

Virtual Speak Out, Stay Safe assembly to take place with Ant and Dec

NSPCC Scotland used to bring a school assembly to almost all primary schools in the country.

In 2019/20 the charity visited 833 schools and spoke with over 145,000 children. Now, they will deliver the assembly online instead, with the help of TV stars, Ant and Dec.

When lockdown was imposed, the number of referrals to the NSPCC helpline rose by a half. So it is even more important that children who have anything happening in their life which is making them anxious, and any concerned adults, know how to contact the helpline.

NSPCC experts say that the risk of abuse and neglect increased during the lockdown and even now the average number of calls to the helpline have increased by a third over the number last year.

The charity will deliver the assembly online instead with supporting teaching materials and engaging activities. The assembly and resources are also available in British Sign Language (BSL).

Hosts Ant & Dec, who've been NSPCC supporters for many years had this to say:

Ant said: "We're thrilled to be involved with the online version of the NSPCC's *Speak Out. Stay Safe* assembly and we've had great fun filming with Buddy, the NSPCC mascot.

"We know that the lockdown will have been a difficult time for some children and others may be struggling with being back at school.

Dec added: "This is why the NSPCC's *Speak Out. Stay Safe* assembly is so important as it reminds children that no matter what may be worrying them, there is always someone who can help.

"It is a real privilege to be supporting the NSPCC with this online assembly and we want all children to remember that difficult times never have to be dealt with alone."

In all *Speak Out. Stay Safe* assemblies children are taught to speak out if they are worried, either to a trusted adult or Childline.

The assemblies help to reinforce key lessons about abuse and neglect that are compulsory for all primary schools.

Alan Stewart, NSPCC Scotland schools service manager, said: "Because of measures put in place to control the spread of Covid-19, children have had months of staying at home; away from school and cut off from their usual support networks.

"At the NSPCC, we know for some children home isn't always a safe place and that many will have faced increased risk of harm.

"As the pandemic continues we all need to be there to support children, and equipping them with the knowledge and understanding they need to speak out is one vital way we can help ensure their safety.

"I encourage all primary schools to sign up, so that we can work alongside teachers to help as many children as possible to recognise and report any worries they have."

To sign-up visit nspcc.org.uk/speakout

Adults concerned about a child can contact the NSPCC helpline seven days a week on 0808 800 5000, or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Children can call Childline on 0800 11 11 from 7.30am to midnight from Monday to Friday or 9am to midnight on weekends. Or they can get in touch via www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC helpline

Phone: 0808 800 5000

Visit nspcc.org.uk

Childline

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