

## The Valuable Role of a Custodian in BC

As per the Ministry of Education, a custodian is a person who is appointed by a child's parent/guardian, through an international student program's authorized document, to care for that child. International student programs and the Canadian federal government require that international students who are minor children have a custodian while studying in the province of British Columbia.

There is often confusion about the difference between a legal guardian and a custodian. In Canada, a legal guardian is the person who is either the child's natural parent or someone who has legally adopted the child through the court system under the Child and Family Services Act. A custodian is appointed by the child's natural parent or legal guardian to provide care in their absence during the student's academic period in Canada.

The custodian's main role is to provide a guidance and support system to the student during their time in Canada. While establishing a relationship with the student, they will offer encouragement, advice and ensure that a comfortable and safe living environment is in place.

To become the custodian of a minor child in Canada, you are required to:

- Be a responsible adult who is 25 years of age or older
- Be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada
- Live within a reasonable proximity to where the student is living
- Be appointed by the minor's parent or legal guardian
- The Custodianship Declaration form: [Custodian Declaration Forms](#)
  - Page 1 is signed by the declared custodian and notarized by a lawyer or notary in Canada
  - Page 2 is signed by the parents or legal guardians of the minor child and notarized in their home country

Along with the primary role of providing support and care for the student, typically the custodian will:

- Understand you will not be released of responsibilities as a custodian until a new custodian is appointed and declared, with updated signed and notarized custodianship documents from the natural parents and new custodian
- Maintain regular contact with the student throughout their academic year
- Ensure that the student is residing with a responsible adult 25 years of age or older and placed in a safe and suitable home
- Sign waivers for school-related functions and activities
- Provide assistance with immediate or ongoing medical services
- Be available to respond 24/7 to emergency cases involving the student
- Provide notice to the International Program, in writing, confirmation and notice of any changes to the student's address or residing contact information
- Become the primary contact for the student's school and the International Program
- Be available in person or by phone call for any meetings required to discuss the student's behavior, academics, and/or well-being
- If absent for any period, provide written notice to the International Program:
  - Duration of absence
  - Name and contact details of temporary appointed care
- encourage the student to attend classes regularly and maintain all program standards
- Provide or ensure natural parents will provide notice to the International Office if any school will be missed for any reason. This includes ensuring the travel application form has been submitted by the student's natural parents [Travel Application Form](#)
- Regularly connect with the student's parents to keep them well informed of their child's academic progress, health, and well-being
- Have knowledge of the International Program Code of Conduct and encourage the student to abide by it