

Pippa's Post

August 2021

Welcome from Ben

Welcome to Pippa's Post, the newsletter for our host families in which we bring you news of the Pippa's Guardians community - from the office staff and local Area Managers, to our fantastic host families and our international students all over the UK. Having looked after students for almost twenty five years, Pippa's continues to go from strength to strength, with a record number of

students expected to join us in September. Without a doubt, this cannot happen without the support of our wonderful host families, who really are the lifeblood of our business. By hosting our students, you play a hugely important role in their well-being and happiness whilst they are such a long way from home. Their parents, on the other side of the world, are extremely grateful for the care you show their children.

During the last 18 months, many students have been unable to return home to their families. It has been an increasingly emotional time

for parents and students who have been forced to stay miles apart for longer than normal and during special times of the year like Christmas. The support and kindness offered by our host families at this difficult time continues to be a great comfort to the students and their families and we are so grateful to you for providing this. The pandemic has created new challenges for everyone. In order to best support our students, we have needed to adapt and find new ways to overcome obstacles. Quarantining for students

arriving in the UK and enhanced support at the airport for departing students have been two hurdles that we have efficiently tackled with the help of our host families who have been, more than ever, a valuable extension of the Pippa's team.



The Host Family handbook

We hope that you find your host family handbook a great help and valuable source of advice and information. We update this regularly to make sure you are always kept up to date and have just finalised the 2021/2022 version. Please find the latest copy of the handbook attached to the email sent with this newsletter.



Refer a friend

With a busy September ahead, we are very keen to recruit more host families. Our referral scheme is an incredibly valuable source, as these recommended families are usually very committed and stay with us for many years. Once the referred family has successfully hosted for us, we gift a £75 John Lewis or Marks and Spencer voucher to the family who referred them. Do you have a friend who might be interested in becoming a host family? If so, please email their details to either your Area Manager or Jodie Godliman on jodie@pippasguardians.co.uk

Host family payments

Earlier this year we increased the payment for our host families for accommodation fee per student and mileage for school collections or excursions for students. Claims continue to be made via our on-line claim form facility, however, if you do not have access to the Internet or experience a problem, then please contact our office on 01684 252757.

Our hosting heroes

We want to give special thanks to all the families who have hosted students during the pandemic. We know it has been an unsettling time for everyone, but you still open up your homes and welcome in our students, sometimes for long periods of time during school closures and lockdowns. It isn't easy and we appreciate everything you are doing to support your students.

Celebrations

There have been many birthdays, including sweet sixteenths and the all important eighteenth birthdays. Our students were lucky to spend these special occasions with their host families who baked cakes, made decorations and gave presents.



Special Events

Christmas, New Years, Easter, Chinese New Year.. just some of the special occasions you have helped students to celebrate, bringing them joy even though for some, it was the first time they wouldn't be celebrating with their own families.

Air Support and Quarantine

Children tackling busy airports and travelling across the world alone is something most UK parents couldn't even imagine their child doing but every year thousands of overseas students do it. A delayed flight or lost luggage used to be the biggest frustration, but the pandemic and travel restrictions now make travelling harder for everyone with longer queues, covid testing and quarantining now added to the list. Members of the Pippa's team now regularly attend the airport on busy travel days to assist large numbers of students. We have operated a fully supervised quarantine hotel service in Oxfordshire so students can quarantine safely and take the necessary covid tests with the supervision of our staff. However, we still have host families who are willing to go to the airport to assist the students they host and let them quarantine at their home if needed. This is a huge relief to many parents, especially those with much younger children and gives them the reassurance to send their child back to the UK to continue their studies.



Home Schooling

Not something anyone signed up for! I am sure you will have seen the many cries for help on social media from parents struggling with home schooling their children! When schools closed, our students went to their host families who offered them kindness, encouragement and support through their home learning and separation from their friends and classmates.

The Haircuts

Well done to the brave host families who, armed with a pair of kitchen scissors and a YouTube tutorial, have attempted to cut the latest hairstyles for a hopeful teenager!

Cooking

We think most households had a go at baking banana bread at some point during lockdown! But we know our students thoroughly enjoy cooking sessions and the opportunity to have a go in your kitchens, trying everything from cakes, homemade pasta and traditional dishes from their home country. Cooking for themselves is not something they can do at boarding school and it offers a great distraction from any stress or upset they are feeling. We hope you have enjoyed eating their creations!





Student support award

We are absolutely thrilled to have been shortlisted as a finalist for the Student Support Award in the PIEoneer Awards. Pippa's is dedicated to supporting our students through their educational journey in the UK and we are very proud to have this hard work recognised. The award nomination is following our work over Christmas, caring for those students who couldn't travel home due to COVID and the associated travel

restrictions. The students who had to remain in the UK for Christmas, either went to one of our wonderful host families or our residential camp at Westonbirt School in Gloucestershire. The Christmas camp was not something we had offered before, we have never needed to, but it was a great success. We plan to offer a further camps during some school holidays in addition to host family accommodation when needed. The awards ceremony takes place at the beginning of September when the winners will be announced at a ceremony in London. Wish us luck!

Safeguarding update

At Pippa's Guardians we take great pride in ensuring that we provide an unprecedented level of support to you, our wonderful host families. As a Pippa's Guardians host family you are an integral part of our student's wellbeing and happiness during their time in England and the support and kindness shown to these children while in your care is invaluable and something that we at Pippa's Guardians are immensely grateful for.

We put our Safeguarding responsibilities towards our students at the heart of everything we do and we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to you for playing such an important role in this.

We want you to feel confident that you are offering a secure and safe homestay environment and that you are fully supported in this by our well trained, efficient and approachable staff. Our Host Family Handbook is a fantastic tool and is packed with tips and guidance on how to best support our students and gives information on who to contact if there is a problem. Your Area Manager will have given you a copy of our latest handbook but please do let us know if you would like us to email you another copy for handy reference.

The extended time you, as a host family, spend with our students gives us a valuable insight into their wellbeing. As a host family you are often our 'eyes and ears' when it comes to safeguarding concerns. Should you notice anything

- big or small - that doesn't seem quite right to you, please just let your Area Manager or our DSL Imogen Trevethan know straight away.

Our staff have all undergone AEGIS safeguarding training and six additional staff members also hold Designated Safeguarding Lead training. We have an experienced support network available 24/7 on 07721 372865 to assist you so please do contact us if you feel in any way concerned. We have robust Safeguarding policies in place which can all be found on our website pippasguardians.co.uk under Our Policies.

Please do take time to read these and let us know if you have any further questions or need any clarification. We are only too happy to help.

We are excited to announce that our online training course for host families will be rolled out during the early part of next term and we will be in touch with more details on this a little nearer the time.



Imogen Trevethan

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Welcome Back

The pandemic has resulted in a few families being temporarily unable to host students. Spare bedrooms have been filled with University students who

have returned home or have become temporary home offices. Some families were shielding as we awaited the vaccination programme to protect us all. Throughout this time our students very much missed the comfort of their host family. In the

year ahead we are hopeful of a return to normality and look forward to welcoming valued host families back to hosting – we have missed you! Whilst many of our students are returning to the UK fully vaccinated, their travel home is still restricted

due to the quarantine requirements to enter their home country. With schools closing for exeat and holidays in the coming year, a warm welcome from a local host family will be more reassuring than ever for our anxious parents.

A Parent's Perspective

Dear Ben, I just want to let you know what an amazing team you have.

As you may have heard, we had to arrange for Sophie to return to Hong Kong with almost zero notice in order to beat a UK flight ban deadline imposed by the HK government. Caroline mobilised immediately to help us arrange transport, liaise with the school and find a testing centre. Throughout the whole process she stayed in contact with us so that we didn't have to worry about making the arrangements and could just focus on getting Sophie ready for her trip home.

On the day of travel, needless to say, things were chaotic at the airport. Mohammed stayed with Sophie the entire time, was responsive to our messages as well as providing regular updates. Because of the confusion over the PCR testing paperwork, it looked like Sophie (along with many other students) were not able to board, Mohammed took it upon himself to speak to senior management at the airport to

arrange for them to reopen the gate and allow almost all of the students to board.

We also greatly appreciate Caroline arranging for Julie to come to the airport and provide additional support to Sophie. In addition, Caroline kept in continual contact with us so we knew what was going on. Even after the gate was closed they kept trying to find a way to get Sophie home, including speaking to airport management and seeing if seats were available on Virgin. Sophie got on board in the end and is now back in Hong Kong, having beat the deadline by a mere 8 hours!

I can't express how grateful we are to Pippa's Guardians and the wonderful team you have. I cannot imagine anyone doing a better job than what Pippa's did and the professionalism shown throughout was of the highest order. This would be a great case study for performance under pressure!

I apologise if I've missed anyone who was also involved with this.

Your very thankful client,

Derek Chung

Spotlight

Jodie Godliman, Sales and Marketing Manager

Jodie joined the team in November 2020 to help coordinate the Pippa's Christmas Camp, having previously worked for an international summer school in Malvern. She will be coordinating the Pippa's camps, the next one is taking place in October half term at Cheltenham Ladies' College.

Jodie is also responsible for the marketing of Pippa's Guardians, which includes managing our social media accounts (Please follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn if you don't already.) We love to share photos and updates with our students' parents back home, who find it really comforting to see what a lovely experience staying with a host family can be.

She speaks to all new host family enquiries so if you recently joined Pippa's Guardians as a host family, you may have spoken to her before being introduced to your Pippa's Area Manager. As part of her role, she will be keeping in touch with host families, our extended Pippa's team, via Pippa's Post.

