Summer Holiday Survival Tips

From the Connect Project

The summer holidays can be a lot of fun, but they can also feel long, chaotic and overwhelming. Here are a few things to consider to help the holidays go smoothly.

Find out everyone's hopes and expectations for the holidays

We all have different ideas about what makes a holiday fun and relaxing. But is everyone expecting the same thing—and are those expectations realistic? Are the children expecting lots of expensive trips and days out? Is your teenager hoping for late nights and sleepovers with friends? Some people love to lounge around on the beach, while others find that boring and would rather take part in sporty activities.

If these expectations cannot be met, then this can quickly lead to frustration, disappointment, and disagreements, when they are not met. It can be really helpful to start these conversations early, asking each family member what is important to them during the holidays, getting everyone involved in the planning process and helping children understand what is financial realistic.

Use a Calendar and Plan ahead

It can be overwhelming to think about how we are going to care for and entertain our children for 6 whole weeks. Using a calendar and planning this can be really helpful.

Some children find it helpful to have a copy of this or to have the calander up on the wall.

Special events

It can help to add special events (social events, family days out trips away) to your planner first and then you will see what time you have available for other activities. This can include:

Down time and one to one time

Going from one activity to the next and socialising with lots of people can be overwhelming for children, which can increase the likelihood of them having meltdowns. So, schedule in time for the children to relax and have one to one time with a parent can be really grounding.

Self-care

Parenting is hard and it can feel even harder over the summer holiday as may parents do not get the breaks they normally would when the children are at school. Parents can easily be burn out, so it is important that they also schedule in time for their own self-care so they can be at their best and keep their stamina going. This could be an evening out without the children, time to relax and have a bath, or playing in a sports club.

Holiday clubs

These can be really important in enabling parents to work, undertake their self-care and can be really fun for children. There are many different types of holiday clubs available, so it is worth doing a internet search and exploring what would suit your child; sports clubs, creative, outdoor, special interest. Book early as possible and compare the costs, these can vary. HAF clubs can be booked via (hpps://eequ.org/brightonhovehaf)

Support

Work out who may be able to provide support both practically and emotionally over the holiday. This could be help with childcare, transport, help in the home or just being on the end of the phone when things get stressful.

Low cost activities

Some people believe that it is good for children to get bored from time to time, as it encourages them try new things and be creative. However, it can be helpful to have a few ideas for when face with their cries of boredom! On page 9 there is a list of 50 low-cost activities that children can do. You could show the list too your children and see what they might enjoy.

Keep to routines when possible

During the summer holidays, it's easy for families to drift away from their usual routines, and this can make life appear unpredictable and this can make it harder for children to cope with big feelings. They may become overwhelmed, become "fizzy" and dysregulated, or even move into the "red zone" where they can start lashing out or running away.

Keeping some consistent routines can be really helpful. These will differ between families, but perhaps; still eating together, reading before bed, or following the same steps when getting dressed in the morning. While a slightly later night now and again is perfectly fine, when children don't get enough sleep, they can really struggle. Bedtimes in the holidays don't need to be as early as during school term, but choosing a regular time that works for your family helps children feel secure, stay regulated, and get the rest they need.

Prepare children in advance

It can also be helpful to talk to children in advance about what they can expect, such as the activities they will be doing and the people they may or may not see. This is because unexpected changes or surprises can feel overwhelming for some children.

As well as explaining what will happen, it can help to name how a child might feel. This can reduce the shock when those feelings arise and supports them to manage them. You can also plan any potential difficult moments and provide reassurance

For example, you might want to try something like...

"We're going to the park tomorrow, which is exciting! There might be lots of people there, and sometimes that can feel a bit overwhelming. If it does feel too much, that's okay, we can take a break together and find somewhere quieter."

"Your friend is coming over to play later which will be fun! But I remember last time you felt worried about Harry breaking your toys. Let's choose together which toys you're happy to share, and which ones you'd like to put somewhere safe."

"I'm glad you're excited about going to dance club tomorrow. When we get there, you might start to feel a bit nervous. That's completely normal when trying something new. You will be taking a pack lunch; there will be toilets there and you friends will also be going. I know you will be safe and you can speak to an adult if you feel upset. I'll come and collect you at 4pm."

Emergency self-care!

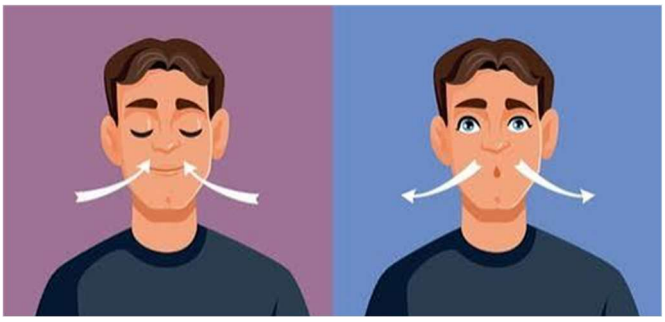
Parenting during the holidays can be especially challenging. We're often juggling additional childcare, work pressures, social events, and very little time to rest or recharge. It's no surprise that many parents start to feel frustrated, overwhelmed, angry, or even hopeless.
When we're in this state, it becomes much harder to be patient, calm, and the kind of parent we want to be. We might find ourselves shouting more, withdrawing or ignoring our children, or getting into frequent arguments. These reactions are understandable, but they don't reflect the parents we want to be and can leave us feeling guilty afterwards. The good news is that it doesn't have to be this way.

When we notice the early signs of overwhelm, we can use "emergency self-care." This means doing something simple and immediate to calm our body and mind, so we can think more clearly and respond to our children in a helpful way.

Emergency self-care could be.....

Taking a breath

Breath in for 4 seconds
Hold for 7 seconds
Breath out for 8 seconds



Mindfulness

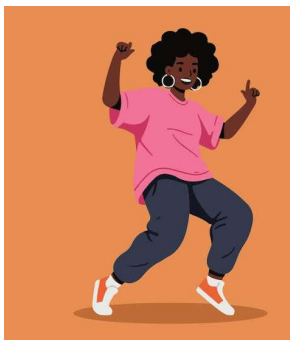
Count 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 thing you can smell (or want to smell) and 1 thing you can taste (or want to taste).

Splashing your face with cold water

This can quickly calm your nervous system

Exercising

Doing some start jumps or running on the spot or up the stairs releases feel good chemicals in our brains and reduces the levels of stress in our bodies.



Dance like no one is watching

Sing your favourite song

Take some space

Provided the children are safe, it is ok to step outside or go into another room for a few moments to calm and compose ourselves!

Modelling grounding techniques also helps our children learn ways they can manage their big feeling.

Budgeting

The school holiday can put additional financial pressure on families, due to less opportunities for parents to work, increased childcare costs, loss of school dinners and paying for activities. However, we are lucky in Brighton and Hove that we have the Beaches and the Downs which can be utilised for low-cost activities, so the holidays do not need to break the bank! On page 9 there is a list of ideas. Nonetheless, planning out family finances over the holidays can be really helpful. Budgeting apps can be helpful for this or a there is a Weekly School Holiday Budgeting sheet on page 7.

During the school holiday parents need to provide children with additional meals and snacks. Planning meals in advance and just buy the required food, can keep food budgets down. To help there is a Weekly Food Planner sheet on page 8.

Financial help

Childcare costs

Brighton and Hove Council provide free HAF activities in the holiday (Holiday and Food Activities) for children who are legible for free school meals.

Parents who are on Universal Credit can claim back some childcare costs **www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-childcare-costs#how-childcare-costs-payments-work-on-universal-credit**

Working parents can check if they are eligible for Tax-Free childcare and some holiday clubs accept Childcare vouchers.

Food costs

Brighton and Hove website provide information on food banks, community food hubs, Food advice in an emergency and low-cost shopping options.

Brighton and Hove Buses

Up to four under 19-year-olds can travel free with a fare paying adult (excluding night services). Under 19s travelling on their own will pay just 50p for a single off-peak journey.

The daily £6 city SAVER ticket is available for anyone buying them on the Brighton & Hove Buses mobile app, online keycard or at travel shops.

Free swimming

All children (under 18), living in Brighton and Hove can swim free at

- King Alfred Leisure centre
- Prince Regent Swimming complex
- St Luke Community Swimming Pool
- Saltdean Lido (May to August)

To sign up –take proof that you live in Brighton and Hove to one of the swimming pools above and completed the form there. Forms are also available online

www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/prince-regent-swimming-complex/latest-news/free-swimming/

Financial difficulties

If you are struggling financially there is a range of advice and help on the Brighton and Hove Council website

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/benefits-and-financial-advice/help-and-support

This includes

- Benefit claims
- Discretionary payments
- Emergency help with food, energy bills and other essentials
- Cost of living
- Welfare Rights

Other useful organisations

Amaze

A charity for parents and carers of children with additional needs and neurodiversity. They offer a range of support groups. In person through WhatsApp.

amazesussex.org.uk/parent-groups-and-befriending/brighton-hove/

ParentLine (Sussex community NHS)

A secure text messaging service operating Monday to Friday (9:30am–4:30pm) where parents of children aged 0–5 can text a health professional for advice and local signposting

Mental Health support

- **Text - SUSSEX or SHOUT 85258 -** 24 hour text service for emotional and Crisis support
- **Staying Well Space - 0800 023 6475 or Email: Stayingwell.brighton@southdown.org -** an out-of-hours mental health crisis support service for people aged 18+ available in Brighton
- **C.A.L.M Helpline - 0800 585858 -** National Helpline aimed at men in crisis open 7 days a week, 5pm to midnight
- **MHRRS** (Mental health rapid response service) **–** 0300 3040078 – 24 hour service
- **The Samaritans - 116 123 -** 24 Hour Confidential emotional support for anyone in a crisis
- **NHS 111 –** Call 111 if you urgently need help or advice but it is not a life-threatening situation. There are leaflets in different languages available on the NHS 111 website

Weekly School holiday Budgeting sheet

Available money for the week	Amount £
Wages	
Benefits	
Child Maintenance	
Other income	
•	
•	
•	
Total available money	

Household outgoings	
Rent/mortgage	
Electricity (this may be high in the holidays as children are home more)	
Gas (this may be high in the holidays as children are home more)	
Water (this may be high in the holidays as children are home more)	
Council tax	
Internet	
Phone	
TV License	
Clothes	
Other expenses	
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Food	
Normal weekly food costs	
Cost of additional lunches	
Cost of additional snacks	

Total outgoings	
Money left over for holiday expenses (Available money – Total outgoings)	

Additional holiday costs	
Holiday clubs	
Childcare	
Days out	
Treats	
Transport	

Week Food Planner

Week beginning……

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Shopping list

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50 Low Cost summer activity ideas for children

In the garden

1. Looking for insects – building a bug's hotel
2. Splashing in a paddling pool
3. Gardening
4. Back yard treasure hunt
5. Footprint artwork (paining feet and walking on big pieces of paper)
6. Making a wind chime
7. Chalk drawings on the floor
8. Make a mud kitchen
9. Make a bird feeder
10. Build an obstacle course

Raining days in the house

11. Art and crafts
12. Make healthy snacks
13. Bake something sweet
14. Decorate cakes or biscuits
15. Make homemade lollies.
16. Make slime
17. Make homemade music instruments and make a band
18. Do a You tube exercise class together or learn a dance routine
19. Watch a film together
20. Make a den/forte
21. Mini Make over – hair and make up
22. Play board game or cards together
23. Make a time capsule
24. Make up a show for relatives
25. Play the floor is lava

Beach

26. Collect stones to paint.
27. Splashing and playing in the sea (with supervision)
28. Searching for shells
29. Rock pooling (Saltdean beach at low tide)

Parks – visit a different one each week! – see page 12

30. Picnic
31. Ball games
32. Playgrounds – see park list
33. Riding bikes/scooters
34. Nature walks
35. Feed the ducks – Queens Park
36. Public Paddling pools
    a. Saunders Park
    b. Hove Lagoon
    c. Fountains at the Level
    d. Peter Pan splash pad
37. Preston Manor and walled Garden & Pet Cemetery

Woods

a. Coney Wood – Mill Road
b. Hollingbury Wood
c. Withdean Wood and Nature reserve
d. Colden Wood

38. Look for animals and wildlife
39. Collect material for art projects
40. Build a den
41. Make a fairy house
42. Make potpourri
43. Take it in turns to be a leader

Swimming – see page 6

44. Children can swim free with a Freedom card
    a. Saltdean lido (May to August)
    b. Prince regent swimming complex
    c. King Alfred Leisure Centre
    d. St Luke's Community Swimming pool

Places to visit

45. Mile Oak farm – free and has a café

46. Visit a Free Admission museum/gallery **– Please check websites for opening times and cost for specific tours.**

a. Booth Museum of Natural History - 194 Dyke Road, Hove, BN1 5AA
Birds, bones, butterflies, hand on activities
www.brightonmuseums.org.uk/booth-museum-of-natural-history/

b. Brighton and Hove Museum of Creativity – 19 New Church Road, Hove, BN3 4AB
New and old toys, hove history, fine art and contemporary crafts.
www.brightonmuseums.org.uk/hove-museum-of-creativity/

c. Brighton Fishing Museum – 201 Kings Road Arches, Brighton, BN1 1NB
History of Brighton Fishing Community
www.fishingquarter.co.uk

d. Phoenix Art Space – 10 – 14 Waterloo Place, Brighton BN2 9NB
A range of different art exhibitions
www. phoenixartspace.org/whats-on/

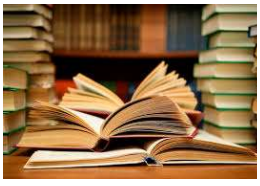
47. Follow Brighton Art trail
Approximately 1 hour walk around Brighton to see local art in the City
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-arts/arts-and-culture/public-art-trail-1-brighton-town-centre

48. Devils Dyke
To fly a kite and go for walks

49. Undercliff walk
Walk between the Marina and Saltdean costal path at the base of the white cliffs.

50. Libraries

- Coldean - *Library Court, 24 Beatty Avenue, Brighton, BN1 9ED*
- Hangleton - *West Way, Hove, BN3 8LD*
- *Hollingdean Community Centre, Thompson Road, Hollingdean, Brighton, BN1 7BH*
- Hove - *Hove Library, 182 to 186 Church Road, Hove, BN3 2EG*
- Jubilee - *Jubilee Street, Brighton, BN1 1GE*
- St Lukes - *St Luke's Church, Queens Park Road, Brighton, BN2 9ZB*
- Moulsecoomb - *The Highway, Moulsecoomb, BN2 4PA*
- Patcham - *Patcham Library, Ladies' Mile Road, Brighton, BN1 8TA*
- Portslade - *Old Shoreham Road, Portslade, BN41 1XR*
- Rottingdean - *The Grange, Rottingdean, BN2 7HA*
- *Saltdean – Saltdean Lido, Saltdean, BN2 8SP*



Brighton and Hove Parks

Blakers Park (Near Five ways)

30 Cleveland Road, Brighton, BN1 6FG

- Children play area, tennis courts, toilets and café
- Brighton and Hove Buses, 26 and 46, and The Big Lemon 52 service, all serve Ditchling Road at the Fiveways junction, a few minutes away from Blakers Park.

Carden park

Chelwood Close, Stanmer Heights, Brighton, BN1 8FN

- Children play area and The Old Boat Community centre, which has a café, community pantry and toilets
- Brighton and Hove Buses 5B and 26 and The Big Lemon 52 bus

Dyke Road Park (opposite Booth Museum)

Dyke Road park, Brighton, BN3 6EH

- Children's play area, tennis courts, café and wheelchair access toilets
- The 14, 14C, 27 and 77 buses go past the park during the day.

East Brighton Park and Sheepcote valley (near Brighton Marina)

Wilson Avenue, Brighton, BN2 5PB

- Wide pen spaces and nature reserve, children play area, tennis courts and dog free area. Toilet and café
- The 7, 21, 47 and 52 buses run near the park during the day.

East Hill park

Manor Road, Brighton

- Children play area, wild gym area, toilet and café
- The 1 and 1A buses run near the park every few minutes during the day.

Hoillingbury Woods and Park

Ditchling Road, Brighton, BN1 7AB

- Woodlands to explore, children play area, tennis courts, bowling green and toilets.
- Buses - 26, 46, 56 and 79 buses run past the park during the day.

Hove lagoon

Kingsway, Hove, BN3 4LX

- Paddling pool, children play area, water sports, café and toilet
- Buses – 1 and 6

Hove Park

Goldstone Crescent, Hove, BN3 6BG

- Children's play area, tennis and basket ball courts, café, toilets
- Buses – 5, 5A and 5B have regular and frequent services to the Sackville Road/Old Shoreham Road/Nevill Road junction, approximately 200m form Hove Park.

Preston Park

Brighton, BN1 6HN

- Children's play area, velodrome (good for cycling) tennis and basketball courts), toilets and 2 cafés
- Buses 5 and 5a

Queens park

Queens Park, Brighton, BN2 0QU

- Children’s play area, ducks to feed, quiet and wild gardens.
- Buses - 23, 81, 81A, 81B and 81C services run closest to Queen's park

St Ann's Well Gardens (Near Hove Seafront)

Hove, BN3 1PL

- Children’s play area, tennis courts, café and toilets, fish pond and sensory garden
- The number 7 and 81B buses go near the park every few minutes during the day.

Stanmer Park

Lewes Road, Brighton, BN1 9SE

- Woodland walks and wide-open spaces, tea rooms and café
- Buses – 78 and 25

Saunders park

Lewes Road, Brighton, BN2 4AE

- Children play area, Paddling pool, wildlife pond, Café, toilets
- Many buses stop right outside the park on Lewes Road. There are many bus routes which connect the park to areas such as, Moulescoomb, Bevendean, Coldean, 24, 25, 28, 29, 29A,

Stoneham Park

Stoneham Road, Hove, BN3 5FS

- 2 children play areas, one with a sandpit
- The closest bus stop is Portland Road, which has many services throughout the day including the 2, 46 and 49 bus routes.

The Level (near St Peters church and London Road)

Brighton, BN1 4ZN

- Children's play area, water fountains to run around and skate park.
- Brighton & Hove Buses' frequent service 25 goes to east (Lewes Road) side, while many routes serve the Open Market stops in Ditchling Road or Oxford Street to the park's west. These include the number 21, 22, 24, 26, 37, 37B, 38, 46, 48, 49, 50 and 81 routes.

Withdean Park

36 Peacock Lane, Brighton, BN1 8NA

- Woodland walks and open spaces
- The 5 and 5A buses run past the bottom of the park and the 5B runs to the top of the park during the day.