Gold Accreditation of:

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited

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Date: 2nd July 2026

The gold inspection report falls into the following sections:

1. **About the Guardianship Organisation**
2. **Review of the quality standards**
3. **Lead Inspector Overview**
4. **Conclusion**

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About the Guardianship Organisation.

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited (OPDS Ltd) was established in 1996 by two co-founders with backgrounds in education and business who shared a commitment to support young people. Recognising that knowledge of the UK education system in China was limited and that younger international students received little support beyond basic transport and accommodation, they founded OPDS Ltd to provide high-quality academic guidance alongside exceptional pastoral care. Their vision was to treat every student with the same care, compassion and commitment they would give their own child.

As the organisation has grown and evolved, the founders have begun to step back from the day-to-day running of the business. To ensure continuity they have appointed a Managing Director with extensive experience in the sector, who will assume responsibility for leading the organisation into its next phase while maintaining its values and high standards. There is a dedicated team of seven UK-based staff, together with a well-established network of more than 50 carefully selected homestay families who play a key role in providing high-quality care for students.

The organisation currently provides guardianship services for approximately 120 students from China, Hong Kong, the USA, Spain and Kenya. Parents are able to select from four levels of service, ranging from an emergency package to a comprehensive VIP package that offers extensive academic, pastoral and practical support tailored to students' individual needs.

This is an AEGIS Gold Standard re-accreditation inspection. The organisation was previously inspected in 2022.

Review of the AEGIS Quality Standards

Standard One: Statement of company aims, principles and practice	Met

The guardianship organisation has a clear statement of aims, principles and practice which is made available to all relevant parties. Overseas Personal Development Services Limited is successful in meeting their aims and principles.

Standard Two: Management of the Guardianship Organisation	Met

Suitable safer recruitment procedures are in place, and checks are undertaken on staff, volunteers and homestays. This includes checking that staff acting as educational guardians, as well as homestays, hold British citizenship or settled status. The guardianship organisation has demonstrated that they have access to a sufficient number of staff who act as educational guardians to meet the needs of the students within their care. Clear job descriptions are provided as well as appropriate induction for all positions. Suitable contracts are in place for staff, homestays and parents and the guardianship organisation has an appropriate code of

conduct that provides guidance on behaviour that it expects from all members of staff and homestays working within the organisation. Comprehensive handbooks have been produced for students, parents, and homestays.

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited has up-to-date professional indemnity, public and employer's liability insurance in place that is sufficient to cover the scope of their business. A suitable system is in place to ensure that all homestays are aware of the need to inform their home and car insurers of the fact that they are hosting students. Record keeping is efficient, with all required documentation stored in a suitable manner. Suitable emergency procedures are in place. These include a 24-hour emergency contact number and emergency plan that outlines how Overseas Personal Development Services Limited will deal with reasonably foreseeable emergencies. Suitable arrangements are in place for any student who cannot be accommodated by their school due to illness, disciplinary action, or any other cause.

Due regard is paid to protecting data and following the correct procedures for information sharing. This is outlined in the guardianship organisation's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. This is available via the organisation's website. Overseas Personal Development Services Limited is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and has appointed a data controller. Consent is sought before using any photographs of students on their website or in any publicity material.

Suitable financial arrangements are in place to ensure that transactions are prompt in line with contractual agreements. Policies are reviewed at least annually, and all policies include a publication and review date.

Standard Three: Students	Met

Prior to arrival, students have the opportunity to meet their appointed guardian at a virtual meeting before coming to the UK. Overseas Personal Development Services Limited holds an introductory meeting following arrival with all students, including those on emergency packages.

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited has a comprehensive student handbook that is written in appropriate language for the age of the reader. This includes important information on safeguarding and who to turn to should they have any concerns. Students are provided with a suitable induction on or shortly after their arrival in the UK. This includes spending time going through the student handbook to ensure that they understand the contents.

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited checks in with students on a regular basis to ensure their wellbeing, including those on emergency packages. Contact is made with students during and after stays with homestays. A record of this communication is maintained, and any concerns are followed up appropriately.

Suitable arrangements are in place to help support students' mental health. Overseas Personal Development Services Limited fully risk-assesses the implications of providing guardianship to any student and considers whether they are equipped to meet their needs before agreeing to become their guardian. Staff and homestays are made aware of the problems students may face, how to identify them and what to do with any concerns. Overseas Personal Development Services Limited has a clear procedure in place for staff and homestays to follow should any mental health concerns be identified, including for when a student is removed from a school setting.

The guardianship organisation maintains suitable student files that include all required information. These are stored securely, in line with data protection principles. Permission is obtained from parents to hold this information and pass it to homestays and schools as appropriate.

Standard Four: Travel Arrangements	Met

Systems for organising student travel are efficient and suitably documented. Permissions for travel are sought and recorded. Any travel arrangements organised by the guardianship organisation are shared with the relevant parties. Overseas Personal Development Services Limited ensures that any taxi firms used are licenced and obtains confirmation that suitable safeguarding checks have been conducted on the drivers who will provide transport to their students. The guardianship organisation ensures that laws for wearing seatbelts and use of car seats and booster seats where required are adhered to when students are transported.

Standard Five: Homestays	Met

Comprehensive checks are undertaken on homestays and all members of their household before placing students with the homestay. Full details are gathered on all homestay members who are either permanently resident or temporarily living away from home. A homestay profile is produced using this information to provide students and their parents with an insight into what life will be like whilst staying with the family. Suitable checks are undertaken to ensure that student accommodation is provided in line with the AEGIS requirements. Overseas Personal Development Services Limited ensures that homestays provide suitable meals, drinks and snacks throughout their stay as well as suitable laundry facilities if students are resident for more than one night. Guidance is provided to homestays on online safety and internet provision. The guardianship organisation ensures that homestays are clear on the expected code of conduct when hosting students. Training is provided at least annually and includes a safeguarding update. Due consideration is given to health and safety requirements and checks are undertaken on the accommodation before any student is placed within the household and thereafter on an annual basis. These cover all of the areas AEGIS requires. Comprehensive notes of this visit are recorded and stored appropriately within the homestay file. Homestays are made aware that they are expected to

cooperate with an inspection that Overseas Personal Development Services Limited is subject to by AEGIS or any statutory body.

Standard Six: Safeguarding, Child Protection and Welfare	Met

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited has a suitable Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy that is shared with relevant parties and available via the organisation's website. The policy is updated at least annually or more regularly as required and is implemented appropriately. Students are provided with appropriate safeguarding information for their age. The guardianship organisation has a Designated Safeguarding Lead as well as a deputy. Both have completed suitable training for their roles that is reviewed every two years. Other members of staff, volunteers and homestays have received appropriate training for their role. This is renewed every three years. A suitable record of training is maintained. In-house update training is also provided regularly to ensure that homestays and staff are aware of the most up-to-date guidance.

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited has suitable procedures for whistleblowing and reporting low level concerns. There is a suitable policy covering anti-radicalisation and the *Prevent Duty* as well as ones for anti-bullying including cyberbullying and online safety. Procedures to follow in the event of a missing student meet the AEGIS requirements. Suitable guidelines are in place to cover the positive behaviour it expects from its students. These are tailored to the age of the students.

Standard Seven: Complaints	Met

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited has a suitable policy that outlines the procedure for recording and responding to complaints in a timely manner. This is available via the organisation's website. The policy covers an informal and formal resolution stage as well as a further stage for referring the matter to AEGIS if the complaint cannot be resolved by the guardianship organisation. Records are kept of any complaints, along with any action taken as a result of those complaints, regardless of whether they are upheld.

Standard Eight: Day Students, Prolonged Stays with Hosts and Private Fostering	Met

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited understands the legal requirements for private fostering and explains these to the school and homestay, liaising with them to ensure that the local authorities are informed of such an arrangement within the expected timescales. They adhere to the regulations regarding private fostering in place within their local area as directed by their local authority. Suitable records are kept of any correspondence with the local authority fostering team, with permissions secured to share such information as necessary with students, parents/agents, homestays, and partner schools. The

guardianship organisation carries out regular visits to homestays who accommodate day students who are over the age of 16.

Standard Nine: Liaison with Partner Schools	Met

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited keeps in regular contact with the student's school in line with the requirements of the parents. They have fostered effective means of communication with the most suitable person in the school, informing them whenever they are visiting the site. Schools are provided with an appropriate statement of service. Overseas Personal Development Services Limited liaises with the school regarding the needs of the individual student and their wellbeing, including any required medication. Where appropriate, they also liaise with school staff regarding travel and homestay arrangements.

Standard Ten: Liaison with parents	Met

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited maintains regular contact with the student's parents, in line with the terms of the contract. They ensure that parents are provided with a 24-hour contact number and clearly explain who they can contact in cases of emergency. Overseas Personal Development Services Limited keeps parents informed in the case of an emergency, for example if a flight is delayed or cancelled, or if a student is unwell. Where required, the guardianship organisation ensures that measures are in place to facilitate effective communication where language may be a barrier.

Lead Inspector Overview

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited (OPDS Ltd) is a long-established guardianship organisation celebrating its 30th year of operation. It benefits from the extensive experience and leadership of its co-founders and newly appointed Managing Director, who are supported by a small, knowledgeable and committed staff team. The organisation places the welfare and development of its international students at the heart of its work, ensuring that individual needs are recognised and effectively supported. This strong commitment enables students to flourish during their time in the UK and to achieve their educational and personal ambitions.

An Admissions and Host Family Manager oversees the organisation's network of 50 homestay families located throughout England. Homestay families are recruited through procedures that are aligned with the requirements of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE). Comprehensive records are maintained of all safeguarding and suitability checks carried out on both homestay families and their accommodation. The recruitment process is robust, incorporating a detailed application form, enhanced DBS and barred list checks, right-to-work verification, reference checks, and a formal interview. While online checks on potential staff and homestay providers had not been undertaken in the past, the guardianship organisation has now adapted their systems to include this process to further strengthen safeguarding arrangements. Detailed

records of all stages of the process are securely retained by Overseas Personal Development Services Limited. Written agreements, clearly setting out roles, responsibilities, and expectations, are issued to all homestay families. Homestay profiles provided to parents and students include clear photographs of the hosts and their homes, together with information about the location and accommodation. Inspectors noted examples of particularly effective practice, including one family providing photographs of meal options available to students during their stay. Information can also be made available in Chinese, enabling families to make informed decisions with greater confidence and ease. Regular monitoring visits and accommodation checks are conducted and carefully documented, helping to ensure that students are placed in safe, comfortable, and suitable environments throughout their stay. Detailed records of these visits are maintained. Discussions with the Supporting Inspector confirmed that homestay families receive appropriate safeguarding training, together with regular updates to ensure their knowledge remains current. Homestay families are further supported through ongoing telephone contact, as well as access to handbooks and relevant policies. Collectively, these measures demonstrate the organisation's strong commitment to safeguarding, student welfare, and the provision of high-quality homestay accommodation.

Students receive comprehensive support prior to their arrival in the UK through Overseas Development Services Limited's structured onboarding programme. The process begins with the identification of the most effective method of communication for each family, followed by a series of individualised pre-departure meetings. Families are also invited to participate in a programme of webinars delivered by the founders that provide practical guidance on settling into a boarding school environment and offer valuable insights into life in the UK. Comprehensive handbooks are shared electronically and are written in a clear, accessible style. These contain detailed information on a range of topics, including personal safety, wellbeing, and how to access support if required. Close liaison is maintained with each student's school regarding arrival arrangements and transport. Parents are also offered guidance on maintaining appropriate contact with their child during the initial transition period, recognising that excessive communication can sometimes hinder a student's successful adjustment to boarding school life. Each student's consultant maintains regular contact until they are fully settled and confident in their new environment. Consultants also provide practical assistance such as obtaining school uniforms and the opening of bank accounts. Increasingly, parents are choosing to travel to the UK with their children, and the organisation has responded proactively to this trend. The founders arrange meetings with parents in London to offer additional support and reassurance, they also are given the opportunity to meet their child's homestay. All meetings are recorded on the organisation's database, together with notes of discussions. This thorough approach to record-keeping supports continuity of care and helps ensure that families receive a responsive, personalised service. Survey feedback from parents indicates a high level of satisfaction with the support provided and highlights their appreciation of the organisation's consistent communication, accessibility, and commitment to building strong relationships with families.

Records demonstrate that Overseas Development Services Limited provides travel arrangements that are safe, well managed, and carefully coordinated for students. Robust procedures are in place to ensure that all taxi drivers undergo appropriate safeguarding and suitability checks which are recorded on the organisation's Drivers' Checklist. Travel arrangements are meticulously planned, with key information communicated clearly and promptly to students, parents and schools. Evidence of the effectiveness of these arrangements

can be seen in the positive feedback received through student and parent questionnaires, which highlight the quality of communication.

Safeguarding and student wellbeing are at the heart of Overseas Personal Development Services Limited's provision. The organisation has an appropriate safeguarding policy that reflects current statutory guidance and demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting the welfare and safety of all students. The policy is made readily available to staff, parents, and homestay families through publication on the organisation's website and is reviewed annually alongside other key policies to ensure best practice. Students are introduced to key safeguarding information during their induction, with important messages reinforced through the Student Handbook. The organisation has appointed both a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), each of whom has completed suitable training at the required level. In addition, all staff and homestay families receive relevant safeguarding training, with comprehensive records maintained. These arrangements demonstrate the organisation's proactive and well-embedded approach to safeguarding and student welfare.

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited is committed to building strong, collaborative partnerships with its partner schools, and evidence from feedback indicates that these relationships are highly effective. Schools report that the organisation communicates in a responsive and professional manner, with correspondence answered promptly and appropriately. Regular visits and ongoing liaison with school staff help to ensure that students are well supported, that any concerns are identified and addressed swiftly, and that the young people enjoy a positive and successful experience while in the UK. To further strengthen communication and enhance support for students, the organisation should ensure that house parents are routinely provided with copies of key information. This would further help to promote a fully coordinated approach to student welfare and ensure that all those with pastoral responsibility for students are equally well informed.

Overseas Personal Development Services Limited provides a caring, professional, and well-managed service that successfully promotes student welfare, safety, and wellbeing, enabling students to thrive academically, socially, and personally during their time in the UK.

Conclusion

AEGIS is satisfied that Overseas Personal Development Services Limited meets the Quality Standards and have awarded AEGIS Gold Standard re-accreditation on 27th July 2026. Re-accreditation will be due in July 2030.

Points to address:

- Overseas Personal Development Services Limited must implement their new procedure to conduct online checks on all potential staff and homestay providers as part of their recruitment process in order to further strengthen safeguarding arrangements. [Standard 2.8.11]

Points for consideration:

- Overseas Personal Development Services Limited should check that copies of key documents, for example, handbooks have reached boarding house staff.