

CAREGIVER GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Introduction

The following document has been developed to provide guidance to parents/legal guardians who are non-resident in Singapore and have their child/ren under the supervision of a caregiver. (For definitions, please refer to section D below).

1. All non-resident parents or legal guardians appointing a caregiver to care for their children shall be required to sign the caregiver form.
2. All parties will be provided with this CIS guidance document to ensure consistency with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy.
3. CIS will identify a member(s) of the divisional administrative team who will have the added responsibility of being a liaison officer(s) for students. The role of the liaison officer(s) will be to communicate any concerns to parents and caregivers.
4. In the case of a change of caregiver, the parent will advise CIS of the new contact and information details prior to commencement.
5. CIS will not accept the enrolment of a student unless the required sections in this guidance document have been completed by the parent of a student.
6. This documentation will be placed in the student's file.

SECTION A - Caregiver guidelines

The caregiver, who is recommended to have not more than two students in their care, will:

1. Provide a caring, nurturing and supportive environment for students.
2. Ensure a student's general well-being, health and safety, seek medical attention when necessary, and immediately report any significant medical or health issues (whether physical or mental) to the parents.
3. Avoid concurrently placing both adult (21 years or above) and minor students in the same home.
4. Ensure there will be a suitably experienced supervising adult, preferably over the age of 25, resident in the same home/condo flat as their students who will:
 - Know the whereabouts of the student at all times.
 - Support and guide the student in managing time, including getting to and coming home from school on time, managing recreational times and completing home study and school assignments.
 - Provide three nutritious meals per day plus appropriate snacks etc.
 - Provide a safe, clean and tidy residence with a private, adequately furnished bedroom conducive for rest and study.
 - Supervise homework and home study.
 - Ensure adequate safety requirements are in place, including smoke detectors, awareness of evacuation procedures etc.
 - Attend to minor first aid requirements.
 - Provide guidelines and supervise reasonable technology limitations and use. (e.g. number of hours/day and appropriate times of day).
5. Advise students on basic family behavioural expectations and rules including:
 - Care of personal belongings and managing monetary allowances.
 - Expected family routines.
 - Expected information reporting when visiting friends or being outside school/residence outside of school hours, as well as contact information during such time.

- Curfews and time restrictions and the reasons for these. If a student fails to return at the right time, caregivers should attempt to contact or find them, but must inform the student's parents and the police as soon as possible that night if they cannot be located.
 - Homework and home study expectations and routines.
6. Provide age appropriate information on safety and behaviour within the home and environment including:
 - Travelling on local transport
 - Road rules
 - The accepted code of behaviour within Singapore and the applicable laws and regulations of Singapore, including those related to alcohol and drugs.
 7. In the absence of the parent's direct communications with the school, communicate with the school, attend school events to support the student including orientation, special events information such as excursion week, reporting on student progress and assisting the student in seeking extra-curricular activities and sports. To read and explain to the student CIS' weekly e-bulletins or any other e-notifications sent.
 8. Demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to students who are away from their families and familiar surroundings, for the first time. Students may become distressed for different reasons, including culture shock, finding it difficult to adapt to the diet, being overwhelmed by differences in their residential settings, including the lack of privacy, and not being able to fully communicate their feelings. Young people can react in different ways, e.g. becoming unhappy, introverted or aggressive or having trouble sleeping. This may be their first experience of being away from home, and they could be upset when parents contact them. It is only rarely that a student is so distressed that arrangements need to be made for them to return home. Caregivers need to be alert for these signs and to respond appropriately.
 9. If a student needs to be absent from school because of medical or other reasons, the caregiver shall advise the school by 9.00am on the morning of the absence. Note: Students are required to have a 90% attendance record to maintain their Student Pass. Other than in special circumstances, CIS will advise Singaporean Immigration authorities should an attendance rate fall below 90%.
 10. Immediately inform the parents and the school liaison officer(s) if the caregiver is aware of the student consuming alcohol, taking, possessing or trafficking non-prescribed, illegal drugs or breaks the law in any other way.
 11. Provide assistance for a student when travelling to and from Singapore.
 12. Inform students of emergency contact information for emergency services including:
 - A 24-hour contact whom the student can contact should they feel unsafe.
 - Singapore emergency contact numbers 999/995
 - Contact numbers and address of the local general practitioner's clinic and hospital.

SECTION B - Student guidelines

The student will:

1. Respect and follow the laws and regulations of Singapore, the caregiver family behavioural expectations and rules, and be responsible toward the caregiver's residence and property.
2. Engage with the caregiver's family and the school and seek out opportunities to become involved in the school and family life.
3. Communicate regularly with the parents/legal guardian and with their caregiver's family.
4. Communicate significant issues or concerns to the caregiver's family, parent/legal guardian, CIS teacher or advisor as appropriate.

SECTION C - CIS complaint and concern review process

(For alleged complaints or concerns of chronic neglect or abuse)

If neglect or abuse by a caregiver is alleged and there is sufficient evidence or reasonable belief that the allegations are worth investigating, the appropriate CIS liaison officer(s) will conduct a review of the child's living arrangements in Singapore. This review will comprise of two steps. This review process does not preclude CIS from contacting the Police or Child Protection Services (CPS) immediately upon obtaining information in relation to neglect or abuse.

Step one - Preliminary review

- a. The liaison officer(s) will interview the student about living conditions, and minutes will be maintained to record the concerns.
- b. Caregivers (and/or parents) will meet with the liaison officer(s) without the communication of minutes.
- c. Parents and the caregiver will be asked to respond to the concerns within 5 days identifying follow up actions.
- d. Within two weeks the liaison officer(s) will have a follow-up interview with the student.
- e. Continuing concerns will immediately invoke Step two.
- f. For issues related to abuse, the process will escalate to Step two immediately.

Step two - Formal review

- a. The administration will constitute an ad-hoc fact-finding committee headed by the liaison officer(s) to initiate a formal investigation and to provide its findings in 5 days.
- b. The administration will re-consider the active status of the child's enrolment at CIS based on the findings of this formal review for the sake of the child's safety and well-being.
- c. The liaison officer(s) will advise the parents and caregiver that the matter may be reported to the CPS within the Ministry of Social and Family Development or the Police if warranted and authorized by the principal, in consultation with the Head of School. The administration may wish to exercise its discretion not to inform the parent or caregiver if he or she is the alleged perpetrator.

SECTION D - Definitions:

- 1.1. "Caregiver" refers to the person appointed by the student's parents or legal guardian under the caregiver form as being the primary contact person in place of the applicant or contact person in addition to the applicant, being a person who has charge of or control over a child during the school year.
- 1.2. "Caregiver form" refers to the form signed by the student's parents/legal guardian who appoint the caregiver, as defined above for the purposes of communicating with CIS.
- 1.3. "Joint Agreement" refers to the agreement between the parents in relation to whom shall deal with CIS in place of the applicant in the event of the separation or divorce of the parents.
- 1.4. "Legal Guardian", in relation to the student, refers to the person(s) appointed by an Order of Court as the legal guardian with custody, care and control of the student. A legal guardian may also be appointed by a Deed of Guardianship or a Will upon the death of the student's parent(s). Legal guardian(s) accept responsibility for the student and are responsible, individually or jointly, for complying with their obligations under these terms and conditions.
- 1.5. "Parents" refers to the natural parents of the student and any adoptive parent who has accepted responsibility for the student. Parents are responsible, individually and jointly, for complying with their obligations under these terms and conditions.

References:

British Columbia
Ministry of Education
K - 12 International Student Homestay Guidelines 2015

UK Council for International Student Affairs
International students under 18: Guidance 2008