

Information for parents of students under the age of 18

Under UK law, anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child. This means that INTO has a special duty of care to students under the age of 18. Parents also continue to have a legal responsibility, even if they are not living in the UK.

Living in a University setting in the UK

Universities in the UK may be very different from Universities in other countries and are not like boarding schools. Universities are adult environments where nearly all of the students are over the age of 18 and have the freedom and responsibilities of adults.

INTO recognises that international students under the age of 18 need extra support and help and that their parents will want to make sure that their children are as safe as possible. This information booklet will set out the ways in which we will care for your child. However, you should also be aware that you are still legally responsible for your child and that you should make any provision you feel necessary for their wellbeing when they are in the UK.

Your child will, for the most part, be treated by INTO and Queen's University Belfast in the same way as any other student, nearly all of whom will be over 18 years of age.

Guardianship

Whilst INTO will do everything possible to care for your child whilst they are at INTO, it cannot take full parental responsibility for your child. We strongly recommend that you appoint a Guardian, who is resident in the UK, for your child. The Guardian is someone who can act in your place if there are any problems or emergencies and will provide an added level of care for your child and give you peace of mind.

Guardianship options:

1. If you have a friend or relative living in the UK who is over 21 years of age and who you trust, they may be willing to act as your child's guardian
2. There are a variety of Guardianship agencies in the UK. You should look for a Guardianship agency which is a member of AEGIS. Go to website: www.aegisuk.net

If you have decided to appoint someone to act as your child's guardian in the UK, you should complete **Form 4**, attached

What INTO will do to support and help your child

General statement

All students will be treated with dignity, respect and fairness by all staff. They will be provided with a learning environment which is free from physical, emotional and social abuse.

INTO has a duty of care to all of its students and especially those under the age of 18. All INTO staff

have police checks to make sure that they have not committed any offences which would make them unfit to look after students under the age of 18. These are known as Access NI checks.

INTO has a child protection policy to safeguard its students from abuse, which includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or bullying. Parents should contact the Head of Student Services if they become concerned that their child might be suffering abuse from any other student or any member of staff.

Support for students

Personal Tutor

Each student is assigned a personal tutor who is available to discuss and deal with any issues which might arise as part of the student's studies.

Student Services Staff

INTO has a number of Student Services Staff, whose role it is to look after the welfare of all of our students, but particularly those under the age of 18. Student Services Staff are made aware of each student under the age of 18 so that they can provide extra help and support to these students.

As well as helping with day to day support, questions and problems, the Student Services Staff also help student with:

- Police registration (which takes place in the INTO Centre so that students do not need to go to the police station)
- Visa Extensions
- Registration with the University Medical Centre
- Social Programme

Social Programme and Social Activities

INTO runs a range of social activities in the evenings and at weekends. The University also has a range of social clubs and activities which your child will be encouraged to join.

INTO also offers a range of excursions to places of interest in and around Belfast. There is a charge for these excursions.

Language Advisors

We have language advisors available to speak to students in their own language. The language advisors are there to help students if they need to speak to someone in their own language. The language advisors are also available to speak to parents if necessary. If the need arises and we do not have a language advisor who speaks your child's native language, we will do our best to find someone within the University who does speak your child's language

24 hour emergency support

INTO has a 24 hour emergency support line, which means your child can contact someone from INTO day and night, no matter where they are. Also, if you have an emergency and need to contact someone from INTO out of normal office hours, you can telephone the INTO emergency number. You

should make sure that your child has the number with them before they leave their own country. The emergency number is **+44 (0) 7971609572**. Please note that this number should only be used for emergencies and not for general enquiries.

Medical Services

The University Health Centre is 5 minutes walk from the INTO Centre. All students studying at INTO for 6 months or more will register with the Health Centre. It is important that students bring any medical information with them.

Students studying at INTO for less than 6 months will be able to get medical treatment from the Health Centre, however they will have to pay for treatment in the first instance and then re-claim the cost from their insurance.

Please note that students between the age of 16 and 18 are able to give their own consent for medical treatment and their wishes will be respected by medical staff. INTO can only give consent for medical treatment if a student under the age of 18 is unable to do so themselves (for example if they are unconscious or the doctor thinks they are mentally unfit to give consent)

Dental Services

Students will be advised to register with a local dentist upon arrival. A charge is made for dental treatment, however it may be possible to re-claim the charge for emergency dental work from the student's insurance. Students may have to pay for treatment in the first instance and then re-claim the cost from their insurance.

Pre-departure

Your child will receive a pre-departure guide before they leave home to come to INTO. You should read this guide together to make sure that your child is prepared for arrival in the UK.

Meet and Greet Service

In the Policy Guidance for Tier 4 of the Points Based System it states that 'All children studying in the United Kingdom must have suitable care arrangements in place for their travel, reception at port and living arrangements while here.

Children are all students under 18 years old. If you are 16 or 17 years old and applying as an adult student, you must have your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) written consent that you can live and travel independently.'

To ensure the safety of your child on arrival in the UK, we require parents of students under the age of 18 to use the 'meet and greet' service, at the cost set out in the brochure, unless they have made satisfactory alternative provision for their child to be met. A taxi will be there to meet your child and bring them to INTO Queen's University Belfast. All of the drivers of the taxi service we use have had police checks to make sure they are suitable to collect students aged under 18 of age. You should complete the 'Arrivals Details Form', which is sent with the student's course confirmation letter

If you do not wish to use the meet and greet service and have arranged for someone else to meet your child at the airport, you should complete **Form 5** to let us know the full details, including flight number, flight arrival time at the UK airport, the name of the person collecting the student and their expected arrival time at INTO Queen's University Belfast.

Accommodation

All students under the age of 18 must live in the residences at the INTO Centre. Please note that we are not able to segregate students by age, gender, religion or ethnic group.

Meals

There is a café bar at the INTO Centre which offers hot and cold drinks, snacks, lunches etc. Queen's operate an 'Easypay' system on campus which allows students to load money onto their student card and use it to pay for meals on campus. You can find more information on how to load money onto your child's card from home using the following link:

<http://www.eatatqueens.com/sites/EatAtQueens/Information/>

Support in Accommodation

INTO provides support for all students living in our residential accommodation. There are Residential Assistants whose role it is to look after the welfare of students in the residential unit and to maintain good order in residences. Students under the age of 18 are allocated rooms as close as possible to one of the wardens.

Curfew

All students in residence must sign in at the University accommodation between 9.00 and 10.00 pm every night (including weekends and holiday periods). If students do not sign in as expected, the staff member on duty will attempt to contact the student to ensure they return home safely. If contact cannot be made, the missing students procedure will be implemented.

Nights or weekends away from the INTO residences

If a student under the age of 18 wishes to be away from the INTO residences overnight or for a weekend, they must first get permission. The student must inform the Welfare Officer or Head of Student Services of their intended plans. The Head of Student Services will then try to contact you, either directly or through your agent, to agree to your child's plan. If it is not possible to contact you and you have appointed a UK Guardian, we will seek permission from the Guardian. If there is no Guardian the Head of Student Services will make the decision. In all cases we will need to know where your child is going and who they are going with or going to see. We will also need a contact telephone number.

Our expectations of students

Alcohol and Cigarettes

In the UK it is illegal for alcohol or cigarettes to be sold to anyone under the age of 18. It is also illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to buy alcohol or cigarettes.

INTO does not allow smoking or drinking alcohol by any student either in the main teaching block or in its residences.

Please note that under UK law it is a criminal offence to smoke in any enclosed place used by the public.

Conduct and behaviour of students

All students are expected to treat other students, staff and visitors of INTO and Queen's University Belfast with respect, dignity and fairness. Students under the age of 18 are treated in the same way as other students and are expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The 'Student Code of Conduct' is given to all students when they arrive at INTO. A copy is available on request

Attendance

Good attendance is key to academic success. INTO Queen's University Belfast expects students to attend **all academic sessions**.

Student attendance is monitored carefully and where attendance is not satisfactory, the Centre has an absence procedure, which is administered by the Academic Support Team. The Centre has an additional obligation to report to the Home Office, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) service any changes that may affect the terms of an international student's visa, including absence from the programme.

Any student who persistently misses classes will be given a formal warning and you will be notified of this. INTO reserves the right to permanently exclude any student who receives two formal warnings.

Disciplinary Action

Any student who fails to meet INTO's expectations for attendance or behaviour and conduct is likely to face disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action for minor offences will range from a reprimand to a fine not exceeding £100. For major offences, for example where the student's behaviour puts others at significant risk, or where the student has persistently failed to attend classes as required by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), the student will be subject to formal disciplinary action. The INTO Queen's Centre Director has the authority to suspend or permanently exclude the student from INTO.

If, for any reason, disciplinary action is taken against a student under the age of 18, their parents will be informed. They will be told why the student was disciplined, what is expected of the student in the future and what will happen if the student fails to meet the expectations.

In the unlikely event of a student under 18 years of age being permanently excluded from INTO, the student will not be asked to leave INTO before parents have been informed and have had the chance to make arrangements for the student to return home. A copy of the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures is available on request

Internet

The University is an adult environment and so does not have controls on websites to prevent younger people viewing them. Therefore your child will have access to any website which can be viewed by other members of the University, within the regulations laid out by the University. Please see the INTO Queen's University Belfast Internet Safety Policy for further details