



## HIGHSTED GRAMMAR SCHOOL

### SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

Issue 0013 December 2020

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#### Safeguarding Mission Statement

In accordance with the Children's Acts of 1989 and 2004 and the Education Act 2002, and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020, Highsted Grammar School has a duty to assist local authority specialist children's services departments acting on behalf of children in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse. Highsted Grammar School follows a child centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding. A 'Culture of Vigilance' has been fostered, where it is agreed by all that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Highsted Grammar School firmly believes that it has a strong pastoral responsibility to promote the welfare of children and that children have a right to be protected from harm; this is consistent with our overall aims to educate the whole pupil and foster personal as well as academic development.

#### Safeguarding Responsibilities and Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Tiernan-Powell  
Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Miss Anne Kelly  
Telephone: 01795 424223  
Email: [safeguarding@highsted.kent.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@highsted.kent.sch.uk)  
Website: [www.highsted.kent.sch.uk/safeguarding](http://www.highsted.kent.sch.uk/safeguarding)  
Twitter: @SafeguardingHGS

#### Safeguarding Calendar

Oct 2020: Black History Month  
Nov 2020: Anti-bullying Week  
Jan 2021: Safeguarding Fortnight  
Feb 2021: NSPCC Numbers Day  
Feb 2021: Safer Internet Day  
Feb 2021: Online Safeguarding Evening  
Mar 2021: Eating Disorders Awareness Week  
Mar 2021: Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day  
May 2021: Mental Health Week  
June 2021: LGBTQ History Month

#### Tier 3 Restrictions for Families

The Government has said, for families where parents are separated, children under 18 can move between both homes. But it's important to do what's safe and right for everyone. The [NSPCC](#) and [Parent Zone](#) have published some useful advice for parents and carers, to help children keep in touch with family members and coping with separation and illness.

#### Worried About Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse can affect anyone, the recent government measures to tackle COVID-19 can cause anxiety for those who are experiencing or feel at risk of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is unacceptable in any situation, no matter what stresses you are under. If you are worried about domestic abuse there are a number of organisations out there who want to help.

- Refuge—Help line 0808 2000 247
- Women's Aid– Wigan 01942 496094
- Mankind– Helpline 01823 334244
- Drop in and Share (DIAS)- Helpline 01942 495230

#### Children's Mental Health –Support at Christmas

The MindEd online resource provides information and advice concerning children's mental health and wellbeing. The MindEd online resource is for concerned children and their families to seek help and advice. MindEd directs visitors to sections including 'risky behaviour', 'eating disorders', 'sexual orientation and gender' and 'being a parent in the digital age' for expert advice. Topics on the website include:

- Should I be worried?
- What to do in a crisis
- Death and loss (including pets)
- Trauma and coping
- Talking to my child
- Who can help us?
- Building confidence and resilience
- Parenting in a digital world
- Refusal to go to school
- Bullying and what to do as a parent
- Sexual orientation and gender
- Eating disorders.

[minded.e-lfh.org.uk/.../index.html](http://minded.e-lfh.org.uk/.../index.html)

#### Christmas Risk Factors

For many children experiencing abuse, it is likely that they are at risk every day of the year, not just at Christmas time. However, the reinforced promise of a Happy Christmas can trigger all sorts of emotions in the mind of an abused child, which can make the festive period even more difficult to endure.



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So, what are the specific risks that Christmas can bring to a child?

#### Feelings of loneliness

Neglected or abused children might feel extreme loneliness at Christmas time, when they do not have school to escape to during the day or friends to socialize with at all because 'everyone else' is spending the busy holiday season with their family. Without a happy family unit, abused children can feel extremely cut-off from the rest of the world, and these feelings can lead to depressive episodes, feelings of despair, and can leave a child with the confusing question, "Why me?"

#### Everything in excess

It is common for abusive family members to become violent or aggressive and more likely to abuse a child when they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. At this time of year, when everything is in excess, abused children could be even more at risk than normal because of the presence of alcohol at Christmas parties and at the dinner table.

#### More time at home

If a child is being abused by a family member who is home from work for the holiday period, the respite that the abuser's work schedule might have offered will now be stripped away, leaving much more opportunity for abuse or violence. The same can be the case for school holidays, as without the excuse of going to school, a child might not have any reason at all to leave the house or their abuser.

#### Feelings of inadequacy

It can be extremely difficult for children to hear about all the wonderful presents their friends received for Christmas, and all the happy moments shared with loving families over the festive period. Even portrayals of Christmas on TV can give a child the sense that there is something wrong with them if they do not have the same 'family' experience. That's not to mention the frustration that comes when a child learns that their friends have received expensive and abundant gifts from Santa on Christmas morning, while they received little to nothing. All of this can lead a child to blame themselves for issues that are out of their control, and these emotions can cause depression, feelings of inadequacy, or much darker thoughts.

#### Christmas warning as child abuse contacts to NSPCC helpline rises 43%

Concerns about child abuse have soared since national lockdown measures were first introduced. Since the beginning of the first lockdown, the average number of contacts made to the NSPCC helpline about abuse has gone up. Analysis of data from April to November shows that the level of concern about emotional abuse, neglect, and physical abuse remain well above the pre-pandemic average. The latest figures show that the number of contacts from people concerned about child abuse is 43% higher than before the first lockdown.

Since April, the NSPCC have received:

- 31,359 contacts from adults anxious about child abuse or neglect
- an 82% rise in the number of contacts made about children experiencing emotional abuse, compared to pre-lockdown levels
- over a third more contacts from adults worried about children experiencing neglect and physical abuse, the two most common forms of abuse mentioned.

Now, with Christmas almost here, the NSPCC are sharing these findings as a warning that Christmas can be a very difficult time for children suffering abuse and neglect, and the impact of the Coronavirus could put even more children at risk.

As well as urging the public to be extra vigilant during the Christmas holidays, the NSPCC is urging the government to ensure children and families can get the help they need in the short and long term. To avoid this crisis having a lasting impact on a generation of children, it is crucial that the government invests long term funding to support them to recover from adverse and traumatic experiences during lockdown and to rebuild their lives.

The charity's team of professionals working on its helpline for concerned adults and the dedicated volunteer counsellors at Childline will all play a vital role in being here for children this Christmas.

In April, the government announced it was investing £1.6 million to help fund the NSPCC's helpline. On the 8 December 2020, the government also announced it was providing a further £190,000 for the helpline. This will support the NSPCC to continue to respond to the public's concerns over Christmas and the New Year.

Adults concerned about a child can contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000, or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). The helpline will be open every day over the festive period (Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm and 9am – 6pm at weekends)

#### Childline

Young people can also:

- contact Childline on 0800 1111 or via 1-2-1 chat on [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk). Childline will be open every day and night over the festive period.
- [get support](#) from other people their age in the online community via message-boards. They can also use expert resources to help them through any issues they're concerned about.
- visit the Childline's [Calm Zone](#) which been a great source of support for children and young people during the pandemic.

#### Free School Meals

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance



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- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals. Your child may also get free school meals if you get any of these benefits and your child is both:

- younger than the [compulsory age for starting school](#)
- in full-time education

If your child is eligible for free school meals, they'll remain eligible until they finish the phase of schooling (primary or secondary) they're in on 31 March 2022.

To apply, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

#### **Kent Community Foundation Grants**

Please find a link for the Kent Community Foundation grants which are available to disadvantaged individuals and families in Kent that meet the criteria, along with details of how they can be nominated. The individual or family being nominated must be a resident of Kent or Medway and there must be a demonstrable financial disadvantage underlying the request (e.g. the family are reliant on benefits or out of work for whatever reason). <https://kentcf.org.uk/>

#### **Useful Links**

NSPCC:

Call: 0808 800 5000 (24-hour free helpline)

Text: 88858

Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

Web: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Samaritans:

Call: 116 123

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Web: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

National Self-harm Network:

Call: 0800 622 600 (7pm-11pm)

Web: [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Stop Hate Crime:

Call: 0800 138 1625 (24-hour helpline)

Web: [www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)

Stop LGBTQ Hate Crime:

Call: 0808 801 0661 (24-hour helpline)

Web: [www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)

National Domestic Violence Helpline/ Women's Aid:

Call: 0808 2000 247 (24-hour free helpline)

Email: [helpline@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@womensaid.org.uk)

Web: [www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk)

Web: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

NWG Network (Stop CSE):

Call: 01332 585371

Email: [jointhefight@stop-cse.org](mailto:jointhefight@stop-cse.org)

Web: [www.nwgnetwork.org](http://www.nwgnetwork.org)

FGM/HBV Helpline:

Call: 0800 028 3550 (24-hour free helpline)

Email: [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)

Web: [www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm)

EACH:

EACH has a freephone Actionline for children experiencing homophobic bullying

Call: 0808 1000 143 (Monday to Friday 10am-5.00pm)

Web: <http://www.eachaction.org.uk/>