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FOR KIDS' SAKE... CHILD PROTECTION CAMPAIGN URGES EVERYONE TO BE ALERT FOR SIGNS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

A new school holiday campaign being launched this week urges everyone in Scotland to enjoy plenty of summertime fun time with extended family and friends after months of pandemic restrictions, but to be alert for signs that the lockdown experience was anything but fun for some children.

As Scottish schools prepare to ring the end of term bell this week for the holidays, Child Protection Committees Scotland's new ***For Kids' Sake...*** campaign encourages everyone to look out for clues that a child may have experienced harm, neglect or abuse during the pandemic.

CPCScotland Chair Alan Small says that while everyone is excited about having holiday fun over the summer holidays, some children will have had a very difficult time in recent months.

"Most children and young people in Scotland are really looking forward to having sleepovers, day trips, staycations and time with grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and family friends in the school break. Sadly, some of those children will have been through a rough time during the pandemic. It's only now that we are beginning to spend significant time with children we've seen very little of during lockdown months, and it's only now that we might notice or sense that something is wrong."

In the ***For Kids' Sake...*** campaign, CPCScotland stresses that everyone can play a part to keep children safe. Paying attention and noticing signs that a child has been abused or neglected is critical, as is taking action to get some support for that child or children.

Alan Small stresses that it's essential to do something if you're concerned about a child's wellbeing over the school holidays.

"We're simply asking people across the country to be alert for clues that harm has happened. Children can take a long time to say anything if they've experienced abuse or neglect, but you can listen carefully, look out for signs or pay attention to signals that there's a problem. If your gut tells you something is wrong, it's important not to ignore it. By raising your concerns you might help something worse from happening to a child you know."

So for kids' sake, if you see or hear something which isn't right, or you notice a big change in behaviour from a child, CPCScotland say that it's always better to say something than do nothing. Alan Small stresses that it's so important to raise your concerns.

"You shouldn't ignore signs that something is wrong. Get help and support by contacting your local council's social work department. Or, if you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police right away."

ENDS