

PARENT AND GUARDIAN CHARTER

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INTRODUCTION

The University understands that it can be a challenge to see your child start at university, perhaps also leaving home for the first time, and travelling to a foreign country with different laws, customs and cultures. As well as pride and excitement, and even relief, it is not unusual to also be concerned, worried or anxious. At Richmond we regard it is our role to not only help our students with this transition, but to support parents too.

At Richmond we believe that parents and guardians can play a vital role in helping students and through this assist the University in delivering its mission. It is part of the mission of the University to develop graduates prepared for employability and leadership in the global economy. To do this the University promotes independent learning and encourages students to take responsibility for their own actions, both in class, in the University, and in the wider world.

Parents and guardians are part of the Richmond University community and we encourage and support your engagement with your child's learning, and broader life as a student. When providing support it is important that parents and guardians understand what kind of support is appropriate, and to accept what the reasonable limits are to parental involvement on campus.

This Charter is not a legal contract – we don't require a signature. Instead it is a statement of intent, which lays out the support and advice you can expect from us, and also the expectations we have of you in helping your child.

OUR PLEDGE TO YOU

In line with the Vision and the Mission of Richmond University, we pledge the following to all parents and guardians:

- To deliver our commitment to excellence in teaching and learning and the provision of a high quality student experience for an international student body.
- To educate, support, advise and, when necessary, to discipline, students in accordance with the regulations, policies and procedures of the University and to apply regulations and policies in a timely, consistent and fair way, without prejudice.
- To provide high quality academic and personal support for our students, and to take appropriate steps to ensure students are appropriately informed and treated.
- To provide clear and up-to-date information about the activities of the University, and to make information available to parents and guardians, subject to the relevant national laws and to appropriate permissions being granted and to respond to reasonable requests for information in a timely and efficient manner.
- To make all efforts to ensure alignment and compliance with relevant laws, and the requirements and expectations of the key validating and accreditation bodies, including the Quality Assurance Agency in the UK and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in the US.

OUR EXPECTATIONS OF YOU

In line with the Vision and the Mission of Richmond, we expect all parents and guardians to adhere to the following:

- You agree to support Richmond students in their studies, and to contact the University should you have a serious concern about their personal wellbeing;
- You agree to support the University in applying its regulations, policies and procedures and to encourage students to follow the rules and regulations of the University, including the Student Code of Conduct, at all times;
- You accept that the University is bound by law and may only release information about students with their express written consent;
- You accept that it is essential for students to develop as independent learners and to be able to make choices for themselves;
- You agree not to contact faculty (academic staff) directly, and to always go via the appropriate office when you have a query of any kind:
 - Academic Registry (for all academic matters)
 - Student Affairs (for personal matters)
 - Finance Department (for matters related to fees, tuition and payments)
 - Admissions, Marketing and Recruiting (for any matters related to admission and enrolment that may arise prior to joining the University)

Please note that faculty and staff are instructed to not talk directly with parent(s) or guardian(s) without permission.

- You agree that you may not attend classes or other regular activities of the University without an invitation from the relevant faculty or staff members;
- You agree to conduct yourself in a polite, civil and reasonable manner in all interactions with the University. *The University does not tolerate the intimidation, threatening, bullying or harassment of faculty or staff under any circumstances, and reserves the right to take legal action against a student, parent or guardian if the circumstances merit such action.*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why Does Richmond Have a *Parent and Guardian Charter*?

We believe that Richmond is the first University in the UK to draw up a Charter which provides clear pledges to parents and guardians, and also details the expectations that the University has of the parents and guardians of our students.

This has become necessary because of the ways in which the relationship between parents of children at university and the providers of higher education has changed over the last 30 years. Changing tuition regimes and the much greater role that some parents choose to play in the life of young adults has resulted in much greater expectations of the type and quality of information that the University is asked to provide for parents.

Some of these changes are welcome – at Richmond we are delighted that parents are interested in and engaged with our students’ academic progress and wider student experience. We are happy to work with parents to ensure that we deliver the best possible environment we can for your children.

At the same time, it is also important for parents to accept that, once they are 18 years old, students must be treated as adults, and that developing personal responsibility and self-reliance is one of the key outcomes of university life. This Charter, therefore, is designed to help parents and guardians to understand the limits of involvement, and for the University to lay out as clearly possible what we regard as appropriate and what also is allowed, under the law.

How do I find out what’s going on?

Talk (and listen) to your son or daughter. If you would like an update on your child’s wellbeing or academic progress, speak with them first. Please keep up a dialogue with them, listen to them and support them. Always encourage them to work hard, to talk with their teachers, and ensure they are following university policies and procedures.

REMEMBER - it is the student’s decision what information the University may or may not share with you: a student must consent before we can release information. There are significant legal restrictions on the information we can provide, so speak to your son or daughter first.

If you would like any general information from the university, then please access the University website <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/>. This will enable you to see the policies and regulations of the university as well as details about our courses, programmes and public events. If you cannot find what you need on the website, then you should contact the following offices:

- For all academic matters, including academic regulations, academic progress, grading, academic misconduct, and attendance: The Academic Registry.
- For personal matters, including the Student Code of Conduct and accommodation: Student Affairs.
- For matters related to fees, tuition and payments: the Finance Department.
- For any matters related to admission and enrolment that may arise prior to joining the University: the Admissions, Marketing and Recruiting.

But please remember: personal information cannot be provided about any individual without the express consent of that individual.

What are the rules on obtaining information?

The University has legal obligations to all our students, who must be treated as adults from the age of 18. These legal obligations will dictate what information we may or may not provide to you and to any third party.

In the UK, all students are covered by the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998), which is the principal piece of legislation which protects personal information. Further information on the DPA can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection/the-data-protection-act>

In addition, the University also adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) a US Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Further information can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

Should a conflict occur between these two legal frameworks the University will adhere to the higher standard of compliance.

What if there's an emergency?

If there is an emergency at home and you need to inform us, you should contact Student Affairs in the first instance (allison.cole-stutz@richmond.ac.uk)

If there is an emergency related to a student the University has clear protocols to follow which will allow us to contact you.

How do I make a complaint?

The University complaints and appeals procedures are available on the website at <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/admitted-students/student-complaints-and-appeals/> *Please note that only a student may use the complaints and appeals processes – third parties, including parents, may not.* The University is a subscriber to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA is an independent body set up to review student complaints, further

information may be found at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/> Please note that the OIA can only be involved once the University's internal procedures have been completed.

Can I visit?

If you would like to visit the campus, please ensure that the University is informed in advance so that you can be properly supported when you arrive, appointments can be made with the relevant staff and information permissions can be checked. Remember we are not be able to discuss any of our students with you without their permission, and if you arrive unannounced it may be a wasted journey.

Only enrolled students may attend classes: parents and guardians may not. Students have told us they find the presence of parents (both their own, and those of others) distracting and an inhibition to learning and to free expression. Where there is a public conference, a performance or an exhibition related to a class, invitations will be issued by the University.

How can I best help my child?

We urge all parents and guardians to treat their children with respect and to allow them to grow as independent learners and as young adults. This means letting go. This can be difficult for parents, and we are happy to discuss this with you.

Please also remember that we are not grading your child: we are grading the work that he or she produces. This distinction is subtle, but vitally important: even the brightest and hardest working student may, on occasion, produce work which does not fulfil the requirements that have been set. Our role is to help them to improve.

So we ask you: please don't be a helicopter parent (don't hover over your child all the time) and don't be a snow plough parent (don't push all obstacles out his or her way).¹

Helicopter parenting may lead to decreased confidence and self-esteem, undeveloped coping skills, increased anxiety, a sense of entitlement and undeveloped life skills
<http://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/what-is-helicopter-parenting/>

For a more academic study, please see
<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/usls/2011/00000031/00000004/art00002>

PHIL DEANS, Provost and Deputy VC
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¹ "What is colloquially referred to as "helicopter parenting" is a form of overparenting in which parents apply overly involved and developmentally inappropriate tactics to their children who are otherwise able to assume adult responsibilities and autonomy" Segrin et al "The Association Between Overparenting, Parent-Child Communication, and Entitlement and Adaptive Traits in Adult Children" *Family Relations* Volume 61, Issue 2, pages 237–252, April 2012.