

Welcome to this week's SMRT Safeguarding Update...

WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

This edition includes information related to the upcoming Anti-Bullying Week and the theme 'Choose Respect'. Information is also included regarding the link between, and the school's response to, online and traditional forms of bullying.

Anti-Bullying week next week (Mon 11.11 – Fri 15.11)

Anti-Bullying Week 2024 takes place from Monday 11th – Friday 15th November with the theme 'Choose Respect'. This theme urges adults and children alike to come together to have discussions about what it means to disagree respectfully, how to avoid resorting to bullying, and how we can all choose to lead by example.

'Respect' can mean different things to different people. When we talk about respect, we talk about showing that you value someone, including valuing their feelings, views, and opinions, even if they differ from yours. We also talk about accepting and understanding others, giving them the same consideration you would expect for yourself. Please see the end of this document for a resource on [10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators: Encourage Children to Choose Respect](#). The resource is also included as a separate attachment.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance have offered 8 'choose respect' top tips specifically for young people:

1. **Active listening:** Make a genuine effort to listen to the other person's perspective without interrupting. This shows respect and allows for a better understanding of their point of view.
2. **Use "I" statements:** Frame your thoughts and feelings using "I" statements (e.g., "I feel..." or "I think...") to avoid sounding accusatory and to take responsibility for your own emotions.
3. **Stay calm and take breaks:** Taking deep breaths or a short break if you feel overwhelmed can help you stay collected. If the conversation becomes too intense or emotional, suggest taking a short break to cool down and revisit the discussion later. This can prevent escalation and allow for more rational dialogue. Clearly define and respect personal boundaries. If a conversation becomes too heated, it's okay to suggest continuing it later or in a different setting.
4. **Focus on behaviour, not character:** Critique specific actions or behaviours rather than attacking the person's character. For example, "I didn't like how you interrupted me" is better than "You're so rude".
5. **Seek common ground:** Identify areas of agreement or shared goals. This can help to build a bridge between differing opinions and foster a more cooperative atmosphere.
6. **Agree to disagree:** Recognise that it's okay to have different opinions and that not all disagreements need to be resolved. Sometimes, agreeing to disagree respectfully is the best course of action.
7. **Don't resort to making things personal:** Avoid name-calling, swearing, or derogatory remarks. Respectful language sets a positive tone and helps keep the conversation productive.
8. **Reflect and learn:** After a disagreement, reflect on the experience to understand what you can learn from it. Think about how you can improve your communication and handle conflicts more effectively in the future.

Online and in-person bullying

Online bullying, also known as cyberbullying, has become an alarming issue in today's digital world, affecting individuals of all ages. With the rise of social media and online communication platforms, harmful behaviours such as harassment, threats, and bullying do not require a perpetrator and victim to be in the same physical space and therefore can occur at any time.

[Research by Warwick University \(2017\)](#) shows that there is a strong link between 'traditional' face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying. Their research found that online bullying doesn't create large numbers of new victims and that most bullying is face-to-face – with online bullying used as a modern tool to supplement traditional forms. They recommend that bullying intervention strategies should focus on traditional bullying as well as online bullying.

At St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School cyberbullying is considered by the school to be equally unacceptable as all other forms of bullying. SMRT's anti-bullying code states that we will all:

- Treat others with respect and kindness
- Be inclusive and fair Encourage others to make good choices
- Speak up against bullying and not be a bystander
- Report bullying to someone we trust
- Use social media appropriately and responsibly
- Be positive about each other's differences
- Make everyone feel safe in our school community
- Support each other
- Take responsibility for our actions

Our staff are committed to being alert to the potential for bullying and identify and report it where possible, and to support the application of consequences and interventions set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy. Whilst we aim to be proactive and preventative, we encourage students to reach out to discuss any issues or concerns with a trusted member of their pastoral team or the safeguarding team. Staff will take every care to protect the confidentiality of those reporting bullying incidents.

To mark Anti-Bullying Week, the school has organised assemblies and pastoral activities around identifying, challenging and reporting bullying.

The School's [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) is available in full via the school website, under *key information* and then *policies*.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO CHOOSE RESPECT

Sometimes, differences between children can escalate into bullying, potentially impacting their mental health in a way that can persist into adulthood. While it's natural to disagree sometimes, teaching children the importance of respect is essential – especially in difficult situations. This guide provides strategies for encouraging considerate behaviour, even during a dispute, to foster a kinder, more inclusive environment for everyone.

1 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

As adults, we play a crucial role in modelling respectful behaviour for children: they observe and learn from our actions every day. Be mindful of the way you interact with others in front of children. Keep in mind that you should always approach others with an attitude of mutual respect, even if you disagree with them. Demonstrating this behaviour can influence young people and help them to handle their own conflicts in a healthy way.

2 AGREE TO DISAGREE

Make sure children know that it's fine to have differing opinions – and that disagreeing with someone doesn't mean you can't get along or respect each other's point of view. Help them understand that sometimes we can 'agree to disagree'. Using active listening skills when doing this can also help to build empathy and understanding of others.

3 PROMOTE ACTIVE LISTENING

Teach children about the importance of active listening: that is, making a genuine effort to listen to the other person's perspective without interrupting, before responding in a way that shows you understand their viewpoint, even (or perhaps especially) if you disagree with it. This makes people feel respected and allows for a better comprehension of their point of view, which in turn can make it easier for you to communicate your own opinions to them.

4 ENCOURAGE THE USE OF "I" STATEMENTS

If a child finds themselves in a disagreement with someone, it can be useful to encourage them to use "I" statements during the discussion. Framing their thoughts and feelings using statements like "I feel..." or "I think..." can help them avoid an accusatory tone and encourages them to take responsibility for their own emotions.

5 FOCUS ON BEHAVIOUR, NOT CHARACTER

When disagreements happen, encourage children to focus on critiquing and addressing the specific actions or behaviours that caused this upset, rather than attacking the person's character. For example, "I didn't like how you interrupted me" is better than "You're so rude". This can help children avoid hurting someone's feelings, which is likely to inflame the situation.

6 STAY CALM AND TAKE BREAKS

It's perfectly normal to feel upset during a disagreement – especially if it's getting heated. Remind children that if they feel overwhelmed, they should try to take deep breaths or even go for a short break to help them stay composed. If a conversation becomes too intense, remind them it's OK to suggest continuing it later or in a different setting. This can prevent things getting out of hand, allowing cooler heads to prevail.

7 START CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RESPECT

Talk openly to children about what respect means – to you and to them. Discuss how they might show respect to each other, to friends, to strangers and even to people we might disagree with. You could use examples of considerate or inconsiderate behaviour in books, films or TV to open discussions about the importance of giving others due regard.

8 SEEK COMMON GROUND

When a disagreement has occurred between children, they may find it hard to move past it. You can support them in finding a more positive way forward by helping identify areas of agreement or common ground with the other party. This can help to build bridges between differing opinions and foster a more cooperative atmosphere, as well as preventing those involved from demonising each another.

9 AVOID MAKING THINGS PERSONAL

It's important that we make it clear to children they must avoid name-calling, swearing or derogatory remarks in a disagreement with others. Respectful language sets a positive tone and helps keep the conversation productive. Reminding children to stay calm and take breaks – as mentioned previously – can help them avoid getting too emotional and saying or doing something hurtful.

10 REFLECT AND LEARN

After a child has had a disagreement, encourage them to reflect on the experience and think about what they can learn from it. What did they handle well? How might they improve their communication skills to handle conflicts more effectively in the future? You could use role play, writing and drawing pictures, or hypothetical examples to further develop their skills in showing respect during a disagreement.

Meet Our Expert

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) co-ordinate Anti-Bullying Week each year. ABA is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals, working together to achieve their vision to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. They welcome membership from any organisation or individual that supports this vision and support a free network of thousands of schools and colleges.

ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE

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The National College®

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As always, if you have any immediate concerns about safeguarding issues, students, or the school site, please get in touch via:

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