



HIGHSTED GRAMMAR SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

Issue 0019 December 2022

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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 2022, 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
DSL Trained Staff: Tanya Cornish, Gina Evans, Sarah Appleton and Jo Cutler
Telephone: 01795 424223
Email: safeguarding@highsted.kent.sch.uk
Website: www.highsted.kent.sch.uk/safeguarding

Safeguarding Calendar

Oct 2022: Black History Month
Oct 2022: Mental Health Awareness Week
Nov 2022: Anti-bullying Week
Jan 2023: Holocaust Memorial Day
Feb 2023: LGBTQ+ History Month
Feb 2023: Children's Mental Health Week
Feb 2023: NSPCC Numbers Day
Feb 2023: Safer Internet Day
Feb 2023: Online Safeguarding Evening
Mar 2023: Eating Disorders Awareness Week
Mar 2023: Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day
May 2023: Mental Health Week

Safeguarding at Christmas

Christmas is often seen as the most magical, family-orientated time of the year. But with this focus on family comes pressure – so much so that that same magic can be lost under the expectation of what Christmas SHOULD be.

Whether it's the anxiety that comes with spending extended time around family members or not having a family to spend Christmas with, safeguarding practices can apply to apply to all aspects of the holidays.

Here, we'll look at the many things to consider to ensure that both your child and adult safeguarding responsibilities aren't lost in the craziness of Christmas.

Pressures and expectations

Christmas time comes with a lot of ideals that many households try to reach. This can bring families and groups closer together – but it can also cause tension. Whether it's the abundance of alcohol or being cooped up for longer periods than usual, conflict can ensue and it can require safeguarding practices to be used.

On top of this, children in particular can have a very specific and idealised version of Christmas in their heads that may not come true in their household. Managing the expectations of those within your circle at Christmas is complicated, but the most important thing to remember is to prioritise the people first.

Pressure creates environments that can facilitate abusive behaviour. So, the key is to create a Christmas atmosphere not based on vanity (presents, lights, and whether you can cook the best dinner), but on welcoming values that make all members feel accepted.

Abuse at Christmas

The holiday season is often called the most wonderful time of the year – or at least that's what the songs say.

However, this period can be an anxiety-inducing one for both adults and children experiencing domestic abuse in all of its forms. It can quickly turn into a frightening time for the victim. In the UK, there is often a surge in reports of domestic violence from men, women, and children trapped with their abusers.

This is usually after the core period, however, as Christmas time means there are fewer opportunities to report abuse. With many businesses and schools closed, accessing support can prove tricky for victims.

Mental Wellbeing

A consideration for both children and adults is their mental health over Christmas. Those who are or have been a part of households with child protection issues, domestic violence



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and mental health difficulties can carry those issues into other environments – sometimes unknowingly.

It's been shown that people with mental health problems struggle with self-harm and suicidal feelings due to the pressure of Christmas. Not only can this create hostile environments for adults but the effects can ripple out onto children and young people, putting them in extremely vulnerable situations.

It's important to know how to best support those with mental health issues at a time where it can seem like they are discarded.

Online Safeguarding

With the prevalence of smartphones and online gaming, children and young people often spend their time over the Christmas holidays digitally connected to both friends and strangers.

These devices are often top of lists for young people and can provide fun for not only them but also the whole family. The catch is, of course, that anything with access to online platforms bring risks of cyberbullying, scams, and seeing content no appropriate for children.

A parent or caregiver plays a key role in children stay safe online. Any games or gadgets should be checked for safety and appropriate content, while communications and hours spent on them should be monitored.

Loneliness at Christmas can be a catalyst for many young people to seek company in social media platforms with unknown users. We have recently been made aware of the Wizz app which poses significant risk. We will explore the app and its associate dangers with children in the new year; but for now I would ask that you review the attached link and ensure your child does not download the app. <https://oursaferschools.co.uk/2022/11/25/hipal-walkie-talkie-and-wizz-social-apps/>

Safeguarding at Christmas for Adults

The responsibility of creating the 'perfect' Christmas is that of the adults involved. Whether they're parents, teachers or caregivers, pressure can easily get to those who feel like the enjoyment of everyone around them is in their hands.

This intense pressure can cause stress to the point that it can cause heart attacks in adults. Lack of sleep, emotional stress, anger towards others and alcohol abuse can all lead to negative effects on the adult and those around them. Letting go of the 'idea' of Christmas and allowing others to help create a household or space that is calm and loving is vital to not allowing the effects of overindulgence or pressure to play out.

Parental Support

As part of our work with the [Place2Be](#), the Mental Health Charity, we would like to offer parents the opportunity to explore a range of resources to help navigate through their child's transformation into adulthood.

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
- 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 2023.

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/>



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Useful Links

NSPCC:

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

Text: 88858

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Web: www.nspcc.org.uk

Mental Health Support for Families

Web: <https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/emotional-wellbeing-support-for-parents-carers-and-families/>

Eliie's Angels

Web: <https://www.elliesangels.org/mental-health-support>

Samaritans:

Call: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Web: www.samaritans.org

National Self-harm Network:

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

Web: www.selfharm.co.uk

Stop Hate Crime:

Call: 0800 138 1625 (24-hour helpline)

Web: www.stophateuk.org

Stop LGBTQ Hate Crime:

Call: 0808 801 0661 (24-hour helpline)

Web: www.stophateuk.org

National Domestic Violence Helpline/ Women's Aid:

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

Email: helpline@womensaid.org.uk

Web: www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Web: www.womensaid.org.uk

NWG Network (Stop CSE):

Call: 01332 585371

Email: jointhefight@stop-cse.org

Web: www.nwgnetwork.org

FGM/HBV Helpline:

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

Email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Web: 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/>