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## **PUBLIC URGED TO KEEP EYES OPEN FOR CHILDREN AT RISK**

Everyone in Scotland is being encouraged to keep their Eyes Open for children at risk during the school holidays. As Scottish schools prepare to ring the end of term bell this week for the holidays, a national child protection organisation is urging everyone to be extra observant to help protect potentially vulnerable children while school's out for summer.

Child Protection Committees Scotland, a nation-wide grouping of child protection professionals hopes that members of the public will keep their eyes open and play a part to keep children safe from harm during the long break in the school routine.

CPCScotland Chair Alan Small says that the summer holidays don't present a fun-filled, relaxing time for everyone.

"Most children in Scotland look forward to having lots of fun and free time during the school holidays but for some families the summer break can bring extra stress and pressure. In some cases, children might not be looked after or supervised properly, and some might even experience serious neglect."

CPCScotland stresses that everyone in every community across the country is responsible for child welfare. By taking a more watchful, active Eyes Open approach, CPCScotland suggests that all members of the public can play a part to protect our children. As well as being vigilant, Alan Small stresses that it's also essential to take action if you're concerned about a child during the school holidays.

"We're simply asking people across the country to keep their eyes open for telltale signs that all is not well. Signs that a child might be at risk could include being alone and unsupervised, being out and about at all times of day or night or even going into "party" flats. A vulnerable child might be very dirty or persistently hungry, or have parents who are drunk in charge of them. If you're at all worried, it's important to take action."

If you have seen something and have concerns about a child or children CPCScotland are clear that it's much better to say something than do nothing. Alan Small says that your intervention could help a child at risk.

"You can ask the child if they're okay or even offer the family some support. Or, if the situation is serious and you're very worried contact your local council's social work department, or the police."

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