

Welcome to this week's SMRT safeguarding update...

# WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

## Random Acts of Kindness Week 9-15 February

### What is Random Acts of Kindness Week?

Random Acts of Kindness Week was set up in 1995 by the [Random Acts of Kindness Foundation](#), to celebrate the small, kind things we do that can make a big difference. For children, it shows that even the smallest kind acts, from playing with someone else at breaktime to planting a tree, can help make the world a much kinder place.

Not only does extending kindness benefit others, but we also know that it actually serves to boost our own wellbeing too.

Here are some reminders about the many forms that kindness can take, with some practical ideas if you would like some inspiration for your family:

# WHY 'KINDNESS MATTERS' & HOW DOING GOOD DOES YOU GOOD

'WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET. WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE.'

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

THE FOCUS FOR THIS YEAR'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK IS 'KINDNESS MATTERS'. IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK INTO THE BENEFIT OF HELPING OTHERS WHICH IS GOOD FOR IMPROVING OUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING. HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO GET YOU THINKING:

## ALTRUISM

Altruism is acting in someone else's best interests in order to improve their welfare. When we feel compelled to donate money, shop for someone, call a relative in need or help a neighbour, we are considering the needs of others even when we may not know them. Showing kindness like this, often motivated by empathy, creates a sense of purpose, making us feel good and developing our wellbeing. Children and young people can take part in altruistic activities at home or school. They could create a video for those in isolation, fundraise for a local cause, bake cakes for neighbours or write letters to older members of the community who may feel isolated.



## GENEROSITY

In the context of kindness, being generous with our time, resources and words can provide a low-cost approach to helping others. A generous act is accessible to all. Giving compliments, for example, are a well-researched way of creating a sense of wellbeing and positivity in a community at school or with family. It helps us to recognise the positivity in others as we actively choose to notice and comment on what is valuable and meaningful in someone else. When compliments are given regularly, consistently and with meaning, the community benefits are far reaching!



## GIVE TO GIVE. NOT TO RECEIVE

Sometimes when we are kind there is no payback, which can make it more difficult to keep being kind. Our natural reaction is to shrink back and withdraw our kind act, feeling frustrated that it has either not been reciprocated or that it has not been valued. This is probably one of the most difficult concepts for children to understand and where the 'random acts of kindness' approach is helpful. If it is a random act then it is 'just because' and for no other reason than a one-off act for someone.



## HOLDING OTHERS IN MIND

By holding someone in mind we show that we have been thinking about them and that they matter to us. This act of kindness is so important now, more than at any other time, due to isolation. A simple text to say 'I saw... on the telly last night and it made me think of you' or a quick call to say 'I was just thinking about you yesterday and was wondering how you're doing?' can mean so much. We probably all do this naturally as part of showing kindness and care to others, but perhaps may not appreciate the importance of this for wellbeing.



## COMMUNITY

When we help others in our community, it improves our wellbeing by helping us to feel less isolated as we connect with others. When we show kindness, it is something which we feel we can control, particularly when things may feel a bit chaotic and unusual. Helping others can often give us a different perspective on our own challenges and our own problems. Peer support, for example, is often overlooked as an important part of improving wellbeing. Older students can often greatly benefit from sharing similar, shared experiences and can offer a level of empathy and understanding that adults may not be able to.



## KINDNESS WITH CAUTION

There is a very helpful analogy that is used when we are in an emergency, 'we should put our own oxygen mask on before putting on someone else's'. What's helpful here is that giving to others can often improve our mental health and wellbeing. However, there are times when helping others can create stress or overwhelm us. This is sometimes called 'compassion fatigue'. So, we must balance our own wellbeing with the wellbeing of others. We should notice if we start to feel resentful or negative or if we start avoiding others, have difficulty concentrating or start experiencing unusual sleep patterns. If this happens it's a good time to take a break or ask someone for help or support.



'KINDNESS IS A SILENT SMILE. A FRIENDLY WORD. A NOD OF ENCOURAGEMENT. KINDNESS IS THE SINGLE MOST POWERFUL THING WE CAN TEACH CHILDREN.'

RA KATVIST

The National College

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department for Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



For further info, check out these online resources:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/randam-acts-kindness>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week/get-involved>

Web: [www.thenationalcollege.co.uk](http://www.thenationalcollege.co.uk) | Email: [enquiries@thenationalcollege.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@thenationalcollege.co.uk) | Facebook: [@thenationalcollege](https://www.facebook.com/thenationalcollege) | Twitter: [@thenatcollege](https://twitter.com/thenatcollege)

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# Neurodiversity Celebration Week 17-23 March 2025

Neurodiversity Celebration Week is coming up next month, something which we are always proud to mark at SMRT.

Bristol Autism Support is a great support network for parents/ carers of autistic students, including for parents/ carers whose children do not have a formal diagnosis of autism. They host lots of events that might be of interest, including on EBSA (emotionally based school avoidance) – below are some that are taking place this month. Please visit their website to book onto any of the online sessions that sound helpful, and to keep abreast of future events: [What's On - Bristol Autism Support](#)

## Wednesday 12 February

**Supporting Siblings** - An online information session looking at supporting siblings of autistic children and young people.

## Thursday 13 February

**Stimming, the Inner Body & Movement Senses** - Online session on sensory processing differences covering stimming, interoception, vestibular, and proprioception—exploring their importance, challenges, and supportive strategies.

## Thursday 13 February

**Trowbridge/Bradford on Avon Coffee Morning** - A casual meetup for parents and carers of autistic children (no diagnosis required). Red Admiral Pub, Hilperton, BA14 7GW

## Thursday 13 February

**Vassall Centre Coffee Afternoon** - A casual meetup for parents and carers of autistic children (no diagnosis required). Community Hub at the Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Bristol, BS16 2QQ.

## Friday 14 February

**In person support group North Bristol** - A casual meetup for parents and carers of autistic children (no diagnosis required). Grupo Lounge, 8 Canford Ln, Bristol BS9 3DH

## Thursday 20 February

**BAS Dads North Bristol** - A casual meetup for parents and carers of autistic children (no diagnosis required). Crafty Cow, Gloucester Road, Bristol, BS7 0BJ

## Monday 17 February

**Plymouth Coffee Morning** - A casual meetup for parents and carers of autistic children (no diagnosis required). The Ground Coffee House, PL1 1LD

## Monday 24 February

**South Bristol Evening Get Together** - A casual meetup for parents and carers of autistic children (no diagnosis required). The Lodekka, Tramway Road, Brislington, Bristol. BS4 3DS.

## Tuesday 25 February

### **Gillingham Coffee**

**Morning** - A casual meetup for parents and carers of autistic children (no diagnosis required).

Riversmeet, Hardings Lane,  
Gillingham, Dorset, SP8  
4HXJ

## Tuesday 25 February

### **Good Autism Practice in**

**Education** - This free online session will help parents/carers understand what good autism practice in education settings looks like.

## Tuesday 25 February

### **Fishponds Coffee**

**Morning** - A casual meetup for parents and carers of autistic children (no diagnosis required). Porto

Lounge 784&782a,  
Fishponds Road, Bristol  
BS16 3TT

## Tuesday 25 February

**EBSA online meet up** - Join our online group for parents supporting children out of education.

## Wednesday 26 February

**Poole Coffee Morning-** A casual meetup for parents and carers of autistic children (no diagnosis required). Alexandra Park Cafe, Alexandra Park, Alexandra Road, BH14 9EL

## Wednesday 26 February

**Lunchtime Online Drop in -** A casual online meet up for parents and carers living in South West England. Join us for a chat about anything autism related and ask questions.



**Bristol Autism Support**

**Helpline**

Ring **07835 727394** or email  
**[helpline@bristolautismsupport.org](mailto:helpline@bristolautismsupport.org)**

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

**[safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk)**