

What to look out for in your pupils

A guide for school staff

For some of the children in your school, Christmas may be associated with difficult times and emotions. We will see this distress in their **behaviour**.

Consider the factors below. Which of your students are affected by these? We often feel unable to change these issues in a child's life, but acknowledging why children may be feeling and behaving this way, and finding ways to show we care is a start for those children who are struggling.

Factors

Bereavement: No matter how long ago a death occurred, Christmas may be a very difficult time of mixed emotions for children.

Young carers: children may feel that they don't have the chance to switch off and be carefree.

Poverty: this may lead to shame or envy in a child who doesn't have access to popular toys and accessories. It may also mean that opportunities over the break are limited.

And there are many more situations that make children more vulnerable and at a disadvantage.

Family issues: this may include divorce, hostile or abusive relationships, physical or mental health issues, all of which may create an unsettled, chaotic or unpredictable environment at home.

Parents/carers who have to work over the Christmas period: This means that some children may not have a break or feel that this period is special at all.

Feelings

