

Host Family Handbook



Contents

Welcome	4
Looking after our students	6
How to ensure hosting your student goes smoothly	7
Setting the ground rules from the start	7
Cultural differences and student behaviour	7
Homesickness – how to help	7
If you have any concerns	7
Standards of accommodation	8
Food glorious food	8
Who is the guardian?	8
Host family fee structure	9
Expenses - submitting a claim form	9
Registering to claim	9
What to claim for	9
Receipts	10
Total expenses	10
Payment details	10
Additional comments	10
Email	10
Receiving payment	10
Refer a friend	10
The practicalities of hosting	11
How many students can I host?	11
When will I be expected to host students?	11
Are there any other times I might be needed?	11
What happens if I can't host at a particular time?	11
Confirmation of arrangements	11
Changes of plan and cancellations	12
Driving our students	12
Valuables, luggage and other important items	12
Home insurance	12
Pocket money	12

Student safety	12
Who needs a DBS check?	12
Advising us of changes	12
Staying home alone and going out	12
ICE cards	12
Taking a student away from home overnight	13
Students visiting friends overnight	13
The rules regarding age appropriate safeguards	13
Other guests or students staying at your house	14
Students inviting friends to stay with them at your house	14
Using a babysitter for our students	14
Smoking, drugs and alcohol	14
Computers and internet safety	14
Safety in the home	15
Emergencies and medical issues	15
Safeguarding	16
Disclosure of an incident	16
Guidelines to help support a student who is being bullied	16
Safeguarding training	16
Reassuring your student if they are distressed	17
Private fostering	17
PREVENT – Anti-radicalisation policy	17
Use of CCTV	18
GDPR	18
Complaints	19
Stage 1 - Informal	19
Stage 2 - Formal	19
Stage 3 - Panel	19
Feedback	19
Your contract with us	19



Ben Hughes
Managing Director

Welcome

We would like to welcome you to Pippa's Guardians as part of our friendly and professional team, caring for our students while they are here studying in the UK.

The role that the host family plays is vital in the successful running of our business, and our working relationship with you is extremely important to us. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our students and expect all our staff, host families and working partners to share this commitment.

This handbook is designed to explain the work we do and to set out your responsibilities within that. We aim to share our knowledge and experience in working with overseas students with you, so that you are well prepared when they arrive and you know what to expect.

For almost thirty years we have been caring for international students. Our family run company was established in 1997 by Pippa Hughes. The company is now run by Ben Hughes, her son, from our headquarters in Malvern, Worcestershire.

Ben is also on the committee of The Association for the Education and Guardianship for International Students (AEGIS), the regulatory body that governs our industry and whose principles we uphold.

In Malvern we have a wonderful team that provides support for all of our students and our host families. We are the educational guardian to all our students whilst they are studying here in the UK and we work closely with the boarding schools to ensure their pastoral and educational welfare. We also look after their travel requirements and are responsible for the students at all times when they are not in the care of their schools.

We have a team of Area Managers who meet the students and their families when they arrive in the UK, and continue to visit and support them throughout their school life. Your Area Manager will be your direct contact with Pippa's Guardians and they are on hand to offer advice and support.

For further information please do visit:

www.pippasguardians.co.uk



Looking after our students

Becoming a host family is not only a wonderful opportunity for you to really make a difference to overseas students while they are studying here in the UK, it is also a unique chance for you to learn about different cultures and to extend the hand of friendship and hospitality across the globe.

Your decision to become a host family for Pippa's Guardians means you are now a crucial part of the support system surrounding our students. With your help, support and guidance, our students can flourish and enjoy studying here in the UK. Our parents are also extremely grateful for the care and support they and their children receive from our host families. It is a highly rewarding and worthwhile thing to do, and many of our hosts say they feel it is an immense privilege.

Our host families offer students a warm and comfortable home environment, time out from school to relax, rest or revise, and the opportunity to experience family life here in the UK. Host families provide a fantastic support for our students and we simply could not offer the quality of service and high levels of care without them.

Host families often regard the students as an extension of their own families, and we ask you to care for them as if they are your own children - with the same levels of care and attention, fun and discipline. Host families will often keep in touch with students at school, collect them for holidays, and provide opportunities to take part in activities and visits. The students, in turn, like to return to the same host family throughout their time whilst studying in the UK. This results in many of our host families forming lifelong friendships with our students and their families,

remaining in touch even after they have left school for university. The students really do become part of the family, which is both life-enriching and enormous fun!

Studying in the UK can be a very daunting experience for our students at first. Our students, who are aged between seven and nineteen, are getting used to the rigours of studying at boarding school, in a new language, and having to share their living space with students they have only just met. We usually find that by exeat time or half term, they are feeling much more at home and secure in their new environment. Staying with a host family is an important part of helping them to feel comfortable with their new lives.

Of course, not all students are nervous or find it difficult, but it does help to empathise with the challenges they are facing. By the time they come to stay with you, any homesickness they have experienced will usually have settled down and they are looking forward to meeting new people. They may, however, still be very shy. It is a very individual thing, but your experienced Area Manager will have a good understanding of the students they are placing with you, and this will ensure things run smoothly, especially for the first visit.

With older students who may have already had experience of boarding, and of visiting host families, the challenge can be managing their expectations and greater independence, which we cover later in the section **Staying home alone and going out.**

Obviously, age appropriate activities are an important part of what you provide as a host family, as well as a secure, happy, safe and welcoming environment during their time in your home.

Through your Area Manager, it may be possible to make contact with your student before you meet for the first time. Your student and their family will have seen your profile and know what you look like. We will also provide you with a student profile, so that you know as much as possible about the student you are looking after. A warm welcome makes a very big difference to a student's first impression.

Please show the student around your home and introduce them to all the members of your family – including any pets you may have!

The reaction to pets from students of different cultural backgrounds is sometimes negative – but with careful management of the introductions, they more often than not very quickly learn to love playing with any pets you may have in your family home.



How to ensure hosting your student goes smoothly

Setting the ground rules at the start

Our students feel happiest and most secure when they know what is expected of them, especially in a new situation, such as arriving at the host family house. We know, from talking with our students, that simple rules regarding when to use the shower, what snacks or food they may help themselves to, what to do with laundry, or how to address you, can help them to feel settled more quickly. You can even write them a list of your house rules – this helps if they are shy, as they don't have to keep asking. Just like the boarding house at school, where there will be a strict code of conduct and rules regarding behaviour, it is better to be clear and to let the student know if they do something that is not acceptable. If you find they do not respond to this, or that you cannot make them understand, please call us and we will help you.

Students are not expected to be treated as hotel guests when staying in your home – we expect them to be polite, to offer to clear the table after their meals, fill the dishwasher or wash up after themselves, and to keep their room clean and tidy, and make their bed. We expect them to be respectful in the rest of your house. You do not have to issue the student with a key unless they are over 18, and then we leave this to your discretion.

Cultural differences and student behaviour

Our students are usually extremely polite, well behaved and want very much to fit in with our host families. Sometimes, however, they may appear rude or unsociable because they may stay in their room for

long periods of time and do not assimilate themselves into family life as much as the host family would like. In this case, host families may feel that they have done something to upset the students, or that the student is not happy in their care. This is usually not so, it is simply the way some of our students are. Some have a huge workload and will need to study a lot and others make the most of a break from their busy schedule at school, where they are usually up very early and busy all the time. Like normal teenagers, they want to relax, sleep and do very little! Over time, those students that are reticent to mix, usually do so as they get to know the family. Please give it time. If you are worried about the behaviour of your student, please contact your Area Manager or our Head Office immediately.

Homesickness – how to help

By the time our students come to stay with you, they will have been in school for a few weeks and hopefully any homesickness will have settled down. Homesickness affects the majority of our students in one way or another when they come to study in the UK. It can be caused by a combination of many factors, including a new environment, meeting a huge number of new people in a short space of time and, of course, adapting to the differences in culture, language, time zone, food etc. Added to this, our students are separated from their families and friends at home, quite often for the very first time in their lives. Usually they adapt quickly, and with the help of their supportive house parents and teachers in school, as well as the team at Pippa's Guardians, they learn to deal with any homesickness they are experiencing. If they are still experiencing homesickness while staying with you, there are lots of ways you can help. Make your student aware that you

know homesickness is a normal experience and explain to them it will pass and get easier over time.

1. Make sure your student knows that you are understanding, sympathetic, and always there to talk to.
2. Encourage them to keep in touch with home and suggest they have familiar things around them; including photographs from home or any belongings with personal meaning.
3. Help the student to find familiar food – encourage them to cook their own recipes or plan meals together.
4. Encourage your student to be busy and active – taking regular exercise really does help.
5. Making friends with other international students is a good support mechanism and even better if you are hosting more than one student.

If you feel your student is homesick and they open up to you this is a tremendous achievement as they must feel very comfortable with you.

If you have any concerns

From the outset, your student will have been chosen specifically for you and your family and therefore problems rarely occur. When our students come to stay with you, your Area Manager will be in touch early on to check that everything is going well. This is your opportunity to bring up any problems you are experiencing. Very occasionally, and it is extremely rare, students will not settle with their host family and are not happy, or vice versa. In this case, your Area Manager will act as your intermediary to find out the reasons why and to try to resolve the situation. In rare cases we will move a student if the problem is a valid one, in full consultation with the student, the host family and their parents or educational agent.

Standards of accommodation

It is an AEGIS requirement that each student has their own bedroom wherever possible, unless they have chosen to share with a sibling, friend or host family child of the same sex. While at boarding school, many students are required to share a dormitory with several other students and for them to have their own space, even for a weekend, is very important.

The room for your student should be warm, decorated, clean and tidy. It should have a permanent bed, a chest of drawers, a wardrobe for their clothes, mirror and a bedside table with a lamp. The room should also have a desk and good lighting, as they are likely to want to study while staying with you. If this is not possible, then please ensure there is a quiet place elsewhere in your house for the student to study. Students are expected to make their bed and keep their room clean and tidy.

During the application process, your Area Manager will have already inspected all the rooms in your house. If you decide, for whatever reason, to change the designated bedroom for your student, please contact your Area Manager to discuss this with them.

Bathroom facilities must be lockable, and please let the student know what time is best for them to use it if it is a shared bathroom. Please supply your student with clean bedding, towels and any toiletries they may need, and let them know what to do with their

laundry when they need to have their clothing washed. It is an expected part of caring for your student, that you will wash their clothes as necessary.

Any dry cleaning the student may require is an extra and should be charged for on the claim form under additional expenses.

Food glorious food

This usually consists of three meals a day and snacks, when appropriate. Our students are at boarding school here in the UK and are therefore used to English food, but it is nice to ask them what their favourite food is, or even take them shopping with you and to try to accommodate their preferences when possible. They may even enjoy cooking a meal for you (under supervision of course!) or indeed helping you to cook. Try and help the student to become familiar with our culture and diet, while being respectful of their own cultural and religious background, and taking into account their dietary needs. In most cases our students are very happy with home-cooked dishes that are a usual part of life here in the UK. Taking students out for a meal can also be a fun thing to do. Please contact your Area Manager who will be able to guide you on this for your students. Many parents like to set a budget for any additional expenses.

As teenagers, many of our older students may take the opportunity to get up later than they do at school, so a smaller breakfast is fine. Then either lunch or dinner as the main meal of the day – it is not necessary to provide two large meals.

Snacks of fruit, nuts, or healthy options, cake and/or biscuits, can be offered as well as drinks during the day. Make sure your student knows your house rules regarding food. If they have any dietary issues or intolerances, we will flag this to you.

Please pay careful attention to the safe preparation of all food stuffs and the storing of foods, including the safe storage and preparation of meat, which is a particular hazard and can cause food poisoning if not carefully managed.

Who is the guardian?

This is a question we are often asked. We are contracted by the parents of our students to be their educational guardian while their child studies here in the UK. This is not the same as a legal guardian, i.e. someone who replaces a parent. Instead we are here to act in loco parentis while the student is in the UK without their parents. The term “Guardian” has been adopted by many of the boarding schools to describe the role we undertake.

Schools, host families and parents sometimes get confused about this and refer to the host family or Area Manager as their guardian. You are their host family and technically, and legally, Ben Hughes, the owner of Pippa’s Guardians, is the educational guardian to the student. As a host family you do not have ultimate responsibility for the student - that is our role.

Host family fee structure

Accommodation fee per student, per day is £57.

Mileage for school collections or excursions for students is £0.55 per mile. (Please note that trips you would already be taking are not chargeable to Pippa’s Guardians.)

Out of pocket expenses for students can include, but are not limited to: the student’s portion of cinema, theatre, concert or theme park tickets; pocket money you provide to the student; dry cleaning; shopping, such as clothing, shoes or haircuts for the student, etc. Your Area Manager will guide you on allowable expenses.

Examples:

If you host two students for an exeat weekend, collect them at 3pm on Friday and take them back on Sunday at 6pm, the payment to you would be:
3 days @ £57 = £171
£171 x 2 students = £342 plus mileage to and from school at 55p a mile, plus expenses.

If you host two students for a nine day half term, the payment would be:
9 days @ £57 = £513
£513 x 2 Students = £1,026 plus mileage to and from school at 55p a mile, plus expenses.

Expenses – submitting a claim form

Our online claim form facility is simple and quick, however, if you do not have access to the internet then please contact our office on **01684 252757**.

We hold an expense account for each student which is used to pay our host families, so you do not have to wait for payment and the system ensures that you will be paid in full without incurring any financial risk at any time.

Payments will be made upon receipt of your expense claim. A step by step guide to using our online claim form follows.

Registering to claim

The first step is to register at: <https://pippasguardians.com/host-families/host-family-registration/> You will need to come up with a username and password.

Logging in:

Once you have registered you may access the **Host Families Expense Form** by logging in on our website. You will need to enter your username and password before you can submit your claim.

Please submit one claim form per individual student. Please enter your host family name, select your Area Manager and then enter the name of the student and school.

What to claim for

Day rate

If the student has stayed with you for a day or overnight please click yes, and a drop-down box will allow you to enter the dates they arrived and departed. The number of days and the day expenses will be automatically calculated for you.

Shared care

Shared care is when a child you are hosting goes to another host family during their stay. The fee for this day is shared between both host families and appears on the claim form as a separate drop down box called **Shared Care**. Please ensure that the date of the shared care does not appear in the **Day Rate** expenses.

Late notice cancellation fee

If you are entitled to a late notice cancellation fee then 50% of the daily charge may be claimed up to a maximum of 10 days. This may be claimed if less than 10 days notice is given of the cancellation and if a travel plan has been received.



Mileage and/or school collection/return

If you wish to claim for mileage please tick the ‘Mileage only’ box and then enter the date of the trip, description and total mileage. Tick the ‘Add entry’ box if further trips are to be added.

If any of the journeys were school transfers, then tick the ‘Collecting and/or returning to school’ box and enter the date, description, time in minutes and mileage. The amount will be automatically calculated.

Any other chaperoning of a student must be agreed with the Area Manager in advance. You must be signed off as a chaperone and then this is claimed for using the **Chaperone Claim Form**.

If you are interested in chaperoning, other than collecting and returning students to and from school when staying at your home, please contact your Area Manager who will be able to go through the process with you.

Additional expenses

If you wish to claim additional expenses please click yes, and a drop-down box will allow you to claim for parents evenings (date required) and other expenses. You will need to input the date, description and cost.

Accidental damage

We understand that on occasion a student may accidentally cause damage to your home or property whilst they are with you. If this should occur please do let your Area Manager know immediately so they can talk you through the damage claims approval process.

Please note there is a £50 limit for any bedding claims. Some of our students use topical creams to treat acne and other skin issues. These creams can be quite strong and could take the colour out of pillowcases. We would suggest either using an old pillowcase or asking your Area Manager to arrange for Matron to send a school pillowcase with your student when they visit.

Receipts

Please provide us with a receipt or ticket for all out of pocket expenses you incur. These can be scanned in and uploaded when submitting your online expense form, or you can click the option to advise us you will be sending them by post, and then send them to:

Pippa’s Guardians

Suite 4, Nimrod House,
Sandy’s Road, Malvern, WR14 1JJ

Please remember to include both your name and the student’s name with any posted receipts.

Total expenses

The system will total up the **Day Rate, Mileage** and **Additional Expenses** to provide the total amount being claimed.

Payment details

If we hold your bank account details, then click the option “Bank details provided previously”. If we do not have these, or if you would like us to use a different account, then please complete the required fields. The system is secure and protected, and your details will be treated with the utmost confidentiality – if you have any concerns then please send these by post if you prefer.

Additional comments

The students’ parents love to hear a little more about the time their children spend with our host families, so just a few words here would be very much appreciated. Were they happy, tired or quiet? Did they eat well? Did they spend their time studying or were they playing on their PC? Please indicate any highlights or any concerns. Your Area Manager will be in touch after their visit and will be available during their stay if you need further support.

Email

Please enter your email address so that we can send you a copy of your claim, once submitted.

If you have any problems finding your copy, please check your ‘Spam’ or ‘Junk’ folder. If it is definitely not there, then please let us know by contacting our Head Office on **accounts@pippasguardians.co.uk**

Once you have completed your claim tick the box ‘Please confirm here you are ready to submit this claim.

Receiving payment

We aim to make full payment within three to five working days of receiving your claim. If the payment isn’t received or the amount isn’t what you expected then contact: accounts@pippasguardians.co.uk

Refer a friend

Over the years we have found that word of mouth referrals from existing host families tend to be very successful. If you know anyone who may be interested in becoming a host family for us then please email our host family recruitment team (hostfamilies@pippasguardians.co.uk) with their details and we will contact them.

Once they have become a successful host family for us we would be delighted to send you a £100 John Lewis or Marks and Spencer gift voucher as our way of saying thank you.

The practicalities of hosting

How many students can I host?

The maximum number of students recommended by AEGIS, our governing body, is three students at any one time. The number you choose to look after will be dictated by the amount of room you have available and the size of your family. Some people like to host two students at a time, so they can keep each other company.

When will I be expected to host students?

Once we have matched our students with you and both parties are happy with the arrangement, we like to keep the same host family for all holidays, where possible. These may include:

Exeats – some schools have two weekends each term when they close for two nights and the students have the weekend off. Some schools have only one per term, and some have none at all.

Half terms – all our schools close for half term, each term, and this is usually nine nights but can also be up to 16 days. Your Area Manager will make you aware of the dates well in advance.

Easter and Christmas holidays – very occasionally our students require hosting over the longer holidays. We would contact you in the first instance to discuss this. It is not an expected part of being a host family, although nice for the students to go to a family they know.

Suspensions – this is very rare, but can happen if students are caught drinking, smoking or displaying other bad behaviour and, again, we may call you to see if you can host the student for their suspension. This could be between one night to one week.

One off events – sometimes our students need one or two night’s accommodation, either when they arrive back into the UK after a school holiday, or before they return home, depending on when flights are booked. Students can also sometimes need short term care if they are ill or if flights are cancelled. In these circumstances, we may contact you to see if you are able to care for them until they can return to school or home.

Are there any other times that I might be needed?

Some of our host families also offer to take our students to and from the airports at the beginning and end of term. If you are happy to offer this service, please let us know.

School visits will not be required by the host family, as a representative of Pippa’s Guardians will attend on the parents’ behalf. However, if the host family wishes to support the student by attending plays, concerts or sport matches then this can be done on a voluntary basis and will be much appreciated.

We always encourage our host families to meet the parents of the students they will be looking after, wherever possible. Often overseas parents arrive at the start of the school year, or term, and ask to meet the host family when they come to drop off their child at school. It is reassuring for them to meet the people who will play a very important part in caring for their child while they are here in the UK and they are always appreciative if you can make time to meet them. This can make the experience of hosting our students even more special as genuine friendships between the families often develop.

We politely discourage any host from allowing a student’s parent/s to stay with you at your home. It can lead parents to believe that they now have 24hr access to you and your family, and you may have trouble

creating some professional distance between yourself and the student’s parents. Please do not make any arrangements concerning your students directly with their parents. It is sensible to allow your Area Manager to act as the central point of communication between you all.

What happens if I can’t host at a particular time?

Hosting our students works best when they come regularly to you, and as term dates are available up to two years in advance, we ask that you try to plan any commitments you have accordingly. However, we appreciate this isn’t always possible and encourage you to let us know as far in advance if you are not able to host your student, so that we can organise for another host family to look after them.

Confirmation of arrangements

When you agree to host a student we will confirm all the arrangements regarding the student’s stay with you at least one week prior to their arrival. You wil receive an email from our travel department with all the necessary details about where to collect your student, and at what time, or the arrangements if one of our drivers is due to collect them. Please make yourself known to the house parent of the student, or the teacher on duty, if you are collecting. This will ensure the school know you are the correct person collecting the student and allows for a smooth handover. Please go to reception at the school in the first instance.

Changes of plan and cancellations

We aim to provide host families with as much notice as possible when they are required to host students. However, there is no guarantee that all hosts will be used for each holiday detailed previously, as students sometimes change their plans, stay with a school friend, or visit relatives. If we have to cancel a booking within 10 days* of the start date of the student's stay, we will try to ensure we place another student with you, or you will receive 50% of the daily charge, up to a maximum of 10 days.

**Subject to the date of your signed agreement*

Driving our students

Host family members who drive our students must be aged 25 or over. If you are using your car to provide transport for our students you must have comprehensive insurance in place and you need to inform your insurance company that you will be providing transport to a student. Please ensure your car is safe and roadworthy, with a full MOT and road tax, and that the student travels safely using seat belts correctly at all times.

Children must use the appropriate child car seat until they are 12 years old, or 135cm tall, whichever comes first.

If you are transporting an individual student, we would ask that they travel in the back of the car, from a safeguarding point of view, unless the student suffers from severe travel sickness.

Valuables, luggage and other important items

Passports and other valuable items that students own should be left at school wherever possible. We recommend if a student brings a sum of money with them, it is a good idea for this to be passed to you for safe-keeping. It may seem formal, but please provide them with a receipt. Do encourage your student

not to carry large sums of money, important documents or valuables around with them.

Please do not store pieces of luggage for students unless this has been agreed with your Area Manager in advance. Luggage needs to be stored for at least a week before a storage charge can be made. £25 will be paid for the storage of a small rucksack and suitcase, and £50 for over 3 up to a maximum of 4 items in total for the period of time that has been pre-agreed with your Area Manager. Please do add this luggage storage charge to your next hosting claim.

Home insurance

It is essential that you have comprehensive home insurance, and you inform your insurance company that on occasion you will be hosting international students.

Pocket money

Many of our students have their own bank accounts, but younger students may not. If you need to provide our students with pocket money of up to £50, this must be pre-agreed with your Area Manager. Make a note of this on your expense form and claim it back from us.

Student safety

Who needs a DBS check?

Everyone in your household aged 16 or over is required to have an enhanced DBS check carried out by Pippa's Guardians. This includes anyone who will be staying overnight regularly with you whilst you are hosting our students.

Advising us of changes

Host families must advise their Area Manager of any changes in the household composition during their time as a host family (e.g. a new baby, parental separation, lodgers over 16, someone living at the accommodation ceases to be employed or someone new joins the household).

Staying home alone and going out

The rules we require you to uphold, with regards to what students can and can't do, is what we receive most questions about from host families. We trust you to ensure the safety of our students and while they are with you we have clear guidelines about what they are and are not allowed to do. However, we know that every student is an individual and has a different level of maturity, and so you will need to use your own judgement in some cases. A child who doesn't feel comfortable should never be left home alone.

More advice on this can be found at www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/in-the-home/home-alone/ If you are not sure, please always ask your Area Manager. This way we can work together to ensure the students are happy and secure in your care.

The safety of our students is our top priority – if you are not happy giving consent to your student for them to leave your home, then please contact your Area Manager for guidance.

If at any time you are concerned that your student is not where they have said they will be, or they are late arriving with you with no reasonable explanation, please do call our Duty Phone number on 07721 372865 so we can implement our Missing Student Policy. (Available on our website at <https://pippasguardians.com/our-policies/>)

ICE cards

Please issue your student with an ICE card (In Case of Emergency) if they are aged 15 or over and going out unaccompanied at any time. This has Pippa's Guardians' emergency contact numbers on it, and you will need to fill in your own address and telephone number for your student.

You will receive several ICE cards when your application has been approved. Contact your Area Manager if you require more.

Taking a student away from home overnight

If you and your family are planning to go away for a night with the student in your care, please inform your Area Manager well in advance in order to receive our agreement. We understand that this may be practical for you, and lovely for our students, but our safeguarding rules mean that this must be carefully controlled. The request will have an implication on the DBS requirements of those you are staying with, and it is a requirement of the UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) that Pippa's Guardians knows the exact overnight address of every student in our guardianship at all times whilst they are studying in the UK.

Students visiting friends overnight

Students, particularly older ones who are more independent, may ask you if they can go out or visit friends at the last minute. Sometimes, they will also try to make arrangements themselves, but because we are their guardians at Pippa's Guardians, all requests must be sanctioned by us.

While the student is staying with you, it is forbidden for them to go and stay with their friends for a night or more unless they have specific permission from Pippa's Guardians. Written consent from parents will be required by us prior to the event. If the parent advises you of any such plans directly, please ensure this information is immediately passed on to us as this is part of the requirement of the UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) Department.

The rules regarding age appropriate safeguards are as follows:

Aged 12 and under (year 8 and below)

This age group may go out for local trips such as visiting the shops, cinema or leisure centre but we do ask you to please accompany them. They may be allowed a short time on their own to look around the shops or similar, but we would ask that you agree on a time and meeting point for them and please remind them to keep their phone on.

Aged 13 to 15 (year 9 and 10)

This age group can enjoy some time on their own or with friends for an agreed period of time, to the local town shopping centre, leisure centre or cinema for example – but please do ensure they tell you where they are going and who with and that they know how to contact you in an emergency. Please ask them to be back home before it is dark or 7pm – and do arrange a time for their return so you know when you can expect them. We don't allow this age group to travel further than local amenities unless they have pre- arranged this with their Area Manager, parents and yourselves.

Aged 16 (year 11)

If the student is 16 we ask them to let you know where they are going before they leave your home and we ask them to have a mobile phone with them and be back before dark at a pre-agreed time. They are able to travel further afield if pre-agreed i.e. to London ideally with a friend, but they must be back before dark (unless pre-agreed) and please do remind them to remain in telephone contact with you where needed.

Aged 17 to 18 (year 12 and 13)

For our students aged 17 and 18, they will understandably want to go out unaccompanied but we do ask them to agree their plans with you and be back at 10pm at the latest when going out alone (unless pre-agreed). They may want to go to London or another city during the holidays, while they are staying with you. In this instance, we would have asked that parents give approval in writing to us in good time and their plans are clearly detailed. We would prefer that they travel further distances with a friend from school, or a member of the host family who is over 18.

For all age groups - please ensure they carry their ICE card (In Case of Emergency) with them in case they lose their phone or wallet.

Other guests or students staying at your house

If you are hosting other students or guests in the house (which have not been previously disclosed), you must tell your Area Manager immediately. We need to know this information to ensure the environment is still suitable and safe for our students.

Please note AEGIS standards state that you may not host any other paying guests or operate any form of bed and breakfast facility when hosting AEGIS students.

Please ensure that if you are hosting a student who is under 16 that you are not hosting any additional students who are over the age of 20.

All guests staying aged 16 or over are subject to a DBS check. Please contact us if you have any queries.

Students inviting friends to stay with them at your house

Sometimes students ask if they can invite friends to stay with them at their host family's house. If you have room, and are happy to accommodate other students that are not registered with Pippa's Guardians, then we can organise this, but in order that everything is formalised, the student's friend needs to join our guardianship scheme. This means that we need their parent or guardian to enrol them temporarily onto our guardianship programme for the duration of the stay.

We need a form completed, with medical questions and payment of a fee, plus the host family fees.

If your student approaches you about this, please do not deal with the student directly but refer it back to us. This way you are protected by our guardianship organisation and will be guaranteed payment.

Using a babysitter for our students

You may leave a student who is 14 years of age, or under, for a short time in the care of another member of your family who is 16 years or over and has been DBS checked by us. If you think you will need to leave your student for longer, for example to go out in the evening, you must arrange for a babysitter who must be 18 years or over and hold a current DBS check from Pippa's Guardians.

We know that many of our families may have a regular babysitter and would like to use them in such instances. Please contact us and we will arrange for a DBS check to be completed.

If your student is aged 15 or 16, they can be left for short periods of time; for any longer, they too would require a babysitter, as above.

Students who are aged 17 or 18 can be left at home alone if you need to go out for the evening, as long as they are comfortable with this arrangement and have your contact details.

Smoking, drugs and alcohol

At Pippa's Guardians, and of course at all UK boarding schools that we work with, there is a no tolerance policy towards smoking (including vaping), drugs and alcohol. Students of any age are not allowed to drink or smoke (including vaping) at school. Drugs, including controlled substances and also "legal highs", and any substance supplied for misuse, are strictly forbidden at all times. Alcohol is forbidden unless the student is over the age of 18 years. If your student is over 18, please use your discretion when allowing a student to drink alcohol and seek permission from your Area Manager first.

Alcohol should always be stored appropriately in your home.

Computers and internet safety

Please read our online safety policy which is available at www.pippasguardians.com under the **Policies** section.

While staying at your home, all our students will want to use your WiFi! Please make sure it works adequately and provide them with the WiFi code, as it is important for them to be able to contact home. They will also want to use their own laptops, tablets or smart phones to work or play games while they are staying with you.

While we encourage our students to interact with our families as much as possible, the use of the internet while at your home is entirely at your discretion, as is their use of your own computer or tablet. If the student needs to use your computer, please make sure you have relevant safety software installed and keep a watchful eye on what they are accessing via the internet. At school their use of the internet will be restricted by software to prevent them looking at inappropriate or illegal sites. Further advice can be found at www.vodafoneparenting.co.uk.

It is a good idea to set the ground rules on internet access right from the start, e.g. you would like them to turn off phones after a certain time. If you do not have unlimited broadband usage and will be charged if your usage goes over a certain amount, please ensure you let the students know this, and limit their time on the internet.

Please do not hesitate to contact your Area Manager should you require any further information or guidance.

Safety in the home

Being safety conscious and aware of potential dangers in the home is an important part of being a host family. Below are some of the practical things you can do to prevent accidents occurring in your home, together with the safety rules and regulations we ask you to adhere to.

1. Gas, oil or solid fuel heating appliances – These must be professionally serviced once a year to prevent fires or carbon monoxide poisoning. Servicing must be done by competent, authorised professionals and in the case of gas appliances, a gas safe registered engineer must carry out this work, and a copy of the certificate should be provided to us for our records.

The room where any gas appliance is located must have adequate ventilation - air inlets should not be blocked to prevent draughts, and flues and chimneys should not be obstructed.

2. Fire in the home – Every host family has a duty to protect our students by making sure there are properly fitted and regularly tested (monthly) smoke alarms in the house. You should have, as a minimum, one smoke alarm installed on every storey of the house and a carbon monoxide alarm should be installed in any room containing a gas, liquid or solid fuel burning appliance.

Please make sure your student knows how to escape in the event of a fire by showing them the exits they would need to use in an emergency and where to find the keys to doors or windows. It is not an AEGIS requirement for host families to have fire extinguishers or fire blankets, unless the property is classed as a house in multiple occupation. If fire extinguishers and fire blankets are provided they must be suitably serviced.

Where open fires are used, a suitable fire guard should be in place when the fire is lit, and any matches or lighters should be appropriately stored.

3. Electrical wiring - Please ensure all wiring and electrical appliances are regularly checked and tested to ensure they are safe and fit for purpose. Please reduce the risk of electrical fires and electrocution by never using appliances with cracked plugs or worn cables, and avoid overloading electrical sockets.

Make sure your student knows not to take any electrical equipment into the bathroom and not to touch electrical equipment with wet hands.

Never use an appliance or let your student use an appliance if you suspect it of being unsafe.

4. Burns and scalds – Please make sure your student is aware of the dangers of using a kettle or other equipment that can cause burns and scalds. Cooking is a particular danger – make sure they know how to heat pans on the back ring first, with handles safely positioned.

5. Poisoning and safe storage of medicine and chemicals – Please keep household chemicals out of sight and out of reach of children, preferably in a lockable cupboard. Safely store all medicines out of sight in a place not accessible by your student.

6. First aid kit – Make sure you have a first aid kit for minor injuries and that your student knows where it is kept. A basic first aid kit should include plasters, sterile eye-pads, triangular bandage, safety pins, non-medicated wound dressing, disposable gloves and a leaflet giving guidance on first aid.

Emergencies and medical issues

If your student is ill while staying with you, please report this illness to your Area Manager, and take the same precautions as you would with your own child. Please arrange to accompany the student to the GP or dentist if necessary.

All the students under our guardianship care are registered with an NHS doctor at their school, and thus students can receive medical attention as a visitor under the NHS. You can administer paracetamol in the correct dosage if you feel this is necessary.

We have some students with allergies or medical issues. Full disclosure of any medical condition of our students will be made to you before you agree to host them, and you will be made aware of any medication that is required and how it should be administered. Please be reassured that the parents have full responsibility for their child in your care. A signed, medical consent form will be held on file at the students registered school.

If a medical emergency should arise you should contact the emergency services or a doctor as necessary, as they will be able to give immediate assistance. Please inform your Area Manager as soon as possible.

HOW TO CONTACT US IN AN EMERGENCY:

Duty phone line (emergencies only) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: **(+44) 7721 372865** or **(+44) 330 223 6708** (low rate call).

Our Head Office number is **01684 252 757**

Ben Hughes
Managing Director
telephone 07714 034749
ben@pippasguardians.co.uk

Please note your Area Manager name here:

Safeguarding

If you have a concern about a young person, you should follow Pippa's Guardians' normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Rose Vigers-Belgeonne or Deputy DSL, Michelle Edwards.

Further steps can then be taken by the DSL or DDSL, who might seek advice from other involved parties such as the student's school.

DSL - Rose Vigers-Belgeonne
(+44) 7731 997732

DDSL - Michelle Edwards
(+44) 07802 421472

safeguarding@pippasguardians.co.uk

Pippa's Guardians Duty Phone number is (+44) 7721 372865 or (+44) 330 223 6708 (low rate call).

Pippa's Guardians acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and AEGIS requirements.

As a member of AEGIS we ensure we work to the highest safeguarding practices. Becoming a host family for Pippa's Guardians means that you are willing to adopt our **Safeguarding Policy** and standards. The nature of our relationship with you is a working one, and when you sign our contract, you are agreeing to uphold our standards. We guarantee, in return, to offer you an unrivalled level of support and commitment.

Our **Safeguarding Policy** can be found at www.pippasguardians.co.uk; please do take time to read it and contact us if you have any questions or need further information regarding your responsibilities.

If you would like us to provide you with a hard copy of this policy please contact our DSL Rose Vigers-Belgeonne or DDSL Michelle Edwards on safeguarding@pippasguardians.co.uk

Please be aware that, as a host family, you may only use reasonable, appropriate and lawful means of control to maintain safety. Physical punishment is illegal and must never be used.

Ensure that consent is obtained from your Area Manager at Pippa's Guardians before allowing the student to take part in unduly hazardous or dangerous sports and activities when in your care.

Disclosure of an incident

If a student talks to you about an incident; listen carefully, make notes, indicate that you believe the student and do not question them.

Do not promise confidentiality. Respect the student's right to confidentiality, but this right can, and should, be overridden if it is necessary to do so, in order to protect the student's safety and welfare.

Please pass on any information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at Pippa's Guardians as soon as possible.

Guidelines to help support a student who is being bullied

- Listen and reassure the student that coming to you was the right thing to do.
- Try and establish the facts.
- Assure them that the bullying is not their fault and that they have support around them to help them.
- Reassure them that you will not take any action without discussing it with them first.

- Please let your Area Manager know as soon as possible so they can take advice from our safeguarding team on what the next steps should be.
- Pippa's Guardians anti-bullying policy can be found online at www.pippasguardians.co.uk
- Further information can be found at www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/

Safeguarding training

As you know, safeguarding our students is at the heart of all we do at Pippa's Guardians. You will receive an email from us shortly after you have been signed off as an approved host family, with a link to our required online safeguarding training. This training will need to be undertaken before you can host any students for us.

Our AEGIS Safeguarding course has been written specifically for guardians and host families by the chair of AEGIS, Adam Lubbock. AEGIS is our Governing body and we are very proud to hold Gold membership status.

The training course cost has already been met in full by Pippa's Guardians and you will be sent a certificate shortly after completion of the course, which is for your records. We will offer you the opportunity to renew this safeguarding training every three years, in line with AEGIS best practice.

If you do have current (dated within the last three years) safeguarding training that you have taken elsewhere, we may be able to accept this if you can email through your course certificate.

Reassuring your student if they are distressed

Although it is only human nature to want to comfort our students if they become distressed when they are staying with you, it is important that this is done in a consenting and appropriate manner.

If physical contact is made with students to comfort them, it should be in response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. It is usually considered that a gentle hand on the shoulder or back is agreeable. Where feasible, please seek the student's permission before initiating contact.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of a physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Please try and use your best judgement. Your Area Manager will have covered this in more detail at your home inspection visit.

Private fostering

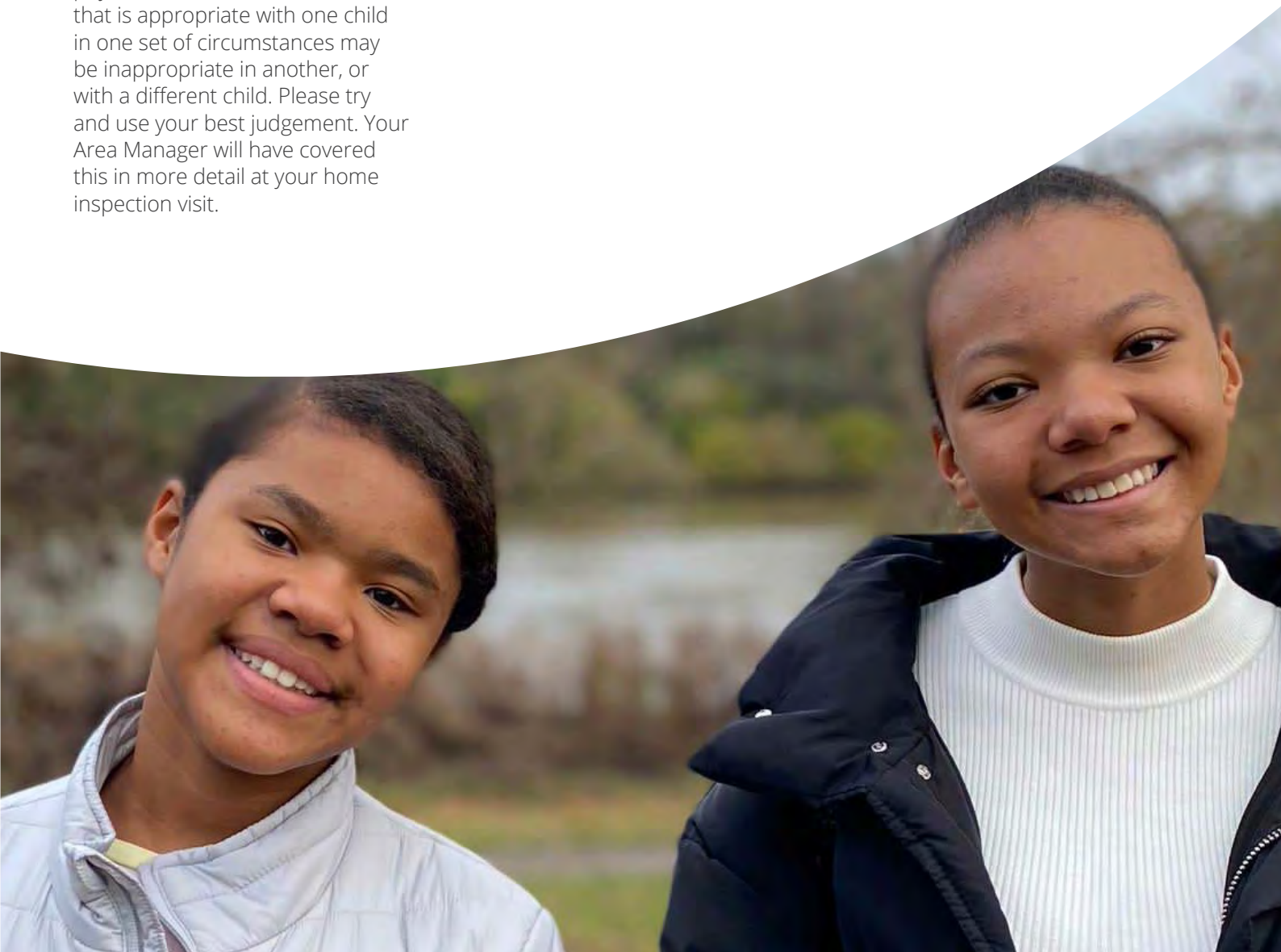
Under rare circumstances you may consider hosting one of our students who is under 16 for a period of 28 days or longer. This would perhaps be over a summer holiday, or similar. This arrangement is known as a private fostering agreement. Your Area Manager would have talked this through with you in detail before you agree to the placement and it simply means that a range of additional checks will be carried out by the local children services department to ensure the child is safe and that all parties, including the parents, are in agreement with the situation. You will be fully supported through this process by both your Area Manager and our safeguarding team.

PREVENT – anti-radicalisation policy

Pippa's Guardians recognises its duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and in line with the Prevent Duty June 2015 to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. The aim of the Prevent duty is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

Pippa's Guardians staff have all undergone government e-learning training on Prevent. Our Prevent policy can be found on our website www.pippasguardians.co.uk under our policies section.

Students will be alerted to our Prevent policy on joining Pippa's Guardians, through age appropriate discussions with their Area Manager.



Use of CCTV

The International Commissioner’s Office (ICO) has a Code of Practice in relation to the use of CCTV inside and outside properties, which can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/media/about-the-ico/consultations/2044/draft-cctv-cop.pdf> This must be adhered to by any homestay using CCTV.

The key is having a clear and lawful need for the recording, and to be able to demonstrate why CCTV is appropriate to meet that need. This should take into account an individual’s right to privacy and what the CCTV user has done to ensure the recordings are no more intrusive than they need to be. There must be a clear system to ensure any data

obtained is adequately protected, in line with the usual data protection principles (just as for written data).

It is essential that the ICO guidelines have been adhered to and that the main homestay carer has a paper trail to demonstrate this.

Host families using CCTV are expected to remain up to date with any changes in this Code of Practice.

GDPR

At Pippa’s Guardians we are committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. Our Data Protection and Privacy Policy explains why we collect personal information, how we use it, the conditions under which we may

disclose it to others, and how we keep it secure.

We amend this policy in line with statutory guidance so please do check our policies page at www.pippasguardians.com at regular intervals so that you can ensure that you are up to date, and happy, with any changes.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like any further clarification on this.

Our Data Protection Officer is Ben Hughes and Ben can be contacted on 01684 252757 or 07714 034749 or ben@pippasguardians.co.uk.

Complaints

The following parties may have a grievance against Pippa’s Guardians:

- Overseas parent(s) (on behalf of the student)
- UK host family
- School
- Another guardianship organisation
- Overseas agent, or other organisation, which may have placed a student with Pippas Guardians

Stage 1 - Informal

In the first instance, all grievances should be made informally to Ben Hughes, Managing Director of Pippa’s Guardians. Ben can be contacted on 01684 252757 or 07714 034749 or ben@pippasguardians.co.uk.

It is to be hoped that the matter will be resolved satisfactorily between the parties involved at this stage. An informal complaint should expect a response within 3-5 working days.

If appropriate, it can be helpful to call informally upon the services of an impartial arbitrator who has some experience and prior knowledge of the circumstances that led to the declaration of a grievance.

Records will be kept, in chronological order, of all correspondence, subsequent responses and action taken.

Stage 2 - Formal

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, then grievances should be directed in writing to Ben Hughes, Managing Director.

The postal address is: **Pippa’s Guardians, Suite 4, Nimrod House, Sandy’s Road, Malvern, WR14 1JJ** and the email address is ben@pippasguardians.co.uk.

The complaint will be formally acknowledged within 24 hrs and, once fully investigated, a response will be offered within 10 days from the date of the complaint.

As for Stage 1, records will be kept, in chronological order, of all correspondence, subsequent responses and action taken.

Stage 3 - Panel

If the grievance cannot be resolved successfully at stage 2, both parties may make formal representations, in writing, to the trustees of AEGIS c/o:

Yasemin Wigglesworth
Executive Officer

AEGIS
The Wheelhouse
Bond’s Mill Estate
Bristol Road Stonehouse
Gloucestershire
GL10 3RF

E-mail: info@aegisuk.net
Telephone: +44 (0) 1453 821293

Feedback

If you have any comments on this handbook, or any of our systems or procedures, and how they may be improved, then please let us know by emailing us at ben@pippasguardians.co.uk.

We value our working relationship with you and any concerns you may have should in the first instance be directed to your appointed Area Manager or Managing Director, Ben Hughes.

Your contract with us

You will be asked to read and confirm agreement to our terms and conditions when you complete the host family application form. Please do ensure you read these carefully and ask your Area Manager if you would like any further clarification on anything within the contract.

A reminder that the terms and conditions can be found at <https://pippasguardians.com/host-familyagreementanddeclaration/> or in the host family portal, which you can access once you are an approved Pippa’s Guardians host family.



AEGIS ACCREDITED



Est. 1997 • AEGIS Accredited

Office: +44 (0)1684 252757

24/7 Duty Support (calls only, for use in emergencies or for urgent assistance)

+44 (0) 7721 372865 or +44 (0) 330 223 6708 (low rate call)

office@pippasguardians.co.uk • www.pippasguardians.co.uk

Suite 4, Nimrod House, Sandy's Road, Malvern, WR14 1JJ

Pippa's Guardians Ltd. Registered in England and Wales. Company Number: 08434636

Handbook version 5 - 2026