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CHILD STUDENT VISA GUIDE

Welcome to our comprehensive guide on applying for a **Child Student visa to study in the UK**. Our aim is to simplify the application process and provide you with all the essential information you need.

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What is a Child Student visa?

International pupils who are not British, Irish or hold UK residency (such as EU Settled status) will need a visa to study in the UK. A Child Student visa permits pupils aged between 4 and 17 to study at an independent school in the UK. The independent school must be a licensed sponsor and have made an unconditional offer of a place on a course.

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

Upon receiving an offer of a place on an approved course, the school will provide a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). This is a reference number required for the application. The school obtains this reference number by providing certain information regarding the pupil and the course to UK Visas and Immigration ('UKVI', part of the UK Home Office). The CAS is valid for six months, so it is vital that the visa application is made within this timeframe.

What is the visa application process?

Applications consist of an online application form, uploading supporting documents, and identity verification. Depending on nationality and location of application, identity verification will either be carried out in person via an appointment at a local visa centre, or via the "UK Immigration: ID check" app. **The online application form can be found here: www.gov.uk/child-study-visa**

How much will it cost?

To submit the visa application, you will need to pay:

- £524 visa application fee
- £776 per year of study for the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). This will be calculated as a total for the full period of study and visa grant, including 1 month pre-course (where relevant), course duration, and 4 months from the end of the course. This provides full access to the National Health Service.

  More information can be found here: **https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application**

What documentation is required?

It is important to ensure that all required documents are provided in the correct format. A typical application will require:

- Valid Passport or Travel Document
- Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)
- Birth Certificate
- Parental Consent Letter confirming the relationship between parents and child, consenting to the child's visa application, living arrangements and care in the UK, travel to and reception in the UK. This must be signed by both parents, or by one only if they have sole responsibility, and provide contact details.
- Letter of Undertaking where there is a nominated UK guardian who will provide non term-time care and/or be available for emergencies. This is a new requirement for all applications from May 29, 2025. See below 'Living arrangements' to see if this applies.

The application may also require;

- TB test certificate. Check if you need one here: **https://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa**
- Financial evidence to prove sufficient funds are available to cover course fees and living costs.
- Certified English translations of documents not in English.

Additional documents may be necessary based on your specific situation. Ensure you compile a comprehensive set of documents to demonstrate your eligibility for the visa.

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NEW REQUIREMENT FOR APPLICATIONS FROM MAY 29, 2025

Living arrangements

A Child Student visa application must confirm that the child's UK living arrangements will be one of the following:

Full boarding at a residential independent school during term time, and outside of term time:

1. living with a person who is a British Citizen or settled in the UK and either:

(i) a nominated guardian (for a period of less than 28 days); *or*

(ii) a private foster carer; *or*

(iii) a close relative

or

2. living with a Parent holding Parent of Child status if linked to younger (day student) sibling.

or

3. staying at school or leaving the UK (this requires the school to be the student's UK emergency contact, and).

Weekly boarding at a residential independent school during term time, and at weekends and outside of term time:

1. living with a person who is a British Citizen or settled in the UK and either:

(i) a nominated guardian (for a period of less than 28 days); *or*

(ii) a private foster carer; *or*

(iii) a close relative

or

2. living with a Parent holding Parent of Child status if linked to younger (day student) sibling.

Flexi boarding at a residential independent school and otherwise:

1. living with a person who is a British Citizen or settled in the UK and either:

(i) a private foster carer; *or*

(ii) a close relative

or

2. living with a Parent holding Parent of Child status if linked to younger (day student) sibling.

Living with a private foster carer or close relative who is a British Citizen or settled in the UK

Living with a parent or legal guardian who has permission as a Parent of a Child Student

Aged 16 or 17 and living independently (with parental consent)

PLUS (in Home Office Guidance, not yet in Appendix Child Student)
Full boarding at a residential independent school during term time and **staying at school outside term-time or leaving the UK**.

The above option requires the school to be the student's UK emergency contact.

Please note the following UKVI definitions:

"Nominated guardian" means a person aged 18 years old or over who is appointed by the Child Student's parent, legal guardian, or school as the Child Student's carer in the UK outside of term-time for less than 28 days and/or is the school's emergency contact in the UK for the Child Student. The person must not be:

1. a private foster carer (for the purposes of section 66 of the Children's Act 1989); or
2. close relative the Child Student is living with during term-time; or
3. the Child Student's parent or legal guardian who has permission as a Parent of a Child Student.

"Private foster care arrangement" means an arrangement in which a child aged under 16, or aged under 18 if disabled, is cared for, on a full-time basis for a period of 28 days or more, by a person aged 18 or over who is not the child's parent or a close relative.

"Close relative" means a grandparent, brother, sister, step-parent, uncle (brother or half-brother of a child's parent) or aunt (sister or half-sister of a child's parent) who is aged 18 or over.

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Financial evidence

You may be required to show you have enough money to pay your course fees (as shown on your CAS) and living costs. The specific amount required depends on individual circumstances:

Living arrangements	Required funds
Residential independent school boarding (full/weekly/flexi) plus UK carer as set out in the table above.	Sufficient funds to cover the course fees and boarding fees for one academic year.
Living with a Private Foster Carer or Close Relative (British Citizen or Settled Status).	Adequate funds to pay the fees for one academic year. The carer or relative must have at least £570 per month available for the duration of the course (up to nine months).
Living with the child's parent or legal guardian who has permission as a Parent of a nine months.	Sufficient funds to cover the course fees for one academic year. If no other children are under the parent's care, £1,560 per month must be available for up to nine months. If other children are also being cared for by the parent in the UK, £625 per month per child is required.
Aged 16 or 17 and living independently.	Adequate funds to pay the school fees for one year. If studying in London, £1,334 per month for each month of the course (up to a maximum of nine months).If studying outside London, £1,023 per month for each month (up to a maximum of nine months).

Evidence can be in the form of bank statements or a letter from your bank that show the required money has been held for at least a consecutive 28-day period ending within the 31 days prior to the application submission date. **Funds must remain available until a decision is made**.

If course fees and accommodation fees (if boarding) for one academic year have been paid in full in advance then the requirement is met. Receipts of payments should be retained, ready to provide with the application. Certain nationalities are exempt from the requirement to provide financial evidence, however you should still be ready to show this as UKVI may still request it.

Important note

A common reason for visa refusals is where UKVI are unable to verify the available funds, either because requested documentation has not been provided or is not in the required format, or because the funds have dropped below the required level while the application is being processed. Please ensure that you are clear on what evidence you must show and that the format of evidence meets UK government specified requirements. Please contact us for guidance on your specific circumstances.

When can the application be made?

An application cannot be made more than six months before the start date of the course, or more than three months if applying from within the UK. Please also note the CAS validity above.

How long will it take?

The Home Office typically processes Child Student Visa applications as follows:

- **Applications from outside the UK:** Decisions are usually made within **3** weeks.
- **Applications from within the UK:** Decisions are typically made within **8** weeks.

Please keep these timeframes in mind when planning your application.

UKVI may request further information or documentation before making their decision. Please check all email inboxes (including Spam and Junk folders) for emails from a GOV.UK address while the application is being processed.

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What does a successful application look like?

The Child Student status will be issued digitally in the form of an eVisa. Additionally, for those who apply via a visa application centre, an entry clearance vignette valid for 90 days will be stuck into a blank page in the child's passport.

An eVisa is an online record of your immigration status and the conditions of your permission to enter or stay in the UK. UKVI will explain in their decision letter the requirement to create a UKVI account to be able to access the eVisa. The child can use an eVisa to travel to the UK together with their current passport, which must be linked to their UKVI account.

To evidence the Child Student visa status, an electronic share code must be generated and provided to the school This share code is valid for 90 days. It is also recommended to generate a share code ready for travel to the UK.

The 'valid from' date on the digital eVisa must be noted and the pupil must not travel to the UK to commence their studies until their new visa is valid.

How long will the Child Student visa be valid for?

The duration of the Child Student visa will vary depending on several factors, including age and course length. Those eligible have the option to extend their visa if they choose to continue their studies in the UK.

Child Student age	Period granted before course start date	Duration of visa
Under 16 years	1 month	Course length (up to 6 years) plus 4 months
16 or 17 years	1 month	Course length (up to 3 years)

Can a parent care for the Child Student visa holder while they are studying?

If your child holds or is applying for a Child Student visa, you may be eligible to apply for the Parent of a Child Student visa. To qualify, the following conditions must apply in your case:

- Your child is aged between four and eleven years old.
- Your child is attending an independent school in the UK.
- You are the sole parent accompanying your child in the UK.
- You maintain your primary residence in your home country.
- You have firm plans to leave the UK when your visa expires.

As a Parent of a Child Student visa holder, you are allowed to stay in the UK until your child's visa expires or until they turn 12 years old (whichever comes first). If your child continues their studies beyond this age, ensure suitable arrangements are in place for their ongoing care.

During your stay in the UK:

- Work, study, and business activities are not permitted.
- You cannot apply for benefits.
- Bringing additional family members to the UK is not allowed.
- Establishing the UK as your primary residence is also prohibited.

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Further support

Our dedicated BSA Legal team specialises in supporting international pupils and their families throughout the UK visa application process. For expert guidance and assistance with Child Student visa applications or related matters, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We are committed to assisting you at every stage.

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