



Our Ref: LGA/KHU/XmasSupport

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

This year Huxlow Academy has been working hard with other schools and organisations across the area to support our students with their emotional wellbeing and mental health.

This time of year can be really tough on mental health. There is so much emphasis on all of the great things about Christmas that it is easy to lose track of when mental health is really starting to suffer.

We are sending this letter to raise awareness about what is available over the festive period, and year-round, to support them, you and indeed anyone who might find it useful.

If you or someone you know is feeling lost, desperate, or alone, encourage them to speak to a trusted friend or family member, sharing how you feel can be a big step in the right direction.

**If you are a parent or carer and worried about your child or someone you know:**

- Encourage them to understand that you are a person who can support them in the first instance if needed and also to seek other additional support if required.
- If you are concerned about the emotional and mental health of a child or adult contact a professional; your GP, phone NHS 111 or take them to an A&E department. In an emergency call 999. Also many online or phone resources now provide anonymous counselling and text services for young people to use directly. Please see the sources of support below.
- If they, or you, are worried about them harming themselves, ask them direct questions, such as “sometimes when people feel like you do, they think about suicide and harming themselves, is that what you are thinking about”?
- Empathic listening is key here – ask open and honest questions and show that you are listening by reflecting on what they say and clarifying what they mean. Do not jump in with solutions – allow them to express their problems first.
- Do not minimize their feelings by saying it is ‘just a phase,’ ‘you will grow out of it’ or ‘why is that even bothering you?’ Take time to imagine what it is like for that person, focus on their feelings and their experiences – not your own.
- Firstly, it is important that you try to stay calm and listen to the young person – hear them out. Avoid judgement, regardless of what is going on.

**Sources of support can be found at:**

- **Young Minds** [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
Free 24/7 mental health crisis support across the UK by text service  
**Text: YM to 85258**  
**Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544**  
[www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/)
- **The Mix** [www.themix.org.uk/](http://www.themix.org.uk/)  
For any issue affecting young people under 25.  
Crisis messenger text service 24/7 crisis support across the UK **Text THEMIX to 85258**  
**Tel: 0808 808 4994 -**
- **MIND:** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)  
Provides information on a range of mental health problems  
**Tel: 0300 123 3393**  
**Text: 86463**  
[info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)
- **Samaritans** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)  
Helps people of all ages in distress, through telephone or email support  
**Tel: 116 123**  
**Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)**
- **Childline** <https://www.childline.org.uk/>  
Offers online advice through an app or desktop site, with coping strategies, message boards, “ask Sam” feature, 24/7 online 1-2-1 Counsellor and Freephone helpline for young people up to the age of 19.  
**Tel: 08001111**
- **CALM** (Campaign against living miserably) [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)  
**Tel:0800 58 58 58**
- **SHOUT** [giveusashout.org](http://giveusashout.org)  
Text ‘SHOUT’ to 85258

Have a safe and supported festive season.

Yours faithfully



Mrs L Gauvrit

Senior Assistant Headteacher/ Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Mental Health Lead