

Welcome to this week's SMRT Safeguarding Update...

WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

Staying Safe this Festive Season

The holiday season is a time for celebration, relaxation and having a well-earned break from school. While this period will hopefully be calm, festive events can be busy and we must take precautions to safeguard our mental and physical health. Please see below for some tips for maintaining safety both online and offline:

1. Stay Connected

Sometimes, holidays can be busy or feel overwhelming, and staying connected ensures that others know you're safe and that you have someone to talk to if anything feels uncomfortable. Whether you stay in touch with family, friends or other trusted adults, it is important to make it known if you need some support during this festive season.

2. Know Your Boundaries Online

Scammers, catfish and strangers can sometimes take advantage of the season to try and get personal details. Always act with caution when sharing personal information online, even with friends. It's okay to say no if something doesn't feel right!

3. Be Mindful of Your Feelings

The holidays can bring up both positive and negative emotions. You should remember that it's okay to feel happy, excited, sad, or even worried – the holidays are not always perfect and that's normal.

4. Stay Safe in Crowded Places

When visiting crowded spaces such as fairs and markets, make sure you stay with trusted adults or friends and have a plan in case you get separated. This may be agreeing on a meeting spot or ensuring you have a way to contact each other. If you do not have access to a phone, you may wish to carry a card that includes the contact information of a trusted adult.

The National College has also put together a guide with [*10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators: Safety Over the Festive Season*](#), which can be found at the end of this document or as a separate attachment.

Family Hubs

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-family-hubs>

What Family Hubs are

Family Hubs offer information, advice and help to all families in Bristol. They run activities and support you and your family to access services and information both at our Family Hub centres and online.

This means you only need to go to one place for information, professionals will work together to give you advice and you only need to explain what you need help with once.

Who can use Family Hubs?

Everybody is welcome at a Family Hub. You can use Family Hubs if you live in Bristol and you're expecting a baby, a family with children aged from 0 to 19 or a family with a child or young person aged up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

BCC are excited to be sharing their offer of Parenting Programmes for parents and carers in Bristol!

If you feel you would benefit from joining one of BCC's Parenting Programmes. New groups are starting in January and February, and places are filling up!

BCC offer a range of parenting programmes that run across the city and online. See attached their '**Parenting Groups Information Booklet**' which highlights the courses they offer to parents/carers with children aged **0 – 8 years old**, including pre-birth courses. These groups are **free** and are suitable for any parent or carer. They help parents/carers to add ideas and skills to their parenting toolbox and develop more confidence in parenting.

Safeguarding Support Over the Christmas Holidays:

Please be aware that, over the Christmas holidays, the SMRT safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk email **will be monitored regularly** by our Safeguarding Team.

If there are any immediate safeguarding concerns or if you are concerned about the welfare of a child, please contact the social care team for your area, using the numbers below:

Bristol- First Response Team: **01179 036444**

BANES - Childrens' social work services: **01225 396111** or **01225 477929**

North Somerset – Safeguarding Children Partnership: **01275 888690**

South Gloucestershire - Access and Response Team: **01454 866000**

Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours after 5pm) number: **01454 615165**

CAMHS urgent response line, for students experiencing a mental health crisis: **0800 9539599**

If there is an immediate risk to a child, please contact the police using the 999 number or please use 101 if it does not require an emergency response.

Hoping that you and all SMRT students have an enjoyable and safe Christmas break.

Human Rights Day (Tuesday 10 December)

On 10 December it was Human Rights Day. In 1948, the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights marked a milestone in the history of human rights. For the first time, it laid out fundamental human rights for all, to be universally protected. Today, 68 years later, the Declaration remains as relevant as ever.

Human Rights were discussed in tutor times during the last week. During this time students and their tutor discussed what Human Rights Day is, how religious believers have put their faith into action to speak up for human rights, and how we can be courageous and advocate for the human rights of others.

Whilst all Human Rights are important, some are particularly relevant for child and young people and inform our school policies.

For our students, we remind them that:

- 5. Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.
- 11. Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it has been proved that they did it.
- 19. We all have the right to make up our own minds.
- 26. We all have the right to an education.
- 28. We have a right to peace and order.
- 29. We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.

We encourage our students to speak up when they believe their rights or the rights of others are at risk. If you see someone being harassed, bullied or ridiculed on the street, on public transportation, while shopping or at school, stand with them or report any incidents to someone that can provide support. In this school this will be members of the pastoral year team or safeguarding team. Outside the school this may be the police or other authority figure within the community.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>

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As always, if you have any immediate concerns about safeguarding issues, students, or the school site, please get in touch via:

safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk