



Bilton Grange Overseas Children and Parents Policy

Date: January 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

POLICY RELATING TO PUPILS OF PARENTS WHO LIVE OVERSEAS

As well as full, weekly and flexi boarders resident in the UK, Bilton Grange accepts boarding children from a number of countries and it is beneficial for British children to live and work alongside those from different cultures and backgrounds. Bilton Grange does not recruit large numbers of children from any one overseas language group to ensure that all children are fully integrated into the life of Bilton Grange.

Bilton Grange also has a number of British children whose parents live overseas or who will be posted overseas at some point in their careers, and this can also require extra support for children and parents in this position. It is the responsibility of the Head of Boarding, Assistant House Parents and House Mothers together with Form Tutors, to be aware of likely difficulties, for example when parents who are members of the Armed Forces are posted to dangerous parts of the world. Such children and their parents will have particular needs, and their welfare and requirements will have to be handled with care and sensitivity.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy is for BG Staff, Children and Parents and is available on the School website.

Admissions (additional to Admissions Policy)

Bilton Grange will establish, as part of the application process, that a child for whom English is not their first language has an adequate grasp of English to allow that child to cope on arrival in the UK. This will often be done initially through educational agents, many of whom know Bilton Grange well and so can judge the suitability of the child in question, but the Head and/or the Head of Boarding will always speak to the applicant directly, usually through Teams video-conference or ideally in person, to make a judgement as to their level of English. The academic year to which the applicant is seeking to join is also taken into account.

The Head will ask about the child's interests, attitudes to learning and aspirations, especially with regard to boarding. It is essential that the child is involved in the decision-making process in making the application to Bilton Grange and is positive about coming to the school.

Bilton Grange may send tests, whether in English, Mathematics, Verbal or Non-Verbal Reasoning, to the family or agent of the child applying for a place. These may be either a paper-based test which will be scanned and emailed (and returned likewise) or will be an online assessment. The school tends to use UKiSET to judge levels of competency in English but occasionally will use other forms of assessment at its discretion.

As with UK admissions, reports and references from previous schools will be taken up.

3.0 POLICY CONTENT

Induction and Integration

Children from overseas, whether English is their first language or not, will require a detailed and carefully structured induction programme for their first few weeks at Bilton Grange. For children for whom English is their first language, the main element of this is extra pastoral support from the Head of Boarding, Assistant House Parents and House Mothers and other boarding staff. An appropriate choice of (child) 'buddy' is made to ensure that the new overseas child can be introduced to all the routines and activities of Bilton Grange and supported in every possible way. It will be the responsibility of the Head of Boarding and the core boarding team to ensure that the new overseas child is well looked after and that there are adequate communications between School and home.

A new international boarder is encouraged to Facetime or call during the day or at an appropriate time to the destination being called. Milk-break calls every day are arranged and booked in so that all boarders can speak/see their parents. It will be doubly important for the Head of Boarding and House Mothers to contact the parents of new overseas children, either by telephone or e-mail, to update and reassure them during that early period.

For most children coming from overseas there may be subjects of which they have little or no experience, for example Latin or French. In some cases where circumstances permit and the need is urgent, Bilton Grange will provide independent learning materials in order that the child can prepare ahead of their first term; it is common for overseas pupils to make remarkably swift progress in such subjects. Occasionally, and in consultation with parents or agents, and taking into account the demands of any chosen senior school, a pupil may be withdrawn from certain non-core subjects in order to provide greater one-to-one support for the core curriculum, which may be chargeable.

EAL (English as an Additional Language) Tuition

For those children whose first language is not English, Bilton Grange's Learning Development Department will make an early assessment of the overseas child's needs in terms of support in English and then a formal pattern of lessons (which are separately chargeable) will be set up with one of Bilton Grange's EAL specialists, if required. Whilst we will always inform parents of our plans and intentions, the school reserves the right to insist on EAL teaching where we decide that this is essential to assist with a pupil's integration and learning. An IEP (Individual Education Plan) will be created to alert staff to the child's particular areas of difficulty so that differentiation can take place in all lessons. Help and support will always be given to EAL children whose lack of confidence in English is hindering progress in any subject and appropriate allowances will be made in class, prep and in examinations (in-class support is not chargeable). For further information about EAL provision please see the EAL Policy.

Guardians, Guardianships and Agents

Bilton Grange requires all overseas children to have a UK Guardian or Guardianship nominated who are AEGIS or BSA accredited at the time of joining the School but does **not** appoint Guardians on parents' behalf. Some of the agencies that Bilton Grange deals with have UK based representatives

who share responsibility with Bilton Grange for welfare, dealing with academic progress of the child, travel, etc. and who often take full responsibility for the child during exeats and some holidays. Such representatives can be very helpful and supportive of the new children by visiting them and liaising with School and parents; of course the contractual relationship is between the family and the agent or guardian. For further information please see the Group Educational Guardianship Policy.

If overseas parents have a difficulty finding a suitable guardian Bilton Grange can direct them to an appropriate UK agency; we cannot offer any recommendation or undertaking with regard to their services but are pleased to make introductions and, if possible, connect prospective parents with existing or past parents who have used the services of the agency in question.

Where necessary, Bilton Grange will accept responsibility from an airline for an overseas child travelling as an unaccompanied minor, and appropriate adults will be asked to meet and greet such children at the appropriate airport. This will either be a member of Bilton Grange staff, or a designated driver known to Bilton Grange who has DBS clearance and has undergone child protection training at Bilton Grange.

Communications with Home

Overseas boarding children are able to maintain regular contact with their families, by telephone, e-mail, through video calls and other forms of digital communication. The Head of Boarding and House Mothers check that e-mail accounts have been set up for overseas boarders at the earliest opportunity and that boarders have regular and easy access to e-mail facilities in School, including via the boarding houses.

Smart Device and User agreement: this has been introduced and established to triangulate the responsibility between the boarder, the parents and the School. In an era when technology, devices and apps move quickly, we want our boarders to remain in touch with their family but safely. This agreement clearly explains the expectations but also allows certain apps to be used with parental consent. (see Smart Device User Agreement PDF)

The Head of Boarding and the House Mothers and Form Tutors will make an extra effort to keep in regular contact with overseas parents, whether they are parents of foreign nationals, expatriates or those posted overseas for shorter periods of time. It is understood how difficult it can be for parents to be far away from young children and this requires a special effort on the part of those who care for the child to keep in touch with their parents. As a rough guide, weekly contact between the Head of Boarding or House Mothers and parents during the first few months of the child's stay at Bilton Grange will be the norm, in order to reassure parents, to keep them in touch with their child's progress and to discuss any problems.

It may be important that children for whom English is an additional language do not lose proficiency in their first language and, if this is both necessary and possible, Bilton Grange will facilitate this, for example by inviting tutors into school; such lessons are additionally chargeable.

Exeat and Holiday Arrangements

It is very important that watertight arrangements are made when organising travel for overseas children. Bilton Grange will expect parents or Guardians to make the necessary plans well in advance of the holiday period and to communicate those to Bilton Grange. This contact should come through the Head of Boarding and House Mothers. It is also important that parents give Bilton Grange adequate notice to pick children up from, or deliver them to, airport terminals. All flight details will be required and House staff will be alert to overseas children who might have to arrive at Bilton Grange slightly earlier than the published times at the end of the long holiday periods, due to international flight schedules. Children on approved UK visa also need to provide flight tickets to and from the UK to validate their movements in and out of the UK.

Parents must be aware that Bilton Grange's holidays are substantial and allow for a good quantity of family time; term time must not be encroached upon by early departures from and late returns to school at the beginning and end of term. As well as academic lessons, it is vital that children do not miss important occasions such as assemblies and chapel services which mark the beginning and end of each term. If there are special circumstances which will entail a pupil missing the end or start of a term, permission must be sought, with an explanation, from the Head (by email to his PA) well ahead of time. Seeking permission once flights have already been booked is not acceptable.

Senior Schools

It is important that Bilton Grange is kept abreast of overseas parents' expectations regarding progression to senior schools. Some senior, independent schools make special entry arrangements for overseas nationals who have only studied in this country for a short period but it is expected that most children will follow the normal Common Entrance curriculum at Bilton Grange. It will be the Head's responsibility to co-ordinate this, with input from the Assistant Head Academic, House staff and Form Tutors.

4.0 POLICY OWNER

Assistant Head – Boarding – Mr Mark G Tovey

5.0 RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Group Guardianship Policy

Smart Device User Agreement

App consent User Agreement

6.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

This policy will be reviewed annually.