

HOLYHEAD SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

September 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:

- Who to contact if you have a concern about one of our students
- Online safety
- Supporting your child returning to school following the summer break
- Why does school attendance matter?

Who to contact if you are concerned about a student at Holyhead school:

Mrs D Denny Lead DSL

ddenny@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Mr D Beale Senior DDSL

dbeale@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Mr F Khan Head of 6th form

fkhan@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Mrs K Robinson SENCO

krobinson@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Mrs S Parker Head of Year 7

sparker@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Mrs T Edwards Head of Year 8

tedwards@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Mrs N Malcolm Head of Year 9

nmalcolm@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Mr L Cain Head of Year lcain@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Miss M Jeffers Head of Year

mjeffers@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Telephone the school on 0121 523 1960 to speak to any of the safeguarding team.

Zepeto



Zepeto has an age rating of over 13.

Users create their own avatars and can design rooms. ZEPETO is a social networking app and therefore users can chat with others. Due to the communication option, there are the usual risks, such as your child seeing inappropriate content or online bullying. In-App purchases are also available on this platform.

Parental controls are not available, but a user can change some settings within privacy and content settings, for example to change who can direct message you.

Zepeto have published a Guardian's guide here:

[ZEPETO Guardian's Guide – ZEPETO](#)

Sprunki



Is your child playing Sprunki? If they are, there are several versions of this game, so it is important to check which version they are playing and to then check its suitability for your child. For example, one version states:

“WARNING: This game contains disturbing images and scenes of explicit violence and gore”

[Sprunki | Incredibox eSafety Commissioner](#)

Online Challenges

According to Ofcom's latest Children's Media Use and Attitudes report “funny videos or those showing pranks or challenges continue to be the most popular type of VSP (video-sharing platforms) content for children, watched by 68% of 3-17-year-olds who watch videos.”

[Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2025 - Ofcom](#)

If your child is watching this type of content, then you need to chat to them regularly, particularly about online challenges and the risks that they can pose. There are challenges online that are risky/dangerous. Sadly, there are reports that children have died as a consequence of attempting online challenges.

Children may not yet have developed the skills and ability to critically analyse that what they see online is not always safe for them to replicate. Make sure your child knows that they should talk to you (or another trusted adult) if they are thinking about trying something that they have seen online.

If your child has not heard about an online challenge, then do not draw attention to it as this may lead to them searching for it out of curiosity, so just talk about challenges in a general sense. Furthermore, reassure your child that challenges that suggest that terrible things will happen if they do not complete the tasks are not real. The following link will provide you with further information as well as content to help you talk to your child:

[How to prevent harm from online challenges | Internet Matters](#)

Supporting your child returning to school after the summer break

It's common for children to feel nervous about going back to school after the holidays or the summer. To help calm their nerves and make sure they're prepared for the school term you could try:

- **Readjusting bed times the week before they go back, to get into a healthy routine**
- **Making sure they aren't bringing their mobiles, tablets, or any devices to bed that might stop them sleeping**
- **Helping them get the correct clothing or uniform and equipment ready the week before**
- **Making sure they eat breakfast each morning**

If you think something's wrong



As children grow up and change schools, or move to new schools in new areas, it may take some time for them to feel happy and comfortable. If you notice that your child has started behaving differently and you're worried, it's important you're able to talk to your child's teacher about it.

They can help provide a full picture, and can help you support them with whatever they are struggling with.

Worried they're being bullied?

Being bullied is a serious problem, and never your child's fault. If you're worried your child is being bullied, encourage them to talk to you about it, or if they don't feel able to, to call [Childline](#).

We have advice about how to [spot the signs](#) a child is being bullied, and [what to do](#) if they are. Childline also has [advice](#) for young people being bullied and [message boards](#) where they can find support.

Worried about their mental health?

If you have noticed a change in your child's behaviour, they could be struggling with something at school, like [bullying](#) or [harmful relationships](#), but they could also be struggling with their mental health. We have [lots of advice](#) about how to know if something is wrong and what you can do to help support them.

If your child has a hard time opening up to you, encourage them to get support from [Childline's counsellors](#). They also have [information and advice](#) for young people on mental health and coping with stress.

Why school attendance matters, and what we're doing to improve it at Holyhead School

Every day at [school](#) counts. The evidence is clear - even a few days of missed school can have a significant impact on a child's education and future prospects.

Since the pandemic, we've seen school absence rates rise. Before COVID-19, the overall absence rate was 4.7%. This jumped to 7.6% in 2021/22 and by 2022/23 had only come down slightly to 7.4%. Census data for this academic year will shortly be published, but although daily data shows that progress is being made, there is still a long way to go.

Even more concerning is the rise in persistent [absence](#) – this means missing more than 10% of school days. The number of children who are persistently absent has nearly doubled since the pandemic. Severe absence – meaning missing more than half of school – has more than doubled from 0.8% to 2%

How attendance affects attainment

Recent research by the Department for Education shows just how closely [attendance](#) and attainment are linked.

At secondary school. Year 11 pupils with near-perfect attendance are almost twice as likely to achieve grade 5 in English and Maths GCSE, compared to similar pupils attending 90-95% of the time. In other words, missing just 10 extra days a year reduces the likelihood of achieving these grades by around 50%.

The long-term impact on earnings

Missing school doesn't just affect exam results and a child's time in education – it can impact future earnings too.

Persistently absent pupils in secondary school could earn £10,000 less at age 28 compared to pupils with near-perfect attendance.

For each additional day of absence between Years 7 to 11, the typical pupil could miss out on an average of £75,000 in future lifetime earnings.

How we are supporting our students attendance at Holyhead

- We have a dedicated attendance team working with each child to support them with their attendance to school
- We offer free breakfast to students from 8:15am to encourage students into school
- If you are having issues getting your child into school we can arrange a free minibus service to support you getting your child into school

If you have any concerns around attendance please contact our attendance manager Mrs Ulhaq or email

aulhag@holyhead.crst.org.uk