

Christmas is fast approaching and although a very merry time of year, we know that for many young people and families, Christmas can feel stressful, overwhelming, or uncomfortable.

Here are some of our top tips:

- 🎄 You can find specific Christmas holiday symbols for Now/Next boards, visual timetables or social stories here: [Holiday Symbols](#). Adding these onto an advent calendar/family calendar can be a great way to prepare your child for special events this month.
- 🎄 Go with the flow and create your own Christmas. If things don't go to plan, try to let it go. If it's not going to work for your child, or your family, don't worry about it. And if things go wrong, take it as a learning opportunity for next time and move on. Christmas brings huge changes in routine and expectation. It is ok to adapt or even avoid certain festive rituals.
- 🎄 Christmas can be noisy, smelly, bright and cold. If you are already aware that your child has sensory processing difficulties, make an action plan to help them cope with all of the additional sensory input. Freemantles had shared some 'help cards' which can allow for our children to easily communicate when things are too much: Holiday Help Cards [Holiday Help Cards](#)



Staying safe and well over the Christmas period

Below are a few services who can offer support and advice during the festive period:

- 🌲 Surrey's Warm Welcome Venue scheme: There are a number of venues ([See Here](#)) across Surrey open for a free hot drink, support services, social interaction and in some settings, additional services such as free meals & activities.
- 🌲 For **food banks and financial support** phone Citizens Adviceline at 0800 144 8848
- 🌲 **The Mindworks 24/7 mental health** crisis line 0800 915 4644
- 🌲 Young people under the age of 19 can text "YM" to contact the **Shout Crisis Text Line**
- 🌲 **Samaritans'** helpline 116 123.
- 🌲 **Mind** helpline 0300 102 1234 (Closed 25th, 26th and 1st Jan)
- 🌲 **NAS family support** 24 answerphone service 0808 800 4106
- 🌲 **NAS helpline** 5pm-11pm 0300 222 5755

Our pastoral line will be CLOSED between 18th December and 5th January. For any urgent contact please email safeguarding@gosden-house.surrey.sch.uk .

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas from the Pastoral Team 😊



Support available this



If you need support now, here's what to do:

If you are in immediate danger: call [999](tel:999)

If you have an urgent need, call our crisis line on [0800 915 4644](tel:08009154644). It's open 24/7. You can also call NHS 111 and select the mental health option.

Self help tools & resources

A range of resources, strategies, and tools developed by professionals can be found on our [resources section](#). Resources on self care, anxiety, depression and much more are available, with links through to other useful websites.



Online support

If you need support with life's ups and downs outside of your regular support system, try Kooth which offers a free, safe, anonymous online support (kooth.com) or Chat Health which offers confidential text support with a qualified nurse (chathealth.nhs.uk).



Workshops and groups

We offer free workshops and groups for children, young people, and families - no request for support or diagnosis needed. More information on our [Early Support pages](#).



CYP Havens

[The Children Young People \(CYP\) Havens](#) are a welcoming space for 10 to 18 year olds to talk about worries and mental health in confidence. Provided by Surrey County Council.



Out of hours advice line

A free out-of-hours phone line provides advice to parents and carers who are struggling with behaviours or difficulties which could be related to neurodevelopmental need, such as autism or ADHD. It runs from 5pm until 11pm, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Please call 0300 222 5755



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

You are the expert of your child

You Are Not Alone - Every 1st Tuesday of the month - 7.00pm - 8.30pm

A free monthly online drop-in for parents & carers

The **You Are Not Alone** community is a friendly and safe space run by Erik & Sally Wagter where you can come and learn about autism & PDA, ask questions, connect with like-minded people or simply listen and learn from other people's conversations.



In this community we talk about all sorts of things such as:

- helping your child regulate their emotions & feelings
- understanding autism and PDA
- navigating school and EHCPs
- Supporting your child with friendships
- understanding and managing challenging behaviour
- managing sensory needs
- developing a positive relationship with your child (family dynamics)
- exploring EOTAS or home education
- looking after your wellbeing
- and so much more



Here's what parents have said:

*'My husband Jamie was saying that in the last few sessions, he has learned **so much more about autism and PDA** than he has over the last year'*

Jo (parent)

*'Thank you so much for the group this evening. I can't tell you how grateful I feel and I **really do feel less alone** and more validated. My hope is back'*

Louise (parent)

'Thank you so much for your support. I nearly chicken out in speaking but I'm glad I did. These sessions have been really helpful and I don't feel so alone'

Emma (parent)

If you would like to join the **next drop-in on Tuesday 6th January**, please send an email to sallywagter@gmail.com and we will send you the **Zoom** link.





Here is the December edition of our newsletter!!

We now have various dates for Parenting Puzzle, with a mixture of online workshops and face to face here at the family centre as well as other locations – please do share this far and wide.

We have also teamed up with Families Thriving Together who will be running Welcome to the World, an 8 week antenatal programme for parents expecting a baby.

Please do take a look through, and feel free to share this link with anyone who might benefit from any of the information.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas, see you in 2026.

[December 2025](#)

Welcome to Families First
Guildford's monthly
newsletter

[Go to this Sway](#)