



18 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Most years we would send you a message with details of support services available over the Christmas holiday period, this year - sadly - some may be needed more than ever.

We are all fully aware of how this season brings both joy and pressure for some, sadness and panic for others; as well as how it is possible to experience a full range of positive and negative emotions during this time. Add the current global pandemic on top of this, it's no wonder many are at breaking point or having to cope in circumstances previously never experienced.

It may all sound and feel rather bleak, but when this is the case, community is everything. The support of those around you is what helps us all survive. As a Blatch Community (family even), the thoughtful kindness which has been shown throughout this term, by families, students and staff, towards those within and beyond our school grounds has been a strong motivation for many. Please remember this is available to us all - sometimes the act of giving as much as receiving, thinking of others as much as of oneself, can give us a reason to feel positive.

We recognise that there are occasions in these dark days of winter when that motivation may be hard to find. Although the guidance and support from school may not be directly available over the next 2 weeks, please do use any of the services listed below should you need them. And, much as we suggested in the summer, perhaps save or pin these up somewhere - just in case you or someone you know may find them useful in the future.

All staff will be back on site from Tuesday 5th January, whether your child is in school or not. Year Offices can be contacted from this date via staff school email addresses or directly via the school switchboard. On our return, please let us know of any pastoral matters from the holidays that may affect your child and their well-being; positive and negative. The Head of Year and Assistant Head of Year will always be happy to support your child and signpost strategies to help them.

Meanwhile, can we wish you all a safe and restful break with the hope of rejuvenation and the chance to focus on what really matters and is important to you and your family.

Very warm regards,  
Ruth King  
Deputy Head Teacher

**Weblinks & pdfs (some of these services are aimed at teenagers, but many are universal or focusing on family support)**

[Schools-Wellbeing-Service-Christmas-Consultation-Line](#) offers support for if you are concerned about your **child's emotional health and well being** over the holidays.

[Online-Safety: See Something. Say Something](#) The number to call if you have any **safeguarding worries** about a young person.

If your child is feeling **anxious**, these links may prove useful. Each organisation has a website full of brilliant coping strategies for when you are feeling anxious, as well as offering free support, including online chats with counsellors

- [Kooth](#) - you can set up a free account
- [Childline 1-2-1 support](#)
- [Brighton & Hove Samaritans](#)
- [The Mix](#)

<https://www.pickyourbrighton.com/about-us> Local support for children who are 'stuck'

Anna Freud - National Centre for Children and Families: **Self-care ideas** for young people (and the whole family)

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>

[www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk) Forum for **self harm** where you can post or read about information and other people's experiences

[Shout 85258 - free, 24/7 mental health text support in the UK | Shout 85258](#) Crisis text service; if you feel unable to cope you can reach out to a texting service for immediate help, whatever your age

Much of the **advice** given out before handily summarised here, from keeping your child free from bullying or online abuse, to mental health etc. (This link was also sent in out the summer)

[advice-to-parents-and-carers-on-keeping-children-safe-from-abuse-and-harm](#)

<https://www.talktofrank.com> Honest factual information about **drugs**

[ru-ok? \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](#) useful clips from the local young people's **substance use** and **sexual health** service

[Mankind – for UK men affected by unwanted sexual experiences](#) - for UK **men affected by unwanted sexual experiences**

[1in6: Home](#) is a very comprehensive site with some very accessible and helpful strategies for dealing with trauma (of all origins) as well as powerful stories and signposting

Brighton and Hove Citizens Advice Centre, Tisbury Road Offices, Hove Town Hall BN3 3BQ

<http://www.brightonhovecab.org.uk/> 08082 787815 Advice available on **debt, housing, family & relationships, benefits** and more

[StepChange Debt Charity](#)

A full **debt help service** is available across the UK. Online support is also available via its [debt advice tool](#) where you can create a budget and get a personal action plan with practical next steps. Tel: 0800 138 1111

Opening Times: Mon - Fri 8am to 8pm, Sat 8am to 4pm, but with a reduced telephone service over the Christmas period. The phone lines will not be open between 25 and 28 December 2020.

Normal phone line services will resume on 5 January 2021. StepChange encourages anybody who is facing a difficult Christmas financially to get in touch as soon as they can.

A new national safeguarding website [www.actearly.uk](http://www.actearly.uk) has been launched to help the public share concerns about a friend or a loved one who might be vulnerable to **radicalisation**.

It can be hard to know what to do if someone close to you is expressing extreme views or hatred, which could cause harm to themselves and others.

Research shows that family and friends are well placed to help spot the signs that someone might be vulnerable to radicalisation.

## A few Top Tips to help get you through the Holiday Season

**#joinin** Sarah Millican's campaign, in its 10th year, to encourage people who may be (or feel) alone at Christmas to engage in chat & company. All on twitter <https://twitter.com/SarahMillican75>

**Offer help** to the elderly neighbours who live close by - all COVID compliant - but send them a note

shortly after we break up, with a phone number if you are ok with this and offer to help in some way.

Suggest presents don't have to be material goods, but could be **offers of kindness** instead.

As this year is not like any other, consider with your family what new **traditions** you could start up - or old ones to chuck out!

**Take time out if you need time out.**

Does everyone in your family know how to let you have this? Would it be worthwhile having a signal or sign that let's people know you need some space?

[Getting-ready-covid-christmas](#) Tips from the COVID ZOE reporting app on how to keep safe this year