

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

## WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

### Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding

At SMRT, we are proud of our diverse community and always strive to find ways to make sure everyone feels like they belong to the school and to each other. At the bottom of this page is an overview of what belonging looks like and some of the ways belonging can be developed in schools. We continue to partner with Representation Matters to find ways to further develop our curriculum and the way we approach our young people, to recognise and celebrate all their different cultures and backgrounds.

We are acutely aware that Education needs to play its role in supporting students from all backgrounds and we seek to build good relationships, with all students, that allow them to be heard and know that they will receive the support they require. Recently, the government have published a national Child Safeguarding Practice review [Race, racism and safeguarding children - GOV.UK](#) that examines the role of a range of public services and bodies in safeguarding young people from a range of backgrounds. It explores what happened to 53 children from Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage backgrounds who were the subject of child safeguarding reviews between January 2022 and March 2024. The outcomes were focused around: ensuring that race, ethnicity and culture are considered a key part of safeguarding young people. That opportunities are not missed to safeguard all young people and that racism is addressed and in all its forms, without hesitation.

As a school, our community is built around the idea that we are one body and that each part of that body is vital to its success. As St Paul said in 1 Cor 12v12-20 'For the body does not consist of one member but of many'. Our Equality policy states that we are 'committed to the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual identity' <https://www.smrt.bristol.sch.uk/key-information/equalities>. While we ensure that our safeguarding policies, procedures and systems are informed and robust, we know that for each student we need to go the extra mile, providing a friendly and warm approach and that we stop and give time to the needs of the one.

We continue to seek to find ways to make sure all students feel like they belong, so that they can have good relationships with trusted adults that they can talk to and come to for support, so that we can celebrate the identities and backgrounds of all students and ensure that they are safeguarded and be fully alive at school, in their future careers and beyond.

#### Our Racial Equity Statement:

As a school, we are committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all, including people from different racial, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. We consider that all manifestations of racism are wholly unacceptable and will act positively to eliminate racial discrimination where it occurs.

The school will take prompt, effective and systematic action to deal with all racist incidents and to identify and address racial, ethnic, cultural and religious inequalities.

The school is also committed to promoting good relationships (in line with [our ALIVE values](#)) between people of different racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups. We will enable every pupil to:

- Participate in a curriculum that takes full account of the richness and variety of the world's racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups and develop understanding of some of the main causes of global inequality, disadvantage and poverty.
- Recognise and challenge racism, racial discrimination and stereotyping.
- Develop the knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for life in Britain's multi-ethnic society and as global citizens in an increasingly interdependent world.

If you would like to discuss this Wake up Wednesday, have any suggestions about how we can ensure students feel like they belong or find out about any of our approaches to safeguarding, please feel free to contact us at [safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk)

**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)**



# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## FOSTERING A SENSE OF BELONGING

Feeling a genuine sense of belonging is essential for the emotional and social development of children and young people. Belonging significantly boosts self-esteem, resilience, and mental wellbeing, reducing feelings of isolation and anxiety. This guide provides practical strategies to help parents and educators cultivate inclusive environments, enhancing both academic outcomes and overall happiness among young people.

### 1 CELEBRATE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Acknowledge and celebrate the uniqueness of every child. Promoting diversity and inclusion creates an environment where differences are valued rather than stigmatised. This experience empowers children to confidently express their identities and feel genuinely included, fostering a robust sense of belonging within both school and home settings.

### 2 CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION

Regularly communicate and actively listen to children, showing genuine interest in their thoughts and experiences. Creating open communication channels helps young people feel heard and valued. This approach not only builds trust but also reinforces children's perception of themselves as a vital part of their family, school and community.

### 3 MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Give children opportunities to actively participate and contribute, whether in classrooms, at home, or in community activities. Meaningful participation helps children feel their input matters, reinforcing a sense of purpose and value. Including them in decisions and responsibilities enhances their self-worth, promoting a deeper sense of belonging and inclusion.

### 4 FOSTER STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Support and encourage positive relationships between peers, educators, and families. Strong, healthy relationships significantly impact a child's sense of belonging, providing emotional support and reducing feelings of loneliness. Facilitate social interactions through group activities, teamwork, and collaborative learning to strengthen these vital connections.

### 5 CREATE INCLUSIVE SPACES

Design environments that reflect diversity and are welcoming for everyone. Inclusive spaces where all children see themselves represented can dramatically improve their feelings of safety and acceptance. Consider classroom displays, books, and resources that celebrate various cultures, abilities, and backgrounds to visibly reinforce inclusivity and belonging.

### 6 MODEL POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Adults play a crucial role by demonstrating inclusive, empathetic, and respectful behaviours. Modelling positive interactions and attitudes sets a clear standard for children to follow. Children are likely to replicate inclusive behaviour, creating a supportive community atmosphere where everyone feels accepted and valued for who they are.

### 7 BUILD EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Teach and encourage emotional expression and understanding among children. Developing emotional literacy enables young people to articulate their feelings and empathise with others. An emotionally intelligent environment cultivates mutual respect and compassion, fostering a deeper sense of belonging and interpersonal connection within groups.

### 8 SUPPORT PEER MENTORSHIP

Encourage peer mentorship or buddy systems within educational settings. Peer support enhances feelings of connectedness and security, reducing feelings of isolation. When children support one another, they naturally build community bonds, nurturing a supportive culture where belonging and friendship thrive.

### 9 RECOGNISE EFFORTS REGULARLY

Consistently acknowledge children's contributions and achievements, however small. Recognition reinforces a child's understanding that their presence and efforts are important. Celebrating individual and collective successes helps cultivate a positive environment where children feel acknowledged, motivated, and deeply connected to peers and adults around them.

### 10 ADDRESS BULLYING PROMPTLY

Quickly address any incidents of bullying. Promptly intervening demonstrates a clear commitment to an inclusive and safe environment. Creating a culture where incidents are swiftly and effectively addressed reinforces trust, security, and a sense of belonging for everyone involved.

### Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is Director of Harpen Education Ltd and Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust. With extensive experience in systemic mental health in schools, she supports educational leaders across the UK to develop inclusive, resilient, and supportive learning environments. Anna is also the lead expert for mental health at The National College.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at [nationalcollege.com/guides/fostering-a-sense-of-belonging](https://nationalcollege.com/guides/fostering-a-sense-of-belonging)



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