.

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: Safety First

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![3] 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.

[3] https://www.think.gov.uk/cycle-safety/

- 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.
- When using hire bikes (private, docked or dockless) wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands before and after cycling.

Managing your money

Arrangements for pocket money will normally be agreed between your parents and your school. Some schools look after pocket money for younger students. Older students may manage their own pocket money with support from their parents.

April Well can give you and your parents general advice about suitable amounts of pocket money and safe ways to manage money. Where your parents and school agree that you should open a UK bank account or prepaid card, April Well can provide information to help you with this process. Your parents are responsible for providing money and for checking your spending.

Keeping your passport safe

Your passport is an important document. You should ensure that this is 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 your passport as this could result in travel delays. If you have an eVisa, keep your UKVI account access secure, do not share your password, and make sure your current travel passport is linked before each journey. Ask your parents or school to help if your passport changes.

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 17 or over 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 Ask your parents or school to check the residence, licence and other eligibility rules before booking lessons.

School rules

Your school will explain their rules and expectations of how you should behave. Please follow these expectations at all times, both in school and when you are away from school.