

HOLYHEAD SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

March 2025

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
- National child exploitation awareness day 18th March 2025
- Supporting children through bereavement
- Early Help support at Holyhead School
- Children absent from education and children missing education
- Why attendance matters
- Children with parents in prison

On the 18th March it is National Child Exploitation Awareness Day, the purpose of the day is to raise awareness of child exploitation and encourage people to speak out against abuse. With the aim of promoting zero tolerance for inappropriate relationships between adults and children. The campaign slogan is **"Say Something if You See Something"**.

National Child Exploitation Awareness Day 18th March 2025

On March 18, we want the world to unite against child exploitation.

The National Child Exploitation Awareness Day aims to highlight the issues surrounding Child Exploitation (CCE); encouraging everyone to **think, spot and speak out against abuse** and adopt a zero-tolerance to adults developing inappropriate relationships with children or children exploiting and abusing their peers.

Any child can be exploited. Help to improve the chances of young people being heard and to deter sexual predators and criminal activity through awareness of child exploitation – **Say Something if You See Something.**

What is child exploitation?

- Exploitation is about more than just Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), think about criminal exploitation, county lines, trafficking, and modern slavery
- Exploitation is abuse and children can't consent to their exploitation.
- Perpetrators groom individuals who are vulnerable. Grooming is where someone builds a relationship with a child (online or offline) to manipulate them.

What are the signs of exploitation?

The look closer campaign (#Lookcloser) seeks to raise awareness of the signs and how to report them.

STOPCE
AWARENESS DAY 18TH MARCH

EXPLOITATION SPOT THE SIGNS

MISSING DAY OR NIGHT
Missing from home or education. Not knowing where they are or who they are with.

NEW PLACES
Discovering they have been going to new places where they have no obvious connections.

ONLINE USE
Spending more time online. Secretive activity, refusal to come offline. Have they distanced themselves from family, friends and usual activities?

CHANGE IN APPEARANCE
Clothing, personal hygiene, talking differently, tired.

INJURIES
Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, marks. Reluctance to seek medical attention.

CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR
Have they become unusually secretive, fearful or withdrawn, aggressive, distanced themselves from family and friends, involved in anti-social behaviour.

COPING MECHANISMS
Alcohol/drug use/self-harm – what they may be doing or using in order to cope.

CHANGE IN FRIENDS
Sudden changes in who they are 'hanging out' with including meeting new people from social media.

POSSESSIONS
Unexplained items e.g. New clothing, money, phone, drugs.

HELP US STOP EXPLOITATION

SAY SOMETHING, IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS.

CONTACT:
Crimestoppers **OR** Police **OR**
0800 555 111 **OR** 101

WWW.STOP-CE.ORG

SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING

STOPCE

Other signs, depending on the type of exploitation could include:

- Being subject to threats, blackmail and violence (linked to their own safety or safety of friends and/or family)
- Being forced to commit crimes
- Not being able to leave a gang
- Risk of physical harm, emotional harm and/or sexual abuse
- Frequently going missing from home, school or care
- Significant decline in school results or performance
- Significant changes in appearance or mental health
- Travelling to places they have no obvious connections with
- Unwillingness to explain their whereabouts
- Receiving excessive calls or texts at all hours of the day

Signs of child exploitation

Ask yourself, is a young person:

- Travelling alone, particularly in school hours, late at night or frequently?
- Looking lost or in unfamiliar surroundings?
- Anxious, frightened, angry or displaying other behaviours that make you worried about them?
- In possession of more than one phone?
- Carrying lots of cash?
- Potentially under the influence of drugs or alcohol?
- Being instructed or controlled by another individual?
- Accompanied by individuals who are older than them?
- Seen begging in a public space?

What can you do?

- We need to disrupt perpetrators through any means possible, don't place the burden on victims to disclose to us
- Think, spot and speak out against abuse – think twice think abuse and say something if you see something
- Recognise and respond to all forms of exploitation
- Challenge the language of exploitation – humanise where language has sought to dehumanise the child/young person
- Look at the bigger picture and see beyond a child's behaviour. Don't see the child/Young Person as the problem, fixate on their behaviour or punish them – talk to them to understand their problems and see their needs
- Get to know children and families for who they are, not what's happening to them
- Listen, care and safeguard. Don't blame, don't judge
- Children and families need you to believe them
- Understand that victims are never to blame
- Take time to build relationships with children and families – it's crucial
- Involve children and young people in decision making, it's their life
- Create safe spaces



- A good relationship with a professional is the best resource a child (and family) can have
- Forming lasting relationships are the key to supporting exploited victims
- Build on families and communities' strengths

If a child reveals abuse

If a child talks to you about sexual exploitation it's important to:

- listen carefully to what they're saying
- let them know they've done the right thing by telling you
- tell them it's not their fault
- say you'll take them seriously
- don't confront the alleged abuser
- explain what you'll do next
- report what the child has told you as soon as possible.

If you have a concern regarding a child that you believe may be the victim of exploitation contact the DSL's at school 0121 523 1960, alternatively report your concern to the police on 101, if you think a child is in immediate danger contact 999. You can also contact the Modern Slavery Helpline for help, report a suspicion or seek advice. Call 0800 012 1700 or fill in their online form by clicking on [File a report](#)

Useful places to go for information for your child



Children Absent from Education & Children Missing Education

The number of children missing from education could be almost as high as 300,000, according to the Education Policy Institute. This is 2.5 times higher than previous estimates by the DfE. Some pupils are more likely than others to be missing, including girls, pupils aged 13 to 15, and pupils with social, emotional or mental health difficulties.

A **child absent from education** is a child who is persistently absent (absent repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods). A child absent from education is at risk of becoming a child missing education.

A **child missing education** is a child aged 5 to 16 not on a school roll and not being educated elsewhere.

Children absent from education and children missing education aren't just problems because of missing out on school – they can be vital warning signs of safeguarding issues. Being absent from education or missing education:

- **Are potential indicators of abuse or neglect**
- **Leaves children more vulnerable to other safeguarding issues (such as becoming a victim of harm, sexual or criminal exploitation, or radicalisation)**
- **Can indicate mental health problems**
- **Can indicate risk of substance abuse, travel to conflict zones, female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or forced marriage**

Early intervention can help identify underlying safeguarding risks and prevent children going missing in the future, so it's important to act early.

What can I as a parent do?

- Follow the school's attendance policy, call the attendance team and report your child's absence
- If your contact details change, ensure you inform the school with the up-to-date details
- If your child is refusing to attend school, report your concerns to your child's head of year or to our DSL team and we can support
- Encourage your child to attend school and the benefits of being with their friends and the impact education can have on their future life chances

At Holyhead School we have a team of dedicated professionals who are here to support parents with ensuring their children are attending school. If you need to speak to the attendance team please contact 0121 523 1960 alternatively you can email Mr Evans pevans@holyhead.crst.org.uk and Mrs Ulhaq aulhaq@holyhead.crst.org.uk

For more information on the topic visit

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/far-more-children-missing-from-school-than-dfe-estimates-says-epi/>

Why attendance matters

Students who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Good attendance also shows potential employers that a young person is reliable. Research suggests that students who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime.

School is the best environment for the vast majority of pupils to learn in. Being surrounded by teachers and friends in school helps keep children safe, and supports them to reach their potential.

Why is school attendance important?

Being in school is important to your child's academic achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. There is evidence to suggest that regular school attendance is a key mechanism to support children and young people's educational, economic and social outcomes. Schools can facilitate positive peer relationships, which contributes to better mental health and wellbeing.

Attendance at school is crucial to prepare young people for successful transition to adulthood, and to support their longer term economic and social participation in society. There is also [evidence](#) that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A level results.

Research by the education hub found that pupils who performed better both at the end of primary and secondary school missed fewer days than those who didn't perform as well.

What does it mean if a child is persistently or severely absent?

Children who are registered at a school but regularly fail to turn up are officially referred to as being 'persistently' or 'severely' absent.

The school day is split into two sessions – one session counts as a morning or afternoon spent in school. Pupils who have missed more than 10% of school sessions are considered persistently absent, while children who have missed more than 50% of school sessions are referred to as severely absent.

My child is anxious about going to school, should I send them in?

Children can sometimes feel a little bit worried about going to school. Mostly, this is a very normal emotion. It is important to recognise that going into school can help children to feel less worried than letting them stay at home.

If you need to speak to the attendance team please contact 0121 523 1960 alternatively you can email Mr Evans pevans@holyhead.crst.org.uk and Mrs Ulhaq aulhaq@holyhead.crst.org.uk

For further support please visit [Why is school attendance important and what support is available? – The Education Hub](#)

Supporting Children through Bereavement

It can be a difficult process navigating through the death of someone close to you. For adults this process, whilst painful, can be dealt with by using the coping mechanisms we all develop through our early years. That first experience with bereavement, is a necessary but extremely painful experience, which will produce resilient adults. However, it is a process that must be dealt with sensitively. For students, the first death will likely be a grandparent or other older relative, Individuals that usually have played an important role in the formative years of that child or young person. Since the processing of death is an intensely private thing for adults, it may not be obvious how to support someone experiencing it for the first time.



Place2Be has published a guide to handling this occurrence in children and young people. For more information, please follow the link below:

[Place2Be: Parenting Smart: Supporting your child when someone dies](#)

Children with parents in prison

Children Heard and Seen is a charity aimed at improving the issues caused by parental imprisonment. It aims to bridge an existing gap in the provision of support for children and young people in these circumstances. They currently offer one-on-one support from trained practitioners, assistance for parents and carers, peer support groups and more. If you are caring for a child with a parent in prison and would like to access support for yourself or your child, please get in touch at:



[Home - Children Heard and Seen](#)

Other support for children with a family member in prison

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/children-with-a-parent-in-prison>

<https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/>

<https://www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk/>

<https://spurgeons.org/how-we-help/affected-by-imprisonment/useful-links-prison-services/>

Early Help Support at Holyhead school

Here at Holyhead school we have a team of professionals who can support you and your child. Each year group has a Head of Year and a Vice Principal who oversee behaviour, rewards and safety. We also have a dedicated mental health team and a host of Early Help wave interventions that can support your child. For more information visit the link below:

[Holyhead School - Early help and Information Signposting](#)