



Essential Tips – Guardianship, Signing, and Will Storage

Table of Contents

1. Choosing Guardians for Your Children	2
What a Guardian Does:.....	2
⚠ If You Don't Appoint One:	2
✓ Best Practices:	2
🌐 Appointing Guardians Who Live Abroad:.....	2
2. Signing Your Will.....	2
Required Setup:	2
Rules for Witnesses:	3
Signing Tips:	3
3. Storing Your Will.....	3
DO:.....	3
DON'T:	3
4. Other Tips Before You Finalize	3
5. Final Reminder:	4

1. Choosing Guardians for Your Children

If you have children under 18, your will should appoint a **legal guardian**. This is one of the most important clauses in your will.

What a Guardian Does:

- Takes full legal responsibility for your children
- Makes decisions about housing, education, medical care, etc.

If You Don't Appoint One:

- The courts may decide who looks after your child
- There may be family disputes or delays
- Your child could be placed in temporary care

Best Practices:

- Appoint **one or two primary guardians**, and **one alternative**
- Choose someone:
 - Over 18
 - Mentally capable
 - Willing and able
 - With shared values and parenting style
- Avoid choosing someone who could cause family tension

Appointing Guardians Who Live Abroad:

- Always appoint someone **UK-based as the primary guardian**, even if you want custody to pass abroad later
- This ensures immediate protection and avoids temporary state care
- Your UK guardian can help facilitate a legal transfer if needed

2. Signing Your Will

Required Setup:

- You (the testator)
- Two adult witnesses (over 18)

Rules for Witnesses:

- Must **not** be beneficiaries in your will
- Must **not** be married to a beneficiary
- Must **watch you sign the will**, and then sign it themselves
- All three must be **physically present** at the same time during signing

Signing Tips:

- Use **black or blue ink**
- Do **not** sign digitally or with a pencil
- Sign on the correct signature line
- Add the **date of signature** to the will

3. Storing Your Will

Once signed, your will becomes a **legal document**. Protect it.

DO:

- Store in a **dry, safe, and secure place** (e.g., a fireproof box or locked drawer)
- Tell your executor where the original is kept
- Keep a **photocopy** for your own reference
- Consider registering it with a will storage service (optional)

DON'T:

- Staple, clip, or damage the pages
- Hide it without telling anyone
- Let anyone alter it after signing (doing so invalidates it)

4. Other Tips Before You Finalize

- Double-check **all names and addresses** in the will
- Keep your will up to date:
 - After marriage or divorce
 - After births, deaths, or major life changes
- Review your will **every 2–3 years**
- Consider storing copies with:
 - Your solicitor (if you have one)
 - A trusted relative
 - Your executor

5. Final Reminder:

Your will reflects your final wishes. Take time to:

- Read everything before signing
- Follow instructions exactly
- Keep a record of who witnessed it and where it is stored

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