St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School

Welcome to this week's SMRT Safeguarding Update…

WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

This edition includes information related to Anti-Bullying Week 2024 and the theme 'Choose Respect', sharing resources on how to 'Choose Respect' when faced with disagreements both in person and online.

Anti-Bullying week (Mon 11.11 – Fri 15.11)

Welcome to Part 2 of our anti-bullying week Wake up Wednesday. The third week of November is marked out as an annual Anti-Bullying Week, aiming to raise awareness of bullying, highlight ways in which we can prevent and respond to bullying, and encourage people to exercise respect when communicating with each other.

The theme this year is 'Choose Respect' as the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) Charity encourages young people to opt for respect in their interactions with each other and urges adults to reflect on how they can model respectful behaviour through their everyday actions and decisions.

In school we have had assemblies, worn odd socks, engaged with tutor time activities and participated in class discussions about bullying, including how to report it and what we do to address situations in school or online. While we may not be perfect, our values of trust and truth and a desire to always seek justice, are at the heart of what we strive to do at SMRT. Utilising our pastoral teams, behaviour support managers, VIP teachers and safeguarding team to support students as they continue to mature and learn how to interact with one another.

As young people and adults we are sooner or later going to find ourselves experiencing conflict or issues within social groups. It is important that we are prepared for this and aware of effective strategies to handle such situations and maintaining healthy relationships. The ABA has offered activities that you may wish to complete with your young person to bring about discussions on kindness, navigating conflict and choosing respect:

1. **Kindness challenge**
   - Together, come up with a list of simple acts of kindness you can perform over the week. At the end of the week, discuss how these acts felt and the reactions they received.
   - Examples: Giving someone a compliment / Helping with homework / Offering to make a cup of tea

2. **Advice column**
   - Create your own 'advice column' for fictional scenarios whereby someone has experienced a bullying situation. Work together to suggest ways in which they can approach the situations and try to resolve the issue.
   - Examples:
     i. I need advice. I overheard a group of people at school gossiping about another student's personal life, spreading mean rumours that I know aren't true. I feel uncomfortable but not sure if I should get involved?
     ii. I need advice. I had a falling out with my best friend after we argued over which film to choose for our movie night. I was so frustrated that I made a hurtful comment about their taste in films in front of our classmates, and now they are being teased because of it. We're now not speaking and I'm not sure what to do. I'm also worried about the next time we disagree on something…

3. **Respectful debates**
   - Choose a light, non-controversial topic and have a debate. However, the twist is that each person has to argue for the side opposite of what they believe. This exercise should encourage understanding different perspectives and respecting others' opinions, even when we disagree and how to handle disagreements.
   - Examples: Is it better to have an early or late bedtime? / Should chores be done on one day or spread throughout the week?

Showing respect online

The internet is an aspect of life that adults and children can find impossible to avoid, and as new apps, games, and social media develop it can feel impossible for teachers, parents and carers to keep up. Alongside the numerous benefits of instantaneous communication, there are numerous opportunities for unkind behaviour.

It is important to discuss with young people how to handle conflict and maintain healthy relationships in an online space. Without key visual cues such as body language and facial expression, it can be hard to determine how our words impact others that we speak to online. With this in mind, please see the next page for a resource on good 'Netiquette' (a general code of conduct for polite and respectful behaviour online!) that you may wish to discuss with your young person. The resource is also included as a separate attachment.

> **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**

10 Top Tips for Respect Online:

A DIGITAL WORLD FOR EVERYONE

Even *before* lockdowns inflamed the situation, one in every five 10- to 15-year-olds was experiencing bullying online: abusive messages, having rumours spread about them or being excluded from group chats, for example. Through smartphones and tablets, we're used to being able to communicate from anywhere, at any time – but digital devices became commonplace so quickly that it caused a problem: as a society, we haven't properly adjusted to how different they've made life. Our tips can help you to build positive relationships online and avoid some of the potential issues.

WHAT IS NETIQUETTE?

Etiquette is a set of rules to help us interact with others: like a code of respect. People follow this code every day (mostly without even thinking about it) and it can help us decide how to act in certain situations. 'Netiquette' (etiquette on the net – we see what they did there!) is the same, except it's designed to help us interact with others online, which is sometimes a whole different ball game.

1 SEE THE OTHER SIDE

Usually when we're online, we can't use the other person's body language or tone of voice to give us clues about what we can say to them, or how to say it. Try to think what the situation might be like for them, how they're feeling and whether we'd say the same thing if they were actually there with us.

2 HIT THE PAUSE BUTTON

Without a person physically there in front of us, it's easy to send something quickly – before we've really thought about whether it's helpful or kind. Just because we *can* do things quickly doesn't mean we *should*; it's better to pause for a second and think it through, instead of simply reacting.

3 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

People have invented loads of different ways to communicate online (emojis, abbreviations like LOL, TBH and so on). Some of these can be triggering to other people (such as USING CAPS SO IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING!), so it's important to stay aware of the style of language you're using.

4 BE SURE BEFORE YOU POST

On social networks like Instagram or Facebook, vast numbers of people might see what you've posted. So if that's something negative about a person, it can feel hugely painful for them. If you're ever tempted to post something like that, ask yourself "do I really need to go public with this?"

5 PROTECT YOURSELF

Always think very carefully before sharing any personal information with someone else or in a group. Once something's been put online, the sender loses any control over where it goes and who might see it. If you've got any uncertainty at all, it's a good idea to talk to a trusted adult about this first.

6 KINDNESS IS CATCHING

Negative communication can spread rapidly online, but so can being kind and helpful (this happened quite a lot during lockdowns, for instance). A friendly, positive message can make a big difference to someone as well as helping us feel good about ourselves – so share the love!

7 WAITING CAN BE HARD

When we've sent a message or posted something online, waiting for a reply or for someone to respond can make us anxious. It could be helpful to think whether you really *have* to message or post right now – or if you could wait until a better time when it will cause you less anxiety.

8 THE NET LOVES ATTENTION

Most apps, games and sites use sophisticated technology that's designed to keep us coming back for more. It's important to keep this in mind when you feel the need to reach for your phone, tablet or console – once we understand this fact, it becomes easier to control how we use our digital devices.

9 REPLY WISELY

Sometimes it's tempting to fire back an instant response to a post or message we don't like. *How* we respond is important, however – whether we reply privately to the person or on a platform where lots of people will see it, for example, makes a big difference to how whoever is receiving the message will deal with it.

10 FORGIVE AND FORGET

Even though we try to avoid them, mistakes can – and *do* – happen online. They can sometimes feel like a bigger deal than they actually are. It's important to remember that we're all only human, and sometimes we mess up. Learn to forgive others and – just as importantly – to forgive yourself.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Carole Francis-Smith is an experienced counselling psychologist who, through her research, specialises in promoting safe and ethical online communications. She consults with businesses and organisations to support positive and effective communication online, often by considering some of the more hidden aspects of the mediums.

NOS National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

www.nationalonlinesafety.com @natonlinesafety /NationalOnlineSafety @nationalonlinesafety

Safeguarding Update 14 November 2024