

OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM



At Holyhead School we endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We believe that all children should feel safe and be able to approach someone if they have a concern. The safety and wellbeing of our students is the most important aspect of our work as a school. If you have any concerns about your child's wellbeing or safety, or want to report a concern about another child, please ask to speak to one of the Designated Safeguarding Team.

In this month's issue we look at:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Preparing for Autumn
- County Lines intensification week October 2024
- Breadth of Child Exploitation
- What is coercive control and how to spot the signs
- Supporting children experiencing bereavement

This month we are focusing on the importance of staying safe as we approach the Autumn period and nights begin getting darker. October is also County Lines Intensification week and we have given you a breakdown of what county lines means and how you can support your child.

Preparing for Autumn

As the autumn months bring shorter days, darker nights and colder weather, our children are spending more time inside, enjoying family time and possibly spending more time online. While it's wonderful to see them active and engaged, it's crucial to ensure their safety. Here are some important tips and guidelines to help keep our children safe in the community.



1. Stranger Danger: Remind your children about the importance of staying away from strangers. Teach them to:

- Never accept gifts or rides from someone they don't know.
- Always stay with a group of friends when out in the neighbourhood.

Know the safe places in the community where they can go if they need help, like a friend's house or a local business.

2. Road Safety With more children walking home on dark evenings, it's essential to reinforce road safety rules:

- Always use pedestrian crossings and look both ways before crossing the street.
- Wear helmets when riding bicycles, scooters or skateboards.
- Avoid playing in or near the street, and be aware of driveways and parking places.

3. Personal Information Ensure your children understand the importance of protecting their personal information when they are online:

- Teach them not to share their full name, address, phone number, or other personal details with strangers.
- Make sure they know how to contact you or another trusted adult in case of an emergency.

4. Safe Routes If your child walks to school or a friend's house, plan and practise a safe route with them:



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- Stick to well-lit, populated areas and avoid shortcuts through alleys or deserted places.
- Identify safe places along the way where they can seek help if needed.

5. Digital Safety Even when they're playing outside, many children use mobile devices. Remind them about digital safety:

- Avoid sharing their location on social media or with strangers online.
- Only communicate with friends and family members through trusted platforms.

County Lines intensification week October 2024

What are County Lines?

County lines is the criminal exploitation of children by drug trafficking gangs who use dedicated phone lines to distribute drugs from urban areas to rural locations. Young people are often coerced into transporting and selling drugs, facing significant risks and dangers.

Why is County Lines a Concern?

- **Exploitation:** Children are targeted and manipulated by criminals.
- **Danger:** Involvement exposes them to violence and severe risks.
- **Legal Issues:** Young people can face serious legal consequences.

How We Combat County Lines at Our School

- **Education and Awareness:** Informing students about the dangers of county lines.
- **Parent Meetings:** Educating parents on recognizing and preventing exploitation.
- **Zero-Tolerance Policy:** Strict rules against exploitation.
- **Reporting Systems:** Confidential ways for students to report concerns (such as Holyhead Helpline).

How You Can Help

As parents and carers, your involvement is crucial in combating county lines exploitation:

- **Stay Informed:** Learn about the signs of county lines involvement and be vigilant for changes in your child's behaviour, such as unexplained absences, new possessions or increased secrecy.
- **Open Communication:** Maintain open lines of communication with your child. Encourage them to speak to you about any concerns or pressures they may be facing.
- **Report Concerns:** If you suspect that your child or another young person is involved in county lines activity, report it to the school or local authorities immediately. By working together, we can



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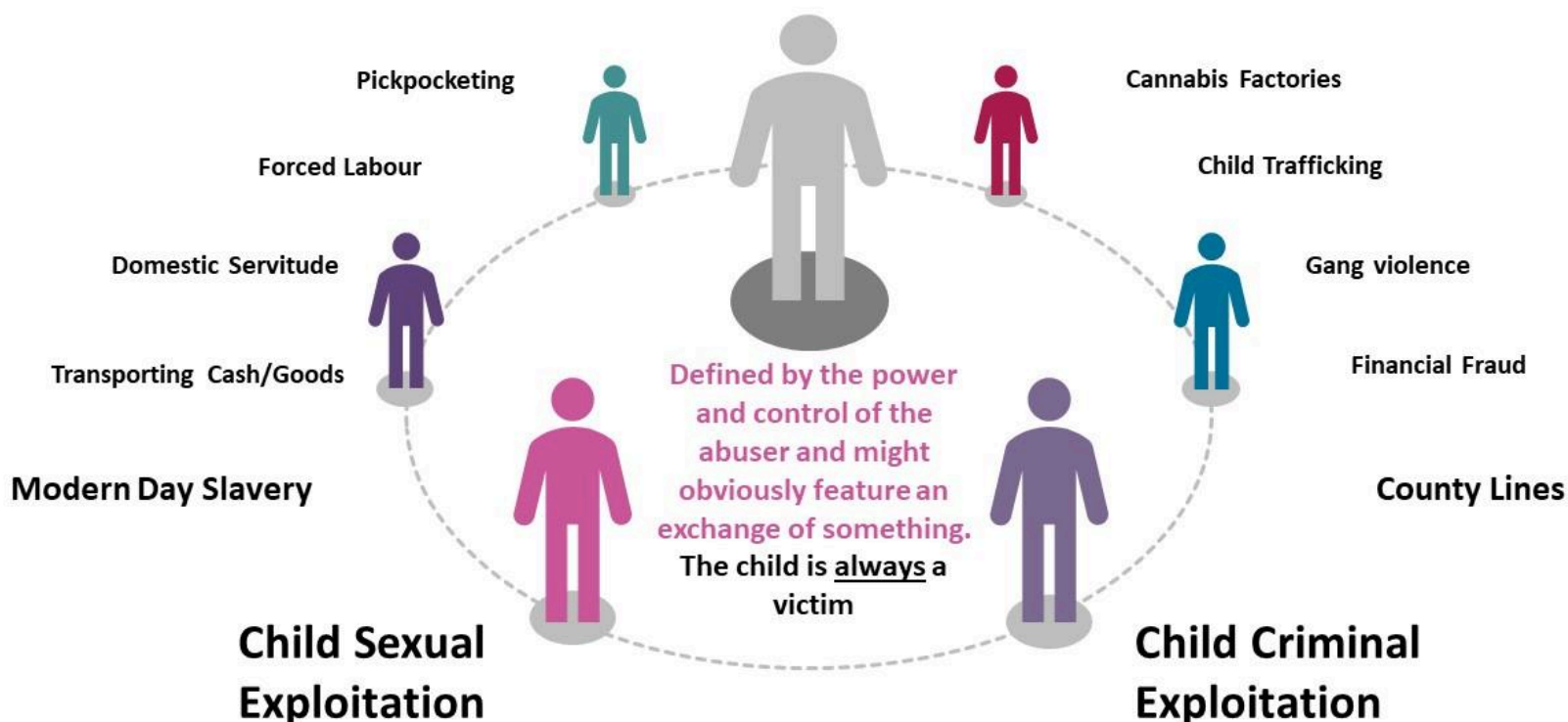


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protect our children from the dangers of county lines and ensure their safety and well-being. If you have any questions or need further information please do not hesitate to contact Deb Denny our Lead DSL at Holyhead School.

Breadth of Child Exploitation

BREADTH OF CHILD EXPLOITATION



If you have any concerns regarding child exploitation please contact a member of the DSL team at Holyhead school 0121 523 1960 or email either Mrs Denny ddenny@holyhead.crst.org.uk or Mr Beale dbeale@holyhead.crst.org.uk.

Alternatively, you can contact Birmingham Children's Trust on 0121 303 1888.



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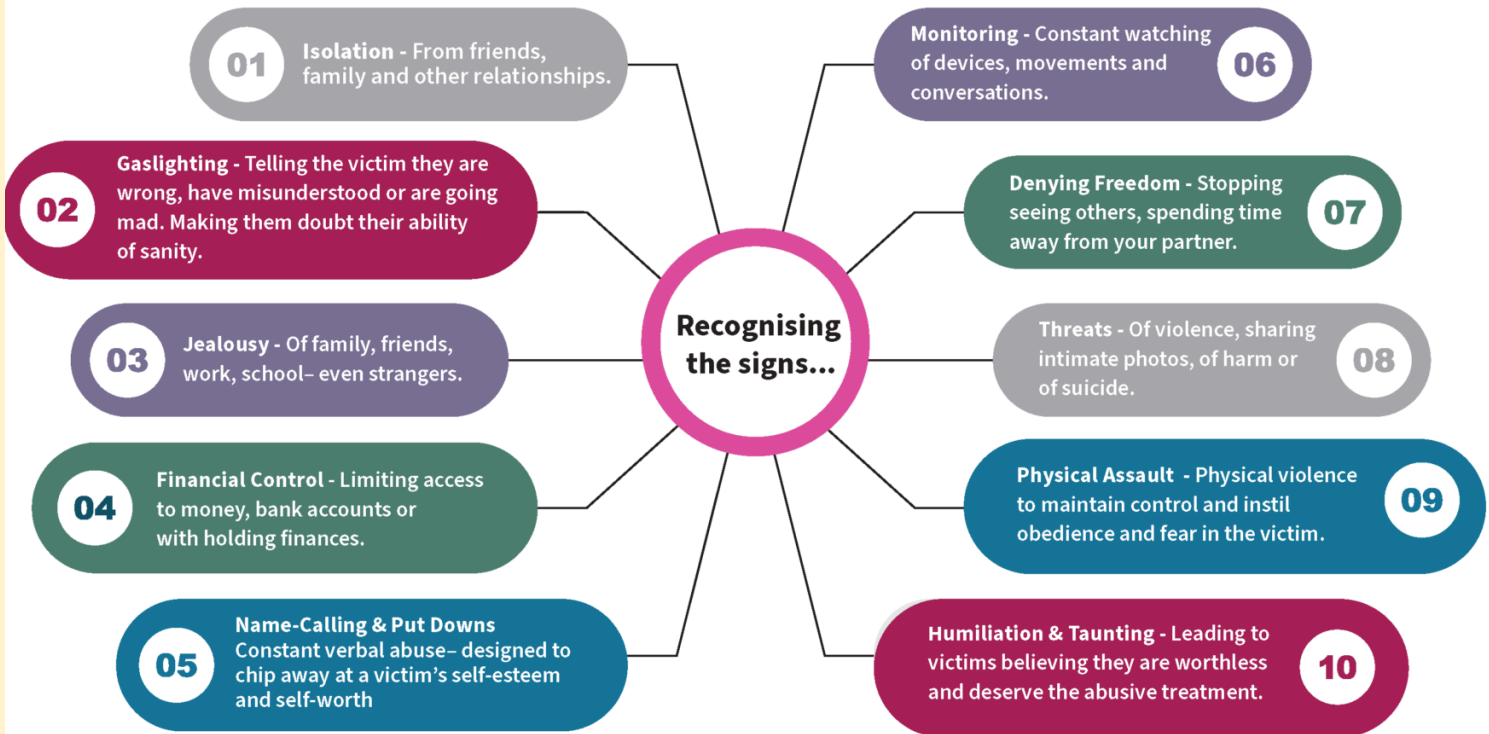
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What is coercive control and how to spot the signs

Coercive control is behaviour or pattern of behaviours that include acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a victim. This behaviour is perpetrated by an abuser in order to make their victim dependent on them, by isolating them from others and taking away their independence. Coercive behaviour can be used to exploit victims and will often go alongside other emotional, physical or sexual abuse.



What can we do...

Reactively...

- Support first- never chastise or victim blame
- Follow your school's safeguarding procedures and refer to Social Care.
- Speak to the police- coercive control is a criminal offence and should be reported as so.
- Create a safety plan- strategies and actions to support the situation. Use online resources to support with this.
- Identify safe spaces and people to talk to.
- Understand that the victim may go back, remain supportive.
- Ensure the 'perpetrator' is not a victim of abuse themselves.

Proactively...

- Detailed, relevant and well-planned lessons in all subject areas teaching about relationships
- It's never too early to discuss- teach children how to respect one another and what makes a strong and safe relationship.
- Teach children what to do when things become unsafe.
- Enable children understand and value their own self-worth.
- Signpost to charities and organisations who can help- share numbers or websites for ease of access.



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Supporting children experiencing bereavement

SUPPORTING CHILDREN EXPERIENCING BEREAVEMENT

We are wired to protect the children in our care and when we see them hurting, we want to do everything in our power to make them happy. A parent of children under 18 dies every 22 minutes in the UK; around 23,600 a year. This equates to around 111 children being bereaved of a parent every day (<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/death-bereavement-statistics>)

Losing a loved one is a traumatic experience and many children do not have the protective support factors to guide them through the process, that's where school and pastoral staff can step in.

There are many things you can do to help children to work through their emotions, understand what's happened, and cope with their loss.



TALKING

Talk about anything the child wants, they don't always have to talk about the person they have lost.

Encourage them to vocalise their feelings and share memories or happy times.



MEMORIES

A memory jar, box or book is a good way to collect and write down favourite and special memories of loved ones.

These can then be pulled out and read later and encourage thinking of better times.



JOURNALLING

Putting feelings into words can be helpful if children aren't sure what to say.

It can help a child process how they are feeling and understand how far they have come in their grief journey.



READING

There are many books and stories that can support children with their grief.

These may offer strategies, support and kindness when things are tough. These can also help younger children talk about grief.



PHOTO BOOKS

Collecting and collating photos of the life of the person has died, helps to keep their memory alive.

This can help children to talk about their experiences and reflect on their life with that loved one.



UNSENT LETTERS

There may be things a child wishes they could have said to the person who has died.

Writing a letter to that person can be a good way for a child to share the things they feel they need to.

If you know a child that is experiencing bereavement then the DSL team at Holyhead can support. Contact us on 0121 523 1960 or email either Mrs Denny ddenny@holyhead.crst.org.uk or Mr Beale dbeale@holyhead.crst.org.uk.



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