



Child Visa Sponsorship Policy

Responsibility of: Headmaster of The Pilgrims' School
(with reference to the Bursar of Winchester College)

Reviewed: Feb 2026

Next Review Date: Feb 2027 (or earlier if change in government guidance or legislation occurs)

Approved by: The Pilgrims' School Senior Leadership Team

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the principles and procedures governing the sponsorship of pupils under the UK Child Student visa route. It ensures that the School's sponsorship arrangements comply with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements and reflects the School's safeguarding, pastoral, and financial policies. (Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 (duty of care) refers [Section 55 v12.pdf](#))

2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils requiring visa sponsorship under the Child Student route and to their parents, Educational Guardians, and any third parties acting on their behalf. It also applies to staff involved in admissions, safeguarding and compliance, and pastoral oversight of sponsored pupils.

3. Sponsorship Model

3.1 Boarding Requirement

The School's current policy is to sponsor pupils into boarding only. At time of review, a small number of 'legacy' day pupils who were previously sponsored under earlier arrangements remain on roll, but no new sponsored day pupils will be accepted.

3.2 Independence from Parents

Sponsored pupils must remain independent of their parents for the purposes of their visa sponsorship. This requirement applies even where a parent holds a Parent of a Child Student visa and is resident in the UK during term time.

4. Financial Requirements

4.1 Self-Funding Requirement

All sponsored applicants must be fully self-funding. Sponsored pupils may not apply for or receive means-tested bursaries unless under a recognised government support scheme.

4.2 Fees and Deposits

A Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) will not be issued until all required fees, deposits, and documentation are complete.

5. Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

CAS will only be issued once all paperwork, financial, Educational Guardianship, and compliance checks are completed. This includes evidential documentation being provided as requested. Some documents may be required to be translated into English and certified (such as birth certificates).

6. Educational Guardianship

All sponsored applicants must have hand-signed Parent Consent letters and fully completed Educational Guardian letters of undertaking for their nominated Educational Guardian.

See the Educational Guardian Policy for full details of all important criteria to be fulfilled in this crucial safeguarding area.

7. Entry Routes

Proof of entry into the UK must be given to the School on the first entry into the UK as a pupil, and every exit and entry thereafter (flight boarding pass or similar). Any pupil who is coming from a school within the UK must be withdrawn from their existing sponsor to activate their new Child Student visa.

8. Whereabouts documentation

Parents and/or Educational Guardians must provide in advance to the School whereabouts (address), an itinerary, showing flight and border entry and exit arrangements (as appropriate) for all exeats, half terms, school holidays or periods of absence longer than 28 days consecutively.

...& Private Fostering

Where the sponsored pupil's stay in the UK outside of school term dates exceeds a period of 28 days consecutively, the parents or Educational Guardians will notify the School and responsibility sits with them to make arrangements for the pupil, so that a private foster arrangement does not arise. Evidence in the form of a boarding pass, or similar, will be given to the School to confirm the carrying out of such itinerary arrangements.

9. UKVI Compliance

The School, parents and Educational Guardians must comply with UKVI rules as updated.

11. Sponsorship Registration

Pilgrims' holds its own UKVI sponsorship registration whilst operating under the umbrella of the merger with Winchester College. The two teams of staff responsible for sponsoring of visas share advice and best practice and help to support one another.

12. Use of Third Parties

The Boarding Schools Association (BSA) and other professionally appropriate visa advisors may act on behalf of the School.