



PEOPLE SPECIAL!

Happy New Year to you all and welcome to the first AEGIS Newsletter of 2020! We hope that the first term of the academic year went well for you and that you have all enjoyed the Christmas break. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed articles for this edition.

Alongside reports of inspiring students, this edition introduces the people behind the names of just some of the guardianship organisations who are working so hard to ensure that the international students under their care have a positive experience here in the UK.

The past weeks have seen some worrying times overseas, which are particularly difficult for students with family in the affected areas. Our thoughts are especially with students and their families in Iran and Hong Kong.

Hong Kong



Background

Since June 2019, there have been continuous protests in Hong Kong against the plan of extradition law to mainland China. Protesters feared that the law will undermine the “one country, two systems” and judicial independence.

Hong Kong was a British colony until 1997 and the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong to China. According to the basic law, people will have a high degree of autonomy.

The bill was withdrawn by Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, in September but the protests kept going up to this date and the motto of the protest is “five demands, not one less.” The demands include full democracy and an inquiry into police operations. Since the local elections, the protests have decreased and the situation seems to be improving.

Owing to the current political climate in Hong Kong, there has been a rise in the number of Hong Kong parents looking for education overseas for their children. So how can schools help? Please do not cap the number of Hong Kong students you are currently taking - at least for this year especially if they are suitable for your school and meet all entrance requirements. Please also be mindful of deadlines as many parents are having to consider many factors - such as financial, age of their children, whether this is the best time for them, the current options of schools available and still recruiting...etc. For guardianship organisations, please remain flexible and understanding to the students and the parents’ needs as plans may change at the last minute.

Irene Lee,
Director, James-Lee Consultancy

Hong Kong – Supporting Students – Connexcel Ltd

Those of us who work closely with pupils from mainland China and Hong Kong are acutely aware of the current tensions and remain vigilant in our attempts to support the students from both areas. Unprecedented scenes of violence and public disorder have been a frequent theme on news broadcasts causing concern, anxiety and indeed occasionally reaction from pupils studying in UK boarding schools. As a guardianship organisation, we aim to be available to support and guide them through this difficult time, working whenever necessary, in conjunction with schools where our students are placed. Together with our partner schools, we want to ensure that the students affected feel that they have an outlet for their fears and opinions, as well as, in some cases, their frustration with the situation.

Our host families also play a crucial part in offering support to students. We encourage our families to maintain contact with their students, building relationships by attending school events and parents' evenings whenever possible. This has meant that the pupils have another avenue through which to express any anxieties about what is happening so far away.

This coordinated approach appears to have helped our pupils to navigate their way through this difficult time and we all continue to hope for a swift resolution to the current situation.

John Zhang,
Managing Director, Connexcel Ltd



AEGIS – BSA – BAISIS Conference 10th -11th March 2020, London



We are pleased to announce the forthcoming AEGIS and **BSA** conference in London in March. This year **BAISIS** is also joining in! A great networking opportunity for guardians, school staff and agents and a chance to hear some inspirational speakers including Ruth Hughes, Director at **Curious Human** Addressing culture shock using positive psychology, and Pat Moores, Director and Co-founder of **UK Education Guide** - What parents really want from Schools & Guardianship.

Lord Karan Bilimoria will be opening the conference on the 10th March. Lord Bilimoria is a British Indian entrepreneur and life peer in the UK House of Lords, Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, President of UKCISA and co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on International Students.

For further details and to book please visit: **AEGIS – BSA – BAISIS Conference** Limited places available!



AEGIS NEEDS YOU!

We are looking to increase our pool of independent inspectors. If you are a school trained inspector and would like to join the team, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact sharon@aegisuk.net for further details.

MEET THE GUARDIANS



Quest Guardians

Richard Cullum, Business Development Manager

Education: Canford School and Brunel University.

Previous career: Ex-housemaster of 16 years with Senior Leadership experience in prep and senior schools. As a maths teacher, tutor, sports coach, parent and husband I have been involved in all areas of private education.

What drew you to the guardianship sector? Being a Housemaster allows you a different perspective on parenting, both in your own and other people's children. Particularly at prep school age, you play a significant part in young people's lives. Now working in guardianship allows me to look from the other side of the fence, working with host families and meeting students.

What do you love most about your job? Engaging with students and seeing the passion so many of them have for their education. Life is tough being a young person but so many students I meet have a 'joie de vive' that is infectious. I also love the ability to engage with people from many cultures and countries.

Oxbridge Guardians

Helen Wu, Director & Founder

Education: MSc Management, Leeds University.

Previous Career: Education Consultant at an international education consultancy company, China Marketing & Recruitment manager at an international school group and set up a British International School in Africa.

What drew you to the Guardianship Sector? Having been an international student myself, I found that I could be empathetic to the journey that our young students go through. Whilst working in the international education sector, I began to provide guardianship services to a small group of students. This is where Oxbridge Guardians began!

What do you love most about your job? The student's journey and seeing how they exceed their own expectations of what they can achieve. The fact that we can help students to flourish in the UK is really the best part of my role.



English Country Guardians

Joanna Winstanley, Principal

Education: Sociology, Politics and Economics, Durham University.

Previous career: I was a secondary school teacher for over 20 years. For the last 12 years I worked in a boarding school as an academic Head of Department with additional pastoral responsibilities.

What drew you to the guardianship sector? Working with the boarders, I came to understand some of the challenges faced by international students. I realised that students and parents did not always understand the UK educational system. With my background and experience, I felt I had an ideal skill set to help international students.

What do you love most about your job? Working with people, the sheer variety, the creativity, the flexibility, the unpredictability, every day is different. I love assisting students on their journey through the UK education system and derive enormous satisfaction from sharing their milestones and achievements with them.

BOSSS Guardians

Mrs Betty Ong-Stevens, Director & Founder

Education: Anglican High School in Singapore and Masters degree, UCL Institute of Education in the UK.

Previous career: Alternate Managing Director of HIL Singapore, a Fortune Global 500 company and one of the largest companies listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

What drew you to the guardianship sector? I had a change of career and decided to set up an Educational Recruitment Agency. Ensuring my students were in safe hands became a priority for me. I set up a Guardianship service, which ran hand in hand; it was the perfect solution.

What do you love most about your job? Knowing my students and their families from the day they register to the day they graduate from university has been my most favourite pleasure! Receiving a Christmas card from a past student addressed "Aunty Betty" makes me smile...and this is why I love my job!



English Guardian (part of UK Study Group)

Marianna Slivnitskaya, Head of Guardianship

Education: MA in Statistics and Computer Sciences (Russia), MA in Educational Marketing (UK).

Previous: I have been working in education since the age of 18.

What drew you to the guardianship sector? I was a part of a company in Russia organising recruitment fairs for UK boarding schools, and it became obvious that parents attending our events desperately needed someone in the UK who truly understands their needs culturally, and at the same time is aware of how the UK education system works.

What do you love most about your job? We are in a fantastic position to make a real difference and I love the fact that we bring up these children together with their parents and house parents. My experience shows that a child with a caring experienced guardian will achieve significantly more than a child without one.

Best Start Education

Elena Colquhoun, Director

Education: BSc, PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education).

Previous career: Science teacher and examiner for OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations).

What drew you to the guardianship sector? I thought that having taught in British schools, I have the knowledge of the system that can be helpful in guiding international students.

What do you love most about your job? I love my students and enjoy helping them. I think international pupils are very impressive. They are courageous, independent people, living far from home. They can speak two or more languages, have many talents and bring richness of their home culture to their boarding schools.





White House Guardianships

Louise Bragg, Local Guardian

Education: Stroud High School.

Previous career: Host mother for over 20 years for many international students. Respite Foster Carer for Disabled Children (2012 onwards). Support worker for Disabled Children and Adults (2008 onwards).

What drew you to the guardianship sector? A desire to support students away from their natural home/families and ensure their wellbeing is at the forefront of any situation or decision made that affects them.

What do you love most about your job? Being that person that my students can talk to 24/7 and knowing that they have someone who is looking out for them.

Pippa's Guardians

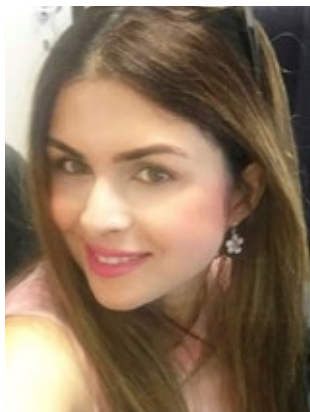
Elaine Kitt, Regional Manager South Team/Area Manager Somerset and Dorset

Education: English, Warwick University; Indentureship Kentish Times - NCTJ trained. journalist; Graduate Trainee Programme Primary English Teaching – QTS.

Previous career: Journalist then Primary School English Specialist Teacher at Leaden Hall School.

What drew you to the guardianship sector? As a teacher, I was interested in the opportunity to continue to work with young people in a pastoral setting. I consider international students to be uniquely vulnerable and really felt I could help support them to achieve their goals.

What do you love most about your job? The thing I love the most is seeing a student, who has faced real difficulties at school, be it due to homesickness, problems with their academic life or perhaps even more serious issues of physical or mental health, achieving their goals.



British Guardianship Ltd

Farimah Zargham, Head of Department

Education: Master of Science in International Marketing, University of Sussex.

Previous career: Business Development Manager at Study First Group.

What drew you to the guardianship sector? I came to the UK as an international student therefore I truly understand the needs of international students: cross cultural differences; homesickness and many more aspects of adapting to a new culture. My aim has always been to assist the students in any way I can.

What do you love most about your job? The opportunity to be in touch with families, students and agents worldwide and learn about new cultures, religions, languages and traditions. An international student to me is like a valuable book with so much information to learn from. I feel like I am making a difference.

Bright World Guardianships Ltd

Su Warren, Director of Guardianships & Operations

Previous career: I managed an independent chain of travel agencies in Spain, specialising in educational trips for students.

What drew you to the guardianship sector? I have always found it very rewarding making arrangements for students - learning about their different cultures and requirements. I also wanted to work in an environment where I could use my second language.

What do you love most about your job? Being on hand to help our students when they need that extra support. Making sure that our clients are happy with our service and, most importantly, that our students are safe and well cared for when they are out of school.



No Fluff - helping people work smarter and increase sales



I'm often asked what No Fluff actually does. Well, you probably understand from the name that whatever we do, it's direct and to the point. Importantly, as we shed the fluff your regular consultants charge you for, we give you results faster.

No Fluff consists of several Associates who we carefully match to our clients. We are all from the international education sector, myself for 24 years, but combined we total around a century. In that time, I have seen the sector blossom and go through huge change. The boarding sector is one I've paid particular interest to. I'm an avid supporter of British boarding, the vital work of AEGIS and good quality guardianship organisations. Whilst I'm a sales leader and Fellow of the Institute of Sales Management, I'm also human and work closely with the mental health charity Student Minds, with whom I consult on international student mental wellbeing.

But back to No Fluff! What do we do?

Perhaps asking more about your situation is a better start:

- Do you know how to nurture education agents well enough so that they always send you the right pupils and think of you first?
- Do you have your agent workshop/exhibition follow up systemised so no leads are leaked?
- Do you have a defined strategy for sales?
- Do you know what actions need to be carried out each day to achieve your goals?
- Which other members of staff are involved in lead generation and customer experience (Marketing? Finance?)?
- Do you or your leader have many roles, only one of which is 'sales' and you can't find time to focus on it?
- Does the person leading the sales team have the right sales leadership skills or could they use some coaching to get the best from their team?
- Do you know the best 'closing techniques' to use?

We help our clients with all these questions. No matter if your contacts are just business cards or on excel. No matter that you are floundering in responsibilities and haven't made one outbound call to find a new agent in years. It's much easier than you think. We match you to the right No Fluff Associate; they are all experienced, successful and empathetic! We pride ourselves on joining teams, not landing on you, lecturing and then leaving. Follow up accountability sessions are built in.

And, if you're worrying about cost, we are affordable, flexible and there's no minimum spend or tie-in and our Sales Audits come with a money back guarantee.

Simple, focused growth. For more information or a quick chat (we're nice and love a chat!) do get in touch

hello@nofluff.biz
<https://nofluff.biz/>

Nicola Lutz,
Owner, No Fluff

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Angela

Roedean Moira House

Angela joined Roedean Moira House in 2016 on a 3 year A Level programme from China. Since then she has fully embraced all aspects of her English education. Angela endeared herself immediately to both her teachers and peers within and outside of the boarding community with her warm smile and positivity. By the end of her first year Angela had already been nominated for a 'Girl of the Term' award, having demonstrated all the ideal traits that the school tries to instil in its students. Angela has also embraced extra-curricular activities since joining us and has not only completed her Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award, but is a key member of the School Orchestra where she plays violin.

On entering Year 12 Angela had achieved GCSEs in Maths and Chinese and chose to study 3D Design, Maths, Physics and Chinese with a view to following on in her father's footsteps of becoming an Architectural Engineer. In addition, she has put herself forward for positions of responsibility and was successful in becoming Vice Captain of her House in Year 12 as well as Head of Boarding in her wider capacity as a School Prefect this year.

Angela is now on the final leg of her journey, she has just applied to University and was in receipt of offers within 24 hours. She will undoubtedly continue to go from strength to strength with her charm and work ethic in her new institution.



Mrs R Harris-Moss,
Head of Year 11 -13, Roedean Moira House



Daria

Queen Anne's School, Berkshire

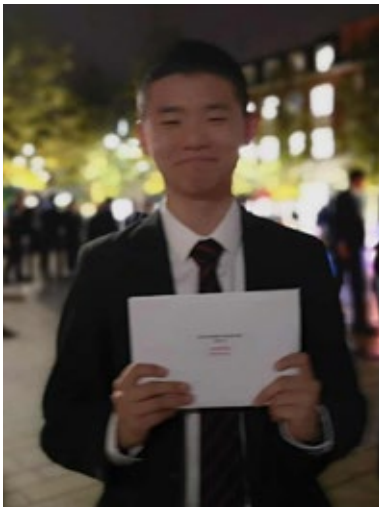
Daria truly exemplifies Queen Anne's ethos of 'Kind hearts, fierce minds, strong spirits'. Daria's move to the UK from Romania to commence her A Level studies was a significant life change, yet she adapted quickly and has flourished in her A Levels.

Her commitment and spirit to many areas of school life led to her being awarded the position of Deputy Head Girl. Daria delivered an outstanding speech at the United Grey Coat and Westminster Foundation Schools' Public Speaking Competition, earning a sponsored place at the LIMUN university-level Conference and working with her peers to inaugurate a student-led MUN Conference for year 10 students from several local schools.

Daria looks beyond the school environment tackling humanitarian problems, researching and designing a means of creating a sustainable energy source with her group whilst working with Redearth Education, an NGO based in Masindi, Uganda. Daria has since expressed an interest in starting up her own NGO in the future to address societal inequality in her home country, Romania.

Daria continues to demonstrate her kind heart organising a sustainable fashion show as part of RAG week and working with the climate committee to secure trees for planting to increase biodiversity at school. Daria is her own success story, her fierce mind enabling her to take on any challenge the world puts in her path with Queen Anne's quiet strength supporting and guiding her.

Lindsey Bryant,
Deputy Head Pastoral – Designated Safeguarding Lead,
Queen Anne's School



Dianyi Yang

Oxbridge Guardians

Dianyi is a current student with Oxbridge Guardians, studying A Levels. He is a very talented student, recently receiving an award at Speech Day for Academic Distinction in year 12, and also won the award for Economics.

What 'top tips' would you give to other students who are studying in the UK? Get CGP books for subjects that you feel weak in. They are generally more useful than the textbooks. Ask questions after lessons if you feel embarrassed asking them during lesson time – the teacher could give you a more detailed response and you can make an impression of being proactive.

If you could describe your experience in the UK in 3 words, what would they be?
Enriching, Safe, Inspiring

Steph Gilbert,
Operations Manager, Oxbridge Guardians

Eddie Zhang

BOSSS Guardians

MSc Statistics with Applications in Medicine and BSc Mathematics, Statistics and Management Science

It's always an exciting but sad time for us when our students fly the nest and leave BOSSS Guardianship to move on to the next chapter of their life, the bond between us and the student can only be compared to as family. Even though we are sad to see our students move on, it's never a "goodbye"...it's more like a "see you soon".

15-year-old Eddie Zhang arrived in the UK in February 2002 from China, his English language was limited so he attended an English Language school to help prepare him for College. Eddie completed his A Levels in Maths, Statistics and Physics with glowing grades and went on to study a Bachelor of Science degree followed by a Master of Science.

Eddie is now 33 years old and is a Biostatistician at UCB Pharma. He is part of the clinical studies team, within a specific area relating to bone diseases such as osteoporosis and cancer metastasis to the bone. It has been a great honour and pleasure for us to watch a young boy become the man he is today.

Marketing Team,
BOSSS Guardians



Saule Salnaite

White House Guardianships

Saule attended Exeter College and is now 24 years old. She has worked for airlines in Manchester, Lithuania, Air Baltic and now a private Airline flying celebrities and footballers to many countries. Saule is still in touch with her guardian and recently flew to the UK to surprise her guardian's son at his 21st birthday party.

Debbie Reeves,
Local Guardian for Ottervale, White House Guardianships



Natalie Berkhamsted School

Sep 2017 – July 2019 (A Levels: Maths A* Physics A* Biology A* Chinese A*,
University offers: Dentistry at Bristol University & University of Hong Kong)

The results that you achieved were excellent, how hard was it for you to do this? Did you need to spend large parts of the weekend working?

I did spend a lot of time outside of school to study and revise for tests and exams throughout my course. I didn't find it too hard in year 12 as I was able to manage my time by doing homework in my free lessons and reviewing the content at night. In Year 13 I found it much more challenging as the step up between year 12 to year 13 is quite big, so I had to spend even more time to understand and learn the content thoroughly. I think the level of help and support I got from my teacher definitely made my learning experience easier and smoother.

Berkhamsted has large numbers of day students and a small number of UK boarders, did you find it easy to integrate, make friends and enjoy studying in a UK environment? What advice would you give to someone thinking of this school - would you recommend it?

I was able to make friends when I first joined Berkhamsted. It took time to develop relationships with day students who had known each other for a long time. However there are a lot of people in the same situation and by just sitting with day students during class and talking to people you don't know makes the school more friendly. Joining the day students for lunch and going to the common room more often also helps you to make more UK friends. Everyone is very friendly, welcoming and talkative once you talk to them more often.

Sarah Brown,
Marketing and PR Officer, Berkhamsted School

Mary Melsheimer Rossall School

My outstanding experience at Rossall School started in September 2019. I found Rossall School with the help of an agency for international students in Germany and now I really am having the time of my life. I settled in very quickly, thanks to the helpful community supported by the professional care and warm involvement of house parents, teachers and tutors.

At the end of every school day we get to take advantage of a fantastic number of extra-curricular activities. We have the choice of many options, including numerous sports, music, art, language courses, cookery, photography club etc. Myself, I enjoy very much participation in the choir, basketball, orchestra and script writing. There is also the offer of extra lessons after school to practise exam skills and I take the opportunity to improve my French and business skills. The highlight for me is the choir. We perform at many different events, small and even big performances. An amazing experience for me was, "Last Night of The Proms" at the Marine Hall. Participation in several activities has made it easy to meet and become friends with pupils outside my year and house.





News

- Many congratulations to **Oxbridge Guardians** for recently gaining full AEGIS accreditation! We asked Steph Gilbert at Oxbridge Guardians about the AEGIS inspection experience:
“The appeal for Oxbridge Guardians to gain accreditation from AEGIS was not only to ensure that we were meeting industry standards but also to reassure parents and partners that they were working with a trustworthy and quality guardianship agency. We found AEGIS to be extremely forthcoming with information, support and details throughout the inspection process, with the Handbook and documentation making clear what AEGIS required. Working with the Lead Inspector was a pleasure as his depth of experience and knowledge allowed us to further fine tune our procedures and policies in a way which will benefit us as a company long term.”
- **Pippa’s Guardians** and **Alpha Plus Guardian Services** recently gained AEGIS re-accreditation. Congratulations!
- We are delighted to welcome three new schools to AEGIS: **Copthorne Preparatory School**, **St Swithun’s** and **St Christopher School**. We thank you for your support. If your school is not yet a member of AEGIS and you are interested in finding out more, please do get in touch via yasemin@aegisuk.net.
- AEGIS is extremely pleased to be working with **YoungMinds**. For more than 25 years YoungMinds has been leading the fight for children and young people’s mental health. Every year YoungMinds work with thousands of ‘trusted adults’, giving practical solutions for supporting children and young people with their mental health. Their expertise and experience in this field leaves them well placed to provide guardianship organisations and school staff with trauma-informed and resilience-building techniques to enhance the way they support international students.
Join us for a training workshop led by **YoungMinds - International Student Mental Health and Welfare**, on **Wednesday 22nd April 2020**, 10.00 - 16.00, London. For further information please contact Yasemin via yasemin@aegisuk.net
- We are running a **Preparation for AEGIS Inspection/Re-Inspection – workshop for guardianship organisations** on **Monday 3rd February 2020**, 10.00 – 15.30, in London. For further information please contact sharon@aegisuk.net.
- AEGIS Chair, Dr Helen Wright, has recently had a book published – **The Globally Competent School: a manual** which explains why global competence is so important for schools now, and why it provides the answer to the problem of how to future-proof education.

Opinion Disclaimer

The views, thoughts and opinions expressed by our contributors and authors to this AEGIS newsletter solely belong to the contributors and authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of AEGIS.

Thank you to all our member Schools/Colleges and Guardianship Organisations for your continued support.



Follow us on Twitter @ukaegis

The Wheelhouse, Bond’s Mill Estate,
Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, GL10 3RF
+ 44 (0)1453 821293
info@aegisuk.net