

Pippa's Post

For Host Families

September 2024

Dear Host Families

Welcome to our newest edition of Pippa's Post, and welcome to the new academic year – it seems to have crept up on us!

I'd like to start by thanking you all for your hosting, in both last academic year and the upcoming one. I will never forget my mother's wise words that, in no uncertain terms, host families are the lifeblood of Pippa's Guardians. We appreciate everything you do - thank you!

I thought it might be prudent to update you all on Pippa's as an organisation and where we stand today, not just on guardianship, but as a company. I'm sure many of you have followed the recent media coverage around VAT on independent school fees. Whilst we eagerly await any further announcement around this policy we are preparing as best we can for the imposition of VAT on school fees. So, what might this mean for the sector and for Pippa's?

For the independent school sector, it is inevitable that any policy that potentially

raises fees by 20% will have a detrimental effect on student numbers. I don't think anyone can argue this point. However, in my opinion, the overseas market (I hope) is more resilient to this fee increase. Furthermore, schools will start to look further afield for student numbers with recruitment efforts focused not only on the UK market, but elsewhere as well. Time will tell whether overseas numbers will increase, but I have a sense they may. With the ongoing focus on safeguarding and student welfare, guardianship is as important now as it ever has been. In turn, the requirement for safe and welcoming host families is equally as relevant today. So, my mother's wise words still ring true today, as they did in 1997 when she started Pippa's from the kitchen table.

More recently Pippa's has been hosting Boarding School Fairs in Japan, a most remarkable country and one I enjoy visiting very much. In November 2023 we hosted 15 boarding schools in Tokyo, the purpose being

to promote their schools into the Japanese market. We enjoyed a wonderful day with over 200 families joining the fair with queues out of the door. It is no mean feat asking 15 schools to fly to Tokyo for the weekend to meet families - it is a logistical behemoth! It was the most brilliant, yet terrifying, day of my professional career but so very rewarding and ultimately successful.

Due to the success of November 2023, we are now hosting two more fairs. The next one is this November, with 18 schools in attendance, and then in March 2025 with 12 schools. The idea simply being that schools will meet Japanese families to introduce them to their school. Down the line, once the student applications are successful, there will be a need for a guardian and therefore a host family, so it complements our current service.

So, pleasingly, Pippa's goes from strength to strength, and we continue to offer a personal, professional and supportive service through our wonderful team of Area Managers. I sincerely hope you enjoy engaging with them as much as our customers do, and that you are being looked after. If you ever have any feedback as to how we can better support you, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you again for taking such good care of our students.

Best wishes to you all.



Ben Hughes Managing Director of Pippa's Guardians, ben@pippasguardians.co.uk

New academic year – new students – new worlds

If you have always had students from one country staying with you – we currently have 123 students from China and 283 from HK – you might be surprised at the number of other nationalities that choose to use Pippa's as their preferred Guardianship company:

China, Germany, Indonesia, United States, Japan, HK, Austria, Spain, Singapore, Nigeria, Kenya, Thailand, Macau, Vietnam, Taiwan, Switzerland, Malaysia, Arabia, Mexico, Chile, Dubai, South Korea, Hungary

Every country has its own unique culture and behaviours, and it is a wonderful opportunity for you as host families to experience a whole new way of life in your own home. Whether it is learning how to make a real chili from Chile, a fondue from Switzerland or how the Thai celebrate SongKran (water everywhere!), the many things your students can share with you are special.

We'd love to hear from you if you have any stories about new things you've learnt from the students staying with you, and we can add them to the next Pippa's Post. Please send them to katie@pippasguardians.co.uk.

Summer Camp

Over the summer holidays the Pippa's Camp Team welcomed 57 Japanese students, aged 7 to 11, to the UK for a two-week camp in Malvern. The primary focus was to improve their English language ability but we also wanted our students to enjoy their experience, so we delivered a raft of exciting and fun activities. These included horse riding, bouncy castles, colour run, archery, swimming, football, disco nights, hill walking – it was endless!

The camp was a huge success and many of the children have confirmed they wish to return next year for the camp or start at a UK boarding school next September. The camp very much complements our Guardianship service and it's a real joy to see such happy students enjoying the English countryside, away from their gadgets and city life. A fun filled, action packed two weeks.

Do you have friends who might be interested in being a host family?

We offer £75 for any referrals

As our numbers grow, we are always looking for new host families to join our wonderful caring community.

As you may know, we offer a £75 voucher as a thank you for any referrals you make who go on to become Pippa's host families.

If you have any family, friends or neighbours who would like to speak to someone at Pippa's about becoming a host family, please email their contact information to hostfamilies@pippasguardians.co.uk

Pippa's Guardians covers the whole of the UK, so your referrals do not need to be local to you. They could be friends or family from afar who would like to know more about hosting.

Thank you in advance for any referrals you send. Your support is always appreciated.

Welcome to new staff

Petra Summer

Petra has joined as Office Administrator looking after the 'office' inbox, emails and calls, assisting with guardianship forms and new registrations along with admissions and all other office admin tasks.

Petra has over twenty years' experience working in administration, both for private and state schools and for the NHS. She has come from Malvern St James Girls' School in Malvern, where she was Data Administrator for nearly 3 years.

She has a miniature schnauzer called Ruby, who will be coming to work with her every day!

Katie Atkinson

Katie has joined us as Communications Officer, helping to communicate with parents, agents, schools, and you, our host families!

She has three boys, 22, 19 and 14, is married to Jason, and has a dog called Emmy – her daughter! Katie's background is in communications consultancy and internal communications, and she is also a nutritionist.

If you have anything you would like to share with us so we can communicate it to parents or staff, please let her know!

Safeguarding Update

As the academic year is well and truly underway and the first exeat weekends are drawing closer, we'd like to introduce our new Pippa's Guardians Designated Safeguarding Leads, Rose Vigers-Belgeonne, who will be looking after students at schools in the South of the country and Sarah Checketts, who will be looking after students at schools in the Midlands and the North. Obviously, pupil safeguarding is at the very heart of all that we do here at Pippa's Guardians, and we are very grateful to you as host families for all that you do to keep our students safe, secure and happy. The effective safeguarding of children truly is a responsibility shared by all of us that work with the Pippa's Guardians pupils. If you ever have any safeguarding concerns regarding students that you host, please do contact the new safeguarding@pippasguardians.co.uk email address, copying it to your Area Manager as well.

The Pippa's Guardians safeguarding policies can

be found on our website. Simply scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the 'Our Policies' link. Please do refamiliarise yourselves with these important documents when you have a moment. Rose and Sarah will be happy to field any questions or queries you may have.

Please may we also take this opportunity to remind you to complete your Pippa's Guardians safeguarding training if it is due. The link to this will have been sent to you by Imogen Trevethen, and you may well have received subsequent reminders from your Area Manager if it is still outstanding. If you work in a school (or with children in a different context) and have an existing and current safeguarding training certificate this can potentially be used in place of completing our training. Copies of training certificates will need to be sent to Imogen at imogen@pippasguardians.co.uk for consideration.

Wishing you all a successful year of hosting and thank you again for all you do to keep our students safe and happy.

Helping with academic camps – East Midlands area

For those of you who live in the East Midlands area, we'd love your help!

As you might know, we organise half term camps at Rugby School for some of our international students who want extra tuition or to focus on their study during the half term breaks. Next year we hope to incorporate a work experience programme into the camp so that the older students, who might find it difficult to arrange their own work experience, can spend time in a work environment.

Could you help?

We are hoping to organise a programme of tours, talks and workshops,

concentrating mainly on medicine and business.

Do you work in either of those areas or have friends who do? We are looking for connections around the Rugby area or ones who could travel to Rugby during the February and/or May half terms next year to help us create a programme.

Any businesses involved would receive free global advertising, with communications about the programme going out to all our customers, agents and partners in the UK and across the world.

If you think you may be able to help or would be interested in discussing a potential collaboration with your business, please contact Jodie on jodie@pippasguardians.co.uk

Family Favourites

We are planning to put together a recipe book full of tasty, nutritious and cost-effective ideas for recipes to cook when you have students staying with you, and we want to include your ideas! Perhaps there is a family favourite that is always a big hit when you are hosting, or a new recipe that you have tried because a student told you it was their preferred meal. Maybe there's something that you really enjoy making with your student because it's fun and hands-on, or there's a quick and easy recipe that takes minutes to throw together after a busy day.

We would love to gather your ideas and suggestions and put them all in one place for all host families to enjoy. If you are able to take photos, all the better! It doesn't have to be fancy or artistic - maybe even a group picture of you all enjoying the meal, or if you want to get more in-depth - perhaps a set of photos showing step-by-step instructions.

Please email recipe ideas and any photos to georgie@pippasguardians.co.uk.

Thank you so much.



Rose Vigers-Belgeonne & Sarah Checketts
Designated Safeguarding Leads (North and South)

What you do is very special

Choosing to become a host family is a very personal decision and you might not be able to pinpoint the reason you became one. It might be for a myriad of reasons. But one wonderful lasting memory of being a host for a child at Pippa's is learning what it meant to them to be part of your family. The testimonials we receive from parents and children are so heart-warming. We wanted to share a few with you.

"This year, I had the pleasure to stay at Julie and Arnold's house. They are lovely people and I always had the feeling of being cared for - this helped me settle in quickly, as I knew that their aim was to support and help me. During my stay with them, I had the freedom of choosing what to do in my free time: whether this was revising, practising, or going on a trip, they never pressured me into doing something that I didn't want to do. I am very grateful to Julie and Arnold for being my host family." Valerie, student at Wells Cathedral School.

"Pippa's Guardians provides international students with another home in this country. I have just finished my first year here, but I was scared and anxious when I first arrived in England. However, my host family tried hard to make me feel comfortable, and even though I could only speak a little English, their continuous effort to converse with me not only helped me settle into the new environment but also gave me the confidence to express my opinions in a second language. Pippa's Guardians has the best system to ensure the safety and comfort of the students, and I have felt protected throughout my time here. My host family has taken me to various places, and I have had many opportunities to explore English culture outside of school. I can confidently say that my experience in this country wouldn't have been the same without the support of Pippa's Guardians." Sora, student at Christ's Hospital School.

Below: Valerie
Bottom right: Georgina



Sora

"I really enjoy staying with my host family because it's like my second home that is very comfortable and caring. I always have a very fun and memorable time while getting to relax and recharge. I think staying at a host family is important because it gives you a sense of comfort and warmth as they will always be willing to support you when you need a break. With my host family we do many stress-relieving and exciting activities, such as strolling the town, going to the beach, doing art together, watching movies, and much more." Georgina, student at Brighton College.



Area Manager Insights

The relationship you have with your Area Manager is an incredibly important one as you are both responsible for the same children – just at different times. If you both know how best to support each other, the easier it is to ensure the children are safe and happy and managed well by both of you.

Insight One

Always try and meet your Area Manager before 'meet and greet' day with your students and their families. Building a warm relationship first will mean that 'meet and greet' day is focused on the students and their families and you both know how you want it to work.

Insight Two

If you can, make a note of special and interesting things you do with your students and tell your Area Manager. It really helps them when they are communicating back with parents.

Insight Three

Share how your students are feeling about work, friendships, school etc with your Area Manager. Your insight gives them a greater understanding of how the children view school and helps them keep an eye on any potential issues.

You are the lifeblood of Pippa's and your views and support are so appreciated. Please carry on sharing your experiences and knowledge!