



Scope and Definitions

This policy explains how British Guardianship manages complaints relating to its services, staff, local coordinators, host families, processes, communication, and decisions. A complaint is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction about an action, lack of action, or decision made by British Guardianship or individuals acting on its behalf."

This policy applies to:

- Students
- Parents
- Host families
- Schools and partner agencies
- Overseas agents
- Staff and local coordinators

Safeguarding and child protection concerns are not complaints and must always be handled under the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and reported directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This policy should not be used for safeguarding concerns.

British Guardianship complaints procedure in respect of poor practice or behaviour

Our Complaints Policy is available to parents, students, partners and homestays and will be followed where a child, parent or host family raises a concern about poor practice towards a child which initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Examples include unfairly singling out a child, using sarcasm or humiliation as a form of control, bullying or belittling a child or discriminating against them in any way. Complaints are managed by the Complaints Officer, Guardianship Director & Client Relations, senior staff and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Complaints from staff are dealt with under the company's disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint by phone, e-mail or in writing. We have a two stage complaints procedure. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. However, if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will inform you and keep you updated on our progress.

Accessibility

This complaints policy is available on request in alternative languages, formats and levels of simplicity, including a child-friendly version. British Guardianship will support any student or parent who needs help to understand or submit a complaint.

Student-Friendly Version

A simplified student-friendly Complaints Guide is available to ensure young people understand their rights and know how to raise concerns safely.

Stage 1 - frontline resolution

Please contact British Guardianship via your local coordinator, office staff, or the 24/7 emergency line. We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within 5 working days, where possible. If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2. You may request Stage 2 escalation in writing or verbally.

by email: almu@britishguardianship.com

or phone the Emergency Line +44(0)7841 611 284 or +44 (0)7969 688 294

Stage 2 – investigation

Our company's Guardianship Director will review your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. Some complaints may also move directly to this stage if they are clearly complex or require detailed investigation. We will acknowledge your complaint within 48 hours and provide our decision as soon as possible, normally within 5 working days, unless there is a clear and justified reason for needing additional time.

British Guardianship expects the complainant to provide a full account of their complaint, and British Guardianship will, in turn, share the findings of the partner organisation where relevant. Together, all parties will work towards a resolution that satisfactorily brings the matter to a close for everyone involved.

Stage 3 – Review / Appeal

If you remain dissatisfied after Stage 2, you may request a review. The review will be conducted by a senior leader not previously involved. The review will focus on process, fairness and proportionality. A written outcome will be provided within 10 working days.

Escalation to AEGIS

If you remain dissatisfied following completion of the internal complaints process, you may escalate your complaint to AEGIS (The Association for the Education & Guardianship of International Students):

Email: info@aegisuk.net

Tel: **+44 (0)1453 821293**

Address: The Wheelhouse, Bond's Mill Estate, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 3RF

AEGIS may review complaints relating to guardianship practice, child safety, safeguarding culture or organisational conduct.

Complaints About Senior Staff

If a complaint concerns the Guardianship Director & Client Relations, the DSL, or a senior member of staff, it will be handled by a different senior leader not involved in the concern. Where this is not possible or if independence cannot be assured, the complaint may be referred to AEGIS for external oversight.

Dealing with complaints timeline

All complaints received by British Guardianship will be treated seriously and handled sensitively. We will acknowledge complaints as soon as reasonably practicable, normally within 5 working days.

Timescales Summary

- Acknowledgment: within 5 working days.
- Stage 1 resolution: within 5 working days.
- Stage 2 investigation: normally within 5 working days unless complexity requires more time.
- Appeal / Review (Stage 3): within 10 working days.

Recording complaints

British Guardianship is careful to meet its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to keep information for no longer than is necessary. Following resolution of a complaint, Head Office will keep a written record of all formal complaints, whether they are resolved at the informal stage or beyond. Record-keeping is important for management purposes and to enable any patterns of concern to be monitored. Key information included in the record will be:

Complaints Policy

- Date the complaint was raised
- Name of parent and student
- Records of all the investigations
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage.
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails phone records).

Confidentiality and Protection

All complaints will be handled confidentially and sensitively. British Guardianship does not tolerate retaliation or disadvantage against anyone who makes a complaint in good faith.

Useful contacts

Guardianship Director & Clients Relations

To discuss with someone confidentially about problems you are having or worries that you might have about others please contact: **Tannaz Fatoorehchi**

Email: tannaz@britishguardianship.com / Telephone: **+44(0) 1273 725 577**

British Guardianship children and family emergency 24/7 line

Mobile / WhatsApp: **+44(0)7841 611 284 or +44 (0)7969 688 294**

Complaints officer

Please contact: **Almu Vilchez**

Email: almu@britishguardianship.com / Telephone: **+44(0) 1273 725 577**

Complaints Involving Schools or Joint Services

If a complaint relates partly or entirely to a school, transport provider, or external partner, British Guardianship will liaise with the relevant organisation and ensure the complaint is managed jointly in line with their procedures.

Public services help lines

If there is a threat to life, serious injury or another incident requiring intervention, dial British Guardianship Emergency Line on **+44(0)7841 611 284 or +44 (0)7969 688 294** and ask them to call **999**.

Police Emergency: 999 / Police Non-Emergency: 101 / NHS: 111

Doctor's out-of-hours service: **08450 568060**

NSPCC Hotline: **0808 800 5000**

Brighton & Hove Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB): **+44(0)1273 292 379**

Brighton and Hove Local Authority Designated Officer: LADO: **+44(0)1273 295 643**

Anti Cyber-bullying Website:

www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/

Childline

Visit: **www.childline.org.uk** / Call: **0800 1111**

Coram Voice

Provides advocacy and advice to children in care or living away from home

Visit: **www.coramvoice.org.uk** / Call: **0808 800 5792**