

MENA Guardian



We have taken account of your status as a MENA, i.e. an unaccompanied foreign minor.



What does «MENA» mean?

It means that:

- You are under **18 years of age**
- You do not have **Belgian nationality**
- Your parents are not with you in Belgium
- You **don't have a valid permit** to be in Belgium

In Belgium, unaccompanied foreign minors are entitled to a **guardian**.



But... what does a guardian do?

A guardian is an individual whom we designate to **support you and help you** with your daily life in Belgium.

She/He is **your legal representative**: this means that she/he helps you with all the procedures you need to follow to live in Belgium. For example, if you are applying for asylum or applying to live in Belgium, she/he is there to support you and help you throughout the procedure.

A guardian does other things, too. Here are a few examples:

- She/He **visits you** often;
- She/He explains to you **the decisions the authorities** have made concerning you;

- She/He finds a **free lawyer** for you; She/He checks that you feel comfortable in your accommodation and, if necessary, helps you to find **suitable accommodation**;
- She/He registers you for school and makes sure everything's going well at **school**;
- If you have any medical problems, she/he makes sure you get **all the care** you need;
- She/He manages your money in consultation with you;
- When things are not going well, she/he listens to your problems; She/He respects **your opinion and your beliefs**;
- She/He talks to you about your future;
- If you want, **she/he will help you look for your parents**;

If you have any questions about **your guardian's duties**, you can talk to her/him.



How to contact us?

You can contact us **24/7** on this phone number:

☎ **078/15.43.24**

You can also send an **email** to:

✉ **tutelles@just.fgov.be**

If you need help to contact us, you can ask **your social worker** at your reception centre or **your lawyer**.



How long will you have a guardian?

Your guardian will support you until you turn **18 years of age**. When you turn 18, you become independent.

What does that mean?

It means **you have to take care of yourself**. The guardian will no longer be able to make decisions for you.

But don't worry, **your guardian will help you prepare for your 18th birthday**: she/he will give you advice and explain what you need to know.

However, it is possible that your guardian's work may stop before you turn 18: if your parents arrive in Belgium, or if you leave Belgium. In such cases, we will send you a letter to say that you no longer have a guardian. The guardian will discuss this with you.



What happens if you have a problem with your guardian?

The guardian must listen to you and be available for you. Try to talk to her/him about what's wrong.

What if it doesn't work?

- Get in touch with **us**; we can try to solve the problem.
- You can also go to the **Justice of the Peace**. She/He is there to solve problems between you and your guardian. You can ask us for more information or ask the social worker at your reception centre.

