



British Guardianship Mental Health Policy

This policy applies to: All staff, Local Coordinators, Homestays, Volunteers, Students, Parents, Agents.

1. Purpose & Scope

British Guardianship is committed to promoting and protecting the mental health and wellbeing of all international students in our care. This policy sets out:

- How staff and homestays identify and respond to mental health concerns
- How we manage student crises, including removal from school where appropriate
- How we assess risks, support students, and liaise with schools, parents, and professionals
- How we comply with AEGIS Mental Health Standard 3.3 requirements

This policy ensures that mental health concerns are identified early, responded to proportionately, and managed in a way that protects student safety, wellbeing and safeguarding.

This policy sits alongside our:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Anti-Bullying & Cyberbullying Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Anti Radicalisation / Prevent Duty Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Emergency Procedures Manual

2. Key Principles

1. **Student safety and wellbeing are paramount.** Mental health difficulties may signal abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and must therefore be treated as potential safeguarding concerns.
2. **Staff are not expected to diagnose** but must recognise behaviours that suggest concern.
3. **Mental health difficulties can affect any young person** and should never be dismissed.
4. **All concerns must be recorded and escalated** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
5. **Students must feel heard;** their wishes are considered where safe and appropriate. British Guardianship ensures that young people are listened to, their views are taken seriously, and they are involved in decisions about their support wherever it is safe and appropriate.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

3.1 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Poliane Costa
Tel: +44 (0)7841 611 284 | Email: polly@britishguardianship.com

The DSL is responsible for:

- Leading the organisation's response to mental health concerns
- Liaising with partner schools, local authorities, health services, and emergency services
- Ensuring records are kept securely and confidentially
- Deciding when a case meets the safeguarding threshold
- Overseeing student removal procedures where needed

3.2 Deputy DSL

- Tannaz Fatoorehchi
Tel: +44 (0)7935 646492 / Email: tannaz@britishguardianship.com

3.3 Homestays

- Monitor students for signs of emotional distress, self-harm, anxiety, unusual behaviour
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL
- Follow guidance on supporting distressed students (see full Homestay Guidelines)

3.4 Staff & Coordinators

- Maintain regular wellbeing check ins with students (text, call, visit)
- Keep formal records of all communication and concerns
- Follow the escalation steps in Section 6

4. Recognising Mental Health Concerns

Signs and symptoms may include (non exhaustive):

- Self-harm or discussion of self-harm
- Withdrawal, persistent sadness, sudden behaviour changes
- Extreme anxiety, panic attacks
- Eating difficulties
- Sleeping difficulties
- Agitation, aggression, fearfulness
- Substance misuse
- Signs of emotional abuse, neglect, bullying or cyberbullying

If ANY such indicators are present, staff must act immediately.

5. Mental Health Risk Assessment (Before Accepting Guardianship)

As required by AEGIS Standard 3.3.4, British Guardianship must assess whether we can meet the needs of any student with identified mental health concerns.

Assessment includes:

- Review of health information provided by parents/agents
- Communication with the school's pastoral/medical team
- Discussion with parents/agents about needs, triggers, medication, safety planning
- Consideration of homestays with mental health relevant experience (e.g., nursing, social care, fostering) — AEGIS Advisory.

British Guardianship reserves the right to decline guardianship where risks exceed our organisational capacity.

6. Procedures for Responding to Mental Health Concerns

6.1 Immediate Action (All Staff & Homestays)

If a student presents with concerning behaviours:

1. **Ensure the student is in a safe environment.**
2. **Listen calmly and without judgement.**
3. **Do NOT promise confidentiality.**
4. **Contact the DSL immediately.**
5. If the student is at immediate risk of harm:
 - Call 999
 - Then inform the DSL

This aligns with AEGIS requirement for immediate safeguarding action.

6.2 Assessing Next Steps

The DSL will:

- Determine if the concern meets the safeguarding threshold
- Record all details securely
- Contact the school's DSL, pastoral or medical teams as needed
- Contact parents unless doing so increases risk
- Decide whether the situation warrants **temporary removal from school**

Where a student's behaviour requires formal consequences, these will be managed in accordance with the British Guardianship Student Code of Conduct, ensuring any action prioritises safety and wellbeing.

If a mental-health-related concern suggests that a member of staff, homestay provider, or volunteer may have contributed to the distress or may pose a risk, the matter will be managed under the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, including the Allegations Against Adults procedures and referral to the LADO where required.

7. Student Removal Procedure (AEGIS Requirement)

In accordance with AEGIS Standard 3.3.3, removal from school must follow a formal process.

Steps

1. School completes the **AEGIS Student Removal Form** (Appendix C).
2. DSL reviews and evaluates:
 - Risk factors
 - Precipitating events
 - Safety and wellbeing needs
 - Medical involvement
 - Parent communication
3. British Guardianship arranges appropriate homestay placement.
4. Daily wellbeing monitoring schedule is implemented.
5. Ongoing liaison with school, parents, and clinicians continues until reintegration.

8. Management of Medication

Where mental health related medication is prescribed:

- Parents must provide written consent
- Homestays must keep medication securely
- A medication administration log must be completed
- Homestays may refuse to administer medication if not trained; alternative arrangements will be made (AEGIS guidelines on medication documentation in Standard 3.4 apply here.)

9. Confidentiality & Information Sharing

- Information will be shared **only on a need to know basis**
- All records stored securely according to data protection regulations
- Mental health disclosures must be documented and kept separate from general student files (aligns with safeguarding record keeping expectations)

10. Collaboration with Schools, Parents, and Agencies

British Guardianship will:

- Maintain close contact with schools regarding progress, behavioural changes, and support plans
- Consult external agencies when needed, including CAMHS, GPs, NHS 111, or emergency services
- Refer to the AEGIS **Mental Health Support List** (Appendix D) for crisis and specialist services

11. Supportive Homestay Arrangements

AEGIS advises using homestays with relevant experience for students with known mental health needs. Homestays must:

- Provide a calm, predictable routine
- Allow appropriate privacy while monitoring wellbeing
- Report any changes immediately

12. Staff & Homestay Training

All staff and homestays will receive:

- Annual safeguarding training covering mental health risk indicators
- Additional guidance on recognising and responding to mental health concerns
- Training documentation will be formally recorded (as required under safeguarding training standards)

13. External Support Directory

British Guardianship uses the AEGIS **Mental Health Support List** (Appendix D) as its core directory. This includes:

- A&E
 - Anxiety UK
 - Childline
 - CAMHS
 - Papyrus HOPELine
 - Samaritans
 - Eating disorder support (BEAT)
- ... and many more services appropriate for students and families.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Updated following any major incident
- Updated when new AEGIS standards or legislation are released

15. Appendices

- Appendix A: AEGIS Mental Health Warning Signs
- Appendix B: Mental Health Escalation Flowchart
- Appendix C: Student Removal Form (AEGIS Appendix 11 reference)
- Appendix D: Mental Health Support Directory (AEGIS Appendix 10)

Appendix A - AEGIS Mental Health Warning Signs

(For staff, coordinators, and homestays)

The following indicators are drawn from AEGIS Mental Health Standard 3.3, the AEGIS guidance on emotional/mental health, and your safeguarding policy's behavioural indicators.

They represent signs that a student **may be experiencing mental health difficulties or may be at risk of harm**.

1. Emotional & Behavioural Indicators

- Persistent sadness, withdrawal, tearfulness, low mood
- Sudden changes in personality (becoming quiet, aggressive, fearful, apathetic)
- Extreme anxiety, panic attacks, constant worry or overthinking
- Irritability, anger outbursts, agitation, or unprovoked aggression
- Expression of hopelessness or feeling overwhelmed

2. Self-Harm & Risk Indicators

- Self-harm behaviours (cutting, burns, unexplained injuries) or discussion of self-harm
- Mentioning suicidal thoughts, ideation, or threats (direct or indirect)
- High risk impulsive behaviour (running away, night wandering)

3. Social Indicators

- Isolation from peers or homestay family, avoiding meals or shared spaces
- Difficulty maintaining friendships, sudden fallouts or conflict
- Fearfulness around certain people or situations (may suggest underlying trauma)

4. Academic & Daily Life Indicators

- Loss of interest in school, homework avoidance, falling grades
- Inability to concentrate, memory difficulties, or confusion
- Exhaustion, frequent complaints of tiredness, sleeping excessively or too little

5. Eating & Physical Health Indicators

- Significant changes in eating patterns (restricting, bingeing, loss of appetite)
- Rapid weight change
- Physical complaints without clear cause (stomach aches, headaches, dizziness)

6. Online & Social Media Indicators

- Cyberbullying reports or online harassment
- Excessive late night phone or social media use leading to sleep disruption
- Viewing or sharing harmful content (self-harm, suicide, violence)

7. Safeguarding Linked Indicators

Mental health struggles may be signs of underlying abuse, neglect, exploitation, or grooming. AEGIS requires staff to treat these indicators as **potential safeguarding concerns**.

Appendix B – Mental Health Escalation Flowchart

(Operational flow for staff, coordinators, and homestays)

This flowchart is aligned with AEGIS Standard 3.3, safeguarding escalation procedures, and the requirement that mental health concerns that are also safeguarding concerns must trigger immediate DSL involvement.

British Guardianship Mental Health Escalation Flowchart

1. Concern Identified

A mental health concern is observed or reported by:

- Student
- Homestay
- School
- Staff/Coordinator
- Peer

2. Assess Immediate Risk

Questions to consider:

- Is the student in immediate danger?
- Is there evidence of self-harm, suicidal intent, or severe distress?

****3A. If IMMEDIATE danger**

Call 999 → Ensure student safety → Contact DSL **immediately**

(Required by safeguarding & AEGIS Standard 3.3.2)

****3B. If NO immediate danger but concern is serious**

Contact DSL within **the same day**

→ Provide factual notes

→ DSL decides whether it meets safeguarding threshold

4. DSL Assessment & Actions

DSL may:

- ✓ Contact school DSL / medical team
- ✓ Contact parents (unless it increases risk)
- ✓ Refer to CAMHS, GP, NHS 111, or emergency services
- ✓ Request completion of **Student Removal Form** by school (Appendix C)
- ✓ Place student in homestay for monitoring
- ✓ Initiate a full risk assessment

5. Student Removal (If applicable)

(Student cannot remain at school safely)

- School completes Removal Form
- DSL arranges homestay & ongoing monitoring
- Daily check ins
- School liaison until reintegration

Appendix B — Mental Health Escalation Flowchart

6. Ongoing Support & Review

- DSL monitors case
- Staff and homestay follow support plan
- Records maintained securely
- Multi agency collaboration continues

7. Case Closure

When:

- Student stabilises
- School confirms reintegration readiness
- Support plan complete
- All documentation archived securely.

Appendix C - Student Removal Form

(Adapted from AEGIS Appendix 11 requirements)

This form **must be completed by the school** before any student is removed into British Guardianship care for mental health related reasons. This ensures British Guardianship has sufficient context to support the student appropriately.

British Guardianship - Student Removal Form (Mental Health)

Section 1 - Student Information

Full Name:																					
Date of Birth:	<table><tr><td></td><td></td><td>/</td><td></td><td></td><td>/</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>D</td><td></td><td>M</td><td>M</td><td></td><td>Y</td><td>Y</td><td>Y</td><td>Y</td></tr></table>			/			/					D	D		M	M		Y	Y	Y	Y
		/			/																
D	D		M	M		Y	Y	Y	Y												
School:																					
Boarding/Day Status:																					
Parent/Guardian Contact Details:																					

Section 2 - Reason for Removal

Description of concerns leading to removal:
Description of student's behaviour, statements, or incidents:
Any safeguarding concerns? (Yes / No — details if Yes)
Any known triggers or recent changes?

Appendix C - Student Removal Form

Section 3 - Actions Taken by the School

Person reporting incident:

Steps taken before removal (e.g., counselling, nurse assessment):

Was student assessed by medical staff? (Details)

Were parents contacted? (When/by whom/response)

Section 4 - Risk Information

Is student at risk of self-harm?

Any suicidal ideation expressed?

Access to harmful items?

Previous incidents?

Section 5 - Medication / Medical Needs

Current medication:

Dosage & administration schedule:

Emergency care instructions:

Appendix C - Student Removal Form

Section 4 - Risk Information

Level of supervision required (e.g., 24/7, check ins)

Any environmental considerations for homestay

Section 7 - School Sign Off

Completed by (Name/Role):	
Date/Time:	
Signature:	

Section 8 - Handover to British Guardianship

Name of receiving staff/DSL:	
Time of handover:	
Additional notes:	

Appendix D – Mental Health Support Directory

(Based on AEGIS Appendix 10 – Mental Health Support List)

This directory is provided to all staff and homestays to ensure they have rapid access to professional and emergency services.

Emergency Contacts

- **Police/Fire/Ambulance:** 999
- **NHS 111:** For urgent medical advice

Mental Health & Crisis Services

- **Samaritans** – 24/7 emotional support
Tel: 116 123
- **Papyrus HOPELINE UK** – Suicide prevention for under 35s
Tel: 0800 068 4141
- **Shout** – 24/7 text crisis service
Text: SHOUT to 85258
- **Mind** – Mental health advice and support
www.mind.org.uk

Child & Young Person Support

- **Childline** – 24/7 support
Tel: 0800 1111
- **CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services)**
Refer via GP or school counsellor
- **YoungMinds** – Mental health support for young people & parents
youngminds.org.uk

Specialist Services

- **BEAT Eating Disorders** – Eating disorder support
Helpline: 0808 801 0677
- **Anxiety UK** – Anxiety support - www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- **Autism/ADHD Support – Autism Support:**
National Autistic Society: <https://www.autism.org.uk/>
ADHD support: <https://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/service/counselling/>
- **Self-Harm Support** – Harmless: <https://harmless.org.uk/>
National Self-Harm Network: <http://www.nshn.co.uk/>

Bereavement Support

- **Cruse Bereavement Support**
Helpline: 0808 808 1677
- **Grief Encounter – Bereavement help for young people**
<https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/>

Online Safety

- **NSPCC Online Safety Helpline**
help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Childnet** – Online safety resources - <https://www.childnet.com/>
- **SWGFL** – Sexting and digital safeguarding support - <https://swgfl.org.uk/>

Sexual Health, Abuse & Exploitation Support

- **Brook** – Sexual health advice for under 25s - <https://www.brook.org.uk/>
- **NCDV (Domestic Violence)** – Emergency protection for victims - <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/>
- **Fearless** – Anonymous crime reporting, including exploitation –
<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless>