Holyhead
Teach What Matters

Central Region Schools Trust

HOLYHEAD SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

November 2026 Edition





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.

-Mrs D Denny Lead DSL. ddenny@holyhead.crst.org.uk

In this month's issue we look at:

- **Anti-Bullying Week 2026: Choose Respect**
- **Winter Welfare: Attendance and Community Safety in Handsworth**
- **Digital Boundaries**

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

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Miss H Ulhaq Attendance concerns
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Telephone the school on 0121 523 1960 to speak to any of the safeguarding team

Anti-Bullying Week: Choose Respect



Anti-Bullying Week 2026 takes place from Monday 9th November to Friday 13th November, kicking off with the traditional **Odd Socks Day** to celebrate individuality. This year's official national theme is **"Choose Respect."**

In an era where disagreements can quickly escalate both in the school corridor and online, this campaign focuses on a vital truth: **respect is a choice**. Having a difference of opinion or a disagreement with someone is a natural part of life, but it should never be used as an excuse to cross the line into bullying, harassment, or intimidation. -Mrs D Denny Lead DSL ddenny@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Key Fact / Statistic

Over **40% of UK youth** report experiencing some form of bullying at least once during their school career.

Roughly **1 in 5 secondary school students** face targeted online cyberbullying outside school hours. Roughly **1 in 5 secondary school students** face targeted online cyberbullying outside school hours.

Victims of prolonged bullying are **twice as likely** to suffer from severe mental health issues or miss school.

At Holyhead School, we operate a strict **zero-tolerance policy** toward any behavior that compromises student safety. If your child is experiencing bullying or witnesses it happening to someone else, they must use these exact reporting steps:

- **Tell a Trusted Adult Immediately:** Speak directly to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, or a member of the **Safeguarding Team** at the main office.
- **Use the Holyhead Helpline:** Report incidents safely and discreetly through the school's internal reporting system.
- **Keep the Evidence:** For cyberbullying, take screenshots of messages, comments, or profiles, and block the perpetrator immediately. Do not reply to the messages.

If a student or parent needs confidential advice or support outside school hours, these verified national platforms are available 24/7:

Organisation	Core Specialism & Support	How to Access
Childline	Free, completely confidential digital counseling and phone lines for youth.	Call **0800 1111** or visit Childline Online
National Bullying Helpline	Specialist advice for parents dealing with school-based bullying issues.	Call **0300 323 0169**
The Anti-Bullying Alliance	The official organizers behind Anti-Bullying Week, packed with parental toolkits.	Visit Anti-Bullying Alliance Portal
Kidscape	Provides practical safety workshops and resilience skills for families.	Visit Kidscape Official Site

Winter Welfare: Attendance and Community Safety in Handsworth

As the clocks go back and winter sets in, the shorter days bring specific safeguarding challenges for our student community in **Handsworth**. The combination of dark, foggy mornings, early twilight, and poor weather can impact both road safety and student vulnerability on the commute to and from **Holyhead School**.



Ensuring students arrive safely and on time remains our highest priority.

Mrs H Ulhaq Attendance lead hulaq@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Colder weather and seasonal illnesses often lead to a sharp drop in school attendance across the UK. However, missing school not only disrupts learning but can also mask wider safeguarding concerns.

Attendance Framework	Policy & Safeguarding Context	Required Action for Parents
The 95% Threshold	Dropping below **95% attendance** equates to missing two full weeks of school a year, severely impacting GCSE progression.	Plan morning routines ahead of time to accommodate slower winter public transport and traffic delays.
Punctuality Gates	Arriving late means students miss vital safety briefings and tutor check-ins. **School gates open at 8:30 AM.**	If your child is too ill to attend, notify the school office by **8:45 AM** via the absence line (**0121 523 1960**).
Persistent Absence	Attendance dropping below **90%** triggers formal local authority intervention and welfare monitoring.	Work with our early help and pastoral teams if seasonal anxiety or weather is creating a barrier to attendance.

Commuter Safety: Navigating Handsworth Safely



With darkness falling before the end of the school day, students face heightened environmental and contextual risks during their commute along busy routes like Soho Road, Handsworth Park, or local side streets.

Mr D Beale Senior DDSL - dbeale@holyhead.crst.org.uk

Road and Visibility Safety

- **Be Visible:** Encourage your child to wear reflective elements on their school bags or coats. Dark school uniforms make pedestrians incredibly difficult for drivers to see in heavy rain or twilight.
- **Distraction-Free Walking:** Remind students to **remove headphones** and

Contextual Safeguarding & Personal Awareness

- **The Power of Groups:** Students should always travel home in peer groups rather than walking alone through less-frequented paths or parks after dark.
- **Stranger Awareness & Exploitation:** Winter darkness unfortunately provides

put away mobile phones when crossing busy junctions, particularly near the Soho Road traffic corridors.

cover for opportunistic anti-social behavior or individuals targeting young people (such as "County Lines" recruitment or street robberies).

- **The Golden Rule:** Advise your child never to accept lifts, gifts, or money from unfamiliar adults, and to stick strictly to well-lit, busy main roads on their journey home.

Safe Havens & Reporting

- If a student ever feels unsafe or followed while walking in Handsworth, they should immediately head to a public, well-lit space—such as a shop, library, or back toward the school gates—and call a parent or the police (**999** in an emergency).

Digital Boundaries: Navigating TikTok and Snapchat Safely

As the winter evenings draw in and students spend more time indoors, screen time naturally spikes. While social media platforms like **TikTok** and **Snapchat** offer creative outlets and connectivity, they also present significant, fast-evolving safeguarding risks. For a teenager, a lack of digital boundaries can quickly impact their mental health, sleep, and physical safety.



At **Holyhead School**, we believe that setting proactive, firm digital boundaries at home is one of the most effective ways to protect young people from online harm.

Miss M Jeffers Head of Year 11 mjeffers@holyhead.crst.org.uk

To keep your child safe without completely cutting off their social life, use these built-in technical features and household rules:

- **Activate Snapchat's "Ghost Mode":** Ensure your child's Snap Map is permanently set to **Ghost Mode**. This allows them to see the map without broadcasting their precise physical location to others.
- **Link Accounts via Family Tools:**
  - Use **TikTok Family Pairing** to link your phone to your teen's account. This lets you remotely manage their daily screen time limits, restrict direct messages, and filter out inappropriate search content.
  - Set up **Snapchat Family Center**, which allows parents to see exactly *who* their child is messaging and viewing, without invading their privacy by reading the actual content of the text.

- **Establish a "Device-Free" Bedroom Policy:** The absolute simplest boundary is environmental. Collect all mobile phones, tablets, and gaming consoles by **9:00 PM** and charge them in a central family room overnight. Removing the temptation eliminates late-night cyberbullying, hidden grooming, and severe sleep deprivation

Platform	Core Safeguarding Risks	What Parents Need to Know
🎵 **TikTok**	**The "For You" Page (FYP) Algorithm:** TikTok's powerful algorithm is designed to keep users scrolling. It can rapidly feed vulnerable teens harmful, highly repetitive content related to extreme dieting, self-harm, or unrealistic body images. **Livestreams & Direct Messaging:** Unstranger contact remains a high risk through live video gift-giving and unmonitored DMs.	**Age Limit:** 13+ The algorithm creates an addictive feedback loop that can severely disrupt a child's sleep patterns, emotional regulation, and attention span.
Snapchat	**The Snap Map (Location Tracking):** This feature shares a user's precise, real-time geographical location on a map. In local areas like Handsworth, this allows anyone on their friends list to see exactly where they hang out, walk home, or live. **My AI & Disappearing Messages:** The automated "My AI" chatbot can give inappropriate advice, while disappearing messages encourage risk-taking behavior (sexting, bullying, or drug-vape sales) because youth assume the evidence vanishes.	**Age Limit:** 13+ The culture of "Snapstreaks" creates intense psychological pressure to stay online 24/7, leading to heightened anxiety and late-night device dependency.