

# Supporting Students with Isolation During Holidays



Holidays are a time of celebration for many, but for some students, they can be really difficult and actually full of loneliness or anxiety.

Parents may be unavailable, leaving children feeling isolated or it might be a time when parents become hyper-focused on what their child is doing (or isn't doing enough of!) and the negativity that is relentlessly directed towards them can be just as hard as feeling invisible.

But what can schools do?

## **Promote Connections Before the Break:**

Create opportunities for students to identify who is staying locally through the holiday period, so that they can make connections with peers who they might not normally connect with. Sometimes students, especially once they hit teenage years, feel too awkward to reach out to others, so is there anything that can be done in Home Rooms or Form Groups to make it a little less 'cringe'?

## **Provide a List of Resources:**

Are there local activities or events happening over the holiday break? Can you share opportunities that families may not be aware of? You could consider details of online communities or events that are going on but please ensure that students also understand how they stay safe in those online environments.

## **Create a “Helping Hand” or “My Network” Campaign:**

Encourage students to reach out to trusted adults if they feel lonely, vulnerable or if they or a friend is struggling with their mental health. For younger children you can ask them to use their 5 fingers/thumb to count off 5 trusted adults (or older teens) who they feel comfortable to speak to outside of school. For all students you can highlight ways they can stay connected through technology, such as video calls or interactive games with family and friends.

## **Offer Mental Health Resources:**

For any students who you feel might be more vulnerable, share local or international helpline links and online mental health support platforms that they can access during the break.