St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School

Welcome to this Fortnight's SMRT Safeguarding Update

WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

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

Anti-Bullying Week: Monday 16 Nov – Friday 20 Nov

BREAK THE SILENCE

For this year's Anti-Bullying Week theme, Break the Silence, we encourage children, young people and adults across the UK to start conversations about bullying, speak up, listen and take action together.

In today's world, bullying can happen in increasingly complex ways, including face to face, online, through group chats, social media and emerging technologies. Anti-Bullying Week 2026 will encourage open conversations about bullying and help create environments where children and young people feel safe to speak and are supported when they do.

It's important to teach pupils that breaking the silence can start through small actions, and that these small actions matter. By equipping pupils with the skills to feel safe to speak up and supporting them to do so we can foster a kinder environment where everyone feels that they belong, are safe and valued.

Sadly, bullying still affects more than one in five children every year.

Despite progress, more than one in five children and young people experience bullying each year. The impact can be devastating, affecting their mental health, confidence, and ability to thrive at school, with the effects often lasting into adulthood.

A national call for government action.

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- Identify bullying early
- Respond effectively and sensitively
- Build inclusive cultures that prevent bullying before it starts, especially those most at risk.

The group emphasises that bullying prevention must be seen as a core part of safeguarding children and an essential part of promoting wellbeing and equal opportunities.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance have offered 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 and 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 pastoral activities around identifying, challenging and reporting bullying.

The School's **Anti-Bullying Policy** is available in full on the Policies page of the School website.


At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.
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
I THINK ...
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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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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