

INTO Queen's University Belfast

Policy and Guidelines for Students under the age of 18

1.0 Context

Students under the age of 18 are considered to be a child under the law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Therefore, INTO Queen's University Belfast has a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare. We wish to ensure that such students are provided with a safe and secure environment in which to study and thrive. The following rules and procedures have been put in place to safeguard students under the age of 18 and to encourage them to take responsibility for their own conduct and behaviour.

INTO Queen's University Belfast is an adult environment and all students will be treated as adults; however, we recognise that we have an additional duty of care to students under the age of 18. INTO Queen's understands that under 18s from overseas may not have the same knowledge or experience of the UK as students originally from the UK so they may be more vulnerable to harm than UK students of the same age. All children and young people have the right to protection from abuse, freedom from injury and a safe and healthy environment while under the care of INTO Queen's.

1.1. Guardianship

A Guardian is someone who can act in place of parents if there are any problems or emergencies. They provide an added level of care although the parents continue to have a legal responsibility over the child even if they are not living in the UK. Whilst INTO Queen's University Belfast will aim to do everything possible to care for students under the age of 18, we cannot take full parental responsibility. We strongly recommend that a Guardian who resides in the UK to be appointed by parents before arrival. The role of the guardian needs to be agreed between the parents and the appointed person. Details of the Guardian or evidence of an alternative arrangement should be provided to INTO Queen's University Belfast. We request all Guardians to be members of [AEGIS](#), an organisation responsible for the safeguarding and Welfare of children in the UK. If no guardian is appointed, the INTO Senior Management Team reserve the right to act in cases of emergency where the parents cannot be contacted and/or where the Senior Management Team feel that the situation warrants immediate action.

2.0 Support Available

All INTO staff have police checks to make sure that they have not committed any offence which would make them unfit to supervise children. For INTO Queen's University staff, this is known as an Access NI check. All staff who have direct responsibilities for students under the age of 18 are required to attend appropriate training. The INTO Senior Management Team which consists of the Centre Director, Academic Director and Head of Student Services oversee this.

INTO and Queen's University Belfast also have a separate **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy** to safeguard its students from abuse, which includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse or bullying. This policy must be read and understood by all staff. Parents should contact the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** or one of the **Designated Safeguarding Staff (DSS)** if there is any concern that their child is suffering abuse from any other student or member of staff. At the INTO Queen's University Centre, the DSL is the Centre Director. Within the policy, it also includes procedures to prevent underage drinking, substance abuse and the possession of obscene material.

2.1. Student Services Staff / Welfare Officer

INTO has several Student Services Staff, whose role is to look after the wellbeing of all of our students. Within the team, there is a dedicated member of staff or a Welfare Officer, whose principle role is the welfare and pastoral care of students. Their role includes helping students deal with personal problems (emotional, academic, family, financial) and crisis management involving, for example, accommodation issues as well as aiming to make sure that any accommodation provided to students by the Centre is suitable. Where possible they offer out-of-hours emergency support, such as attending hospital or the police station, acting as an appropriate adult if guardians or parents cannot be contacted. The Welfare Officer also has responsibility for daily attendance monitoring for students under the age of 18 and will meet informally with each student on a monthly basis during term time to monitor progress.

2.2. Additional Needs and Disability

In the United Kingdom, every person has the same right to education, regardless of medical conditions or disabilities. If you have any medical conditions, disabilities, or if you are neurodivergent, you must let INTO Queen's know, so that we can make sure that we support you fully during your studies.

If a student requires additional support services due to a disability or chronic illness, the INTO Queen's University Centre has a **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)** to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to enable full access to study. The SENCO will work with the Academic Teams and Student Services Teams to ensure that students are not at a disadvantage because of their illness or disability.

2.3 Personal Tutor

All INTO Queen's University students are assigned a personal tutor at the beginning of the academic year. Personal tutors are available to discuss and deal with any issues which might arise including managing workload and exam preparation.

2.4. 24-Hour Emergency Support

INTO has a 24-hour emergency support line, which means students can contact someone from INTO Queen's University day and night, in case of emergency. The emergency number is +44 (0) 79716 09572. **Please note that this number should only be used for emergencies and not for general enquiries.** Students will also be provided with the contact numbers for local Emergency Services, Police, Fire and Ambulance during induction.

3.0. Social Programme and Activities

INTO Queen's University runs a range of social activities in the evening and at weekends and will organise a range of free and paid events. The Queen's University Students Union and Queen's University Residence also has a range of social clubs and activities which students will be encouraged to join.

A risk assessment of each social event will be undertaken. INTO Queen's University will not organise any activities considered to be high risk (e.g. airborne or water-based activities, rifle range/archery, mountaineering, horse riding, motor sports, team sports such as rugby or American football). However, if an event organised by INTO is considered to be a moderate risk (i.e. Go Karting) parental consent will be required. Although INTO Queen's University will do our utmost to ensure that a student under the age of 18 is protected from harm, if the student chooses to engage in high risk activities as part of a University club/society or external organisation against the advice or without the knowledge or consent of INTO, we cannot be held liable for any injury which may occur as a result of this activity. These organisations should complete their own Risk Assessment in conjunction with their own Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Students under the age of 18 will not be permitted to join overnight trips unless it is a required component of the syllabus of their Programme of Study and parental consent is provided. This includes trips organised by Queen's University Clubs and Societies.

INTO Queen's University will use coach companies whose drivers are Access NI checked. INTO Student Assistants will also be Access NI checked. The level of supervision at events will be as follows:

- ❖ During excursions, there will be **1 adult for every 10 students aged under 18**. There will be a named staff member assigned to be the contact for students under the age of 18 during the event.
- ❖ Students under the age of 18 will be identified to all staff involved in the event.
- ❖ Emergency procedures will be communicated to all INTO Student Assistants. Accidents involving students under the age of 18 will be reported to the Welfare Officer and an Accident Report Form completed on return to the INTO Centre.
- ❖ Students will be collected and brought back to the University Accommodation. Where a student under the age of 18 is living in private accommodation with family as previously approved, the assigned member of staff will ensure that the student is transported to their address safely by means of private transport.
- ❖ Students will not be permitted to consume alcohol or to purchase age restricted products.
- ❖ All students on a day trip will be provided with the following information:
 - a. programme for the day, including times, maps and details of meeting points;
 - b. mobile numbers in case of emergency;
 - c. reminder of the behaviour that is expected.

Furthermore, students under the age of 18 will not be permitted to hold a supervisory position for any event or excursion.

4.0. Living Arrangements

All students under the age of 18 are required to stay in the appointed INTO Residential Accommodation. For INTO Queen's University Students, this is the Queen's University Elms Village BT9. If students wish to organise alternative accommodation, they are required to appoint a registered

guardian who is registered with [AEGIS](#). Signed agreement by parents is required and needs to be provided to INTO Admissions Team and the Student Services Team. Any alternative residence will be inspected regularly by the Student Services Team to ensure that it is a suitable environment that adheres to Safeguarding and Child Protection legislation, unless living with a parent. Information on Educational Guardianships and providers can be found through [Association for the Education and Guardianship for International Students \(AEGIS\)](#). Please ensure the agency you engage with will operate in Northern Ireland.

At INTO Residential Accommodation, there are Residential Life Coordinators and Assistants, who are DBS/Access NI checked, available during out of office hours to respond to any queries and support students' safety onsite.

At INTO Queen's University Belfast, the Residential Life Team are employees of Queen's University Belfast and work with the INTO Accommodation Officer to maximise the wellbeing of students residing at the Elms Village, as well as ensuring that all statutory health and safety and fire precaution requirements are met or exceeded. During a fire alarm activation, Residential Life Assistants will be responsible for checking a register. Immediate first aid is available on site from staff who have been trained appropriately. All INTO accommodation includes either electronic control of access and/or 24/7 staffed security.

The Residential Life Team will meet with residents under the age of 18 on a monthly basis to monitor their progress and wellbeing.

5.0 Contact with Parents

INTO provides students with access to a number of PCs in the centre, which can be used to make internet calls, such as WhatsApp. In addition, in an emergency, free direct dial contact can be made from phones on the Welcome Desk. INTO Queen's University provides free SIM cards to students at registration and will support students in getting their UK mobile number activated.

The University residence provides high speed Wi-Fi in both bedrooms and common areas, with additional Ethernet connection of 100Mb in each bedroom.

We strongly advise students to make contact with their parents regularly.

6.0 Complaints

INTO has a written **Complaints Policy and Procedure** which is available to all students.

7.0 INTO expectations of students

7.1. Conduct and Behaviour of Students

All students are expected to treat other students, staff and visitors of INTO and Queen's University 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 in the Student Handbook which is provided to all students at registration and is taken from the Queen's University **Conduct Regulations**. Other Queen's University policies relating to student conduct are the **Student Bullying and Harassment Policy** and the **Equality and Diversity Policy** and are available on request but are also available at:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/hr-filestore/Filetoupload,867094,en.pdf>

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7.2. Registration

Class registers will be completed within the first ten minutes of class and the Student Welfare Officer will check u18 attendance on an hourly basis. If a student is missing from class, the Welfare Officer or a member of the Student Services Team will try to contact the student. If contact cannot be made, a search will be instigated which may involve a check at the students' residence, and the **Missing Student Procedure** carried out if the need arises. If a student feels that they are unable to attend class for any reason, INTO ask that the student make contact with the Welfare Officer as soon as possible to confirm their whereabouts and to allow INTO to provide advice.

7.3. Attendance

All students are expected to attend 100 per cent of classes and to attend all classes on time, unless they are ill or have been granted authorised absence. If a student persistently misses class, they will receive a warning and follow the stages of the **Attendance Monitoring Process**. INTO reserves the right to permanently exclude a student from the course for poor attendance. In addition to the standard attendance monitoring procedures, the following will also apply:

- 1) If a class is missed, the tutor will mark the student as absent which will automatically notify the Welfare Officer, who will make contact with the student.

- 2) If contact cannot be made, a search will be instigated and the **Missing Student Procedure** carried out if the need arises.
- 3) If a student feels that they are unable to attend class for any reason, INTO ask that the student make contact with the Welfare Officer as soon as possible to confirm their whereabouts and to allow INTO to provide advice.

7.4. Conditions of Study

Students will be expected to sign a joint INTO Queen's and Queen's University Conditions of Occupancy document which will be considered binding by both parties. The same disciplinary process will apply to students under the age of 18 as to all other residential students. We will ask the parents of the Under 18 to sign this document.

However, additional regulations are in place in order to safeguard students under the age of 18:

7.4.1. Signing in

All students staying at the University residence must sign in with a member of INTO Staff at the University Accommodation between the hours of **8.30-9.30PM face to face at Elms BT9 reception** each night including weekends and holidays, unless the student is travelling to their family home during a holiday period and has provided sufficient evidence (see 7.4.2). Students are expected to be on their own floors within their accommodation by no later than 11.30PM. Students under the age of 18 will have a formal meeting with the Welfare Officer during Induction and will be informed as to how sign in works.

If a sign in appointment is missed, and contact cannot be made by the INTO Staff member on duty, the Student Services Team will attempt contact with the student which may require Security to enter their room. If contact cannot be made, a search will be instigated and the **Missing Student Procedure** implemented if the need arises. If this happens, on the first instance you will meet with the Welfare Officer, the second occasion you will be asked to meet with the Head of Student Services who will advise you of the next steps that will be taken.

7.4.2. Nights or weekends away

If a student under the age of 18 wishes to be away from INTO accommodation overnight or for a weekend, **they must get permission in advance by at least one week i.e. 5 working days. Late requests will not be considered except in the case of exceptional circumstances.**

The student must inform the Welfare Officer of their intended plans. The parents or

appointed guardian must provide written permission to the Welfare officer and complete [the u18 Travel form](#) which will include providing details of an Adult, over the age of 21, who the student will be travelling and/or staying with. This is **non-negotiable**. INTO reserves the right to request proof of identity for the nominated adult. Copies of their flight/transport details must also be provided. If it is not possible to contact the parents and there is no guardian, or if the student will not be accompanied by an adult over the age of 21, permission will not be granted.

In all cases, INTO will need to know where the student is going and who they are going to see and reserve the right to refuse travel even where parental permission has been obtained. A contact telephone number and address must be given for where they will be. INTO Senior Management will have the final say on whether travel can be approved.

7.5. Finance

Students are expected to manage their own expenses and monthly budget. Members of the Student Services Team, the Welfare Officer and Personal Tutor will be able to assist students in opening a bank account in the UK and can provide informal advice on money management. Opening a UK bank account for a student under the age of 18 differs from adults, however the Student Services Team at INTO Queen's will help support the application.

7.6. Alcohol and Cigarettes

In the UK, it is illegal for alcohol or cigarettes/vapes to be sold to anyone under the age of 18. It is also illegal for such students to buy or use alcohol or cigarettes. It is a criminal offence for anyone aged over 18 to buy, or to attempt to buy, alcohol for any person who is aged under 18 years. The local Police regularly patrol shops which sell alcohol in order to catch people who break this law.

There are also age restrictions for a number of other goods and services in the UK. Students under the age of 18 are not able to buy solvents, gas lighter refills and some DVDs and computing games. There is also restricted entrance to films with an 18 certificate, and to nightclubs and bars.

7.7. Contact Details

Students must inform the Student Services Team when their contact telephone number or email address has changed so that records can be updated in accordance with UK Visa and Immigration guidelines. All students must provide INTO with a working UK Mobile Number during registration and must be contactable on this number. We strongly recommend our students **DO NOT** bring a UK sim

card with them, INTO Queen's will provide this. This is to best protect our students from Fraud

7.8. Internet and Email

INTO Queen's University Belfast expect students to access email and internet services as set out by the University Regulations and **Acceptable Use Guide**. Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action. A copy of the **Acceptable Use Guide** is available on request and is also available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/Services/Security/#Policies>

8.0 Disciplinary Action

Any student who fails to meet INTO Queen's University Belfast's expectations for attendance or behaviour and conduct is likely to face disciplinary action. 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, the student will be withdrawn from INTO.

If, for any reason, disciplinary action is taken against a student under the age of 18, the 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 withdrawn from INTO, the student will not be asked to leave INTO Queen's University Belfast before parents have been informed and have had the chance to make arrangements for the student to return home.

A copy of the Queen's University Belfast **Conduct Regulations** is available on request and is also available at:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/ConductRegulations/>