

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

WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

This edition includes a brief overview of what safeguarding covers and how this links to behaviour and developing and maintaining good relationships.

What do we mean by safeguarding?

This past year has seen the Government release a new definition of what is meant by safeguarding. Safeguarding has an ever-increasing role to play in schools, colleges and wider society and therefore it is important we are all aware of what it means.

The definition below highlights the main areas of focus that the Department for Education sets out for schools in England:

Safeguarding means ...

Providing help
and support to
meet the
needs of
children as
soon as
problems
emerge

Protecting children
from maltreatment
within or outside the
home, including online

Preventing impairment
of children's mental
and physical health
or development

Making sure children receive
safe and effective care

Taking action to enable
all children to have the
best outcomes

How does this relate to behaviour?

There is a link between safeguarding students and ensuring that each student knows the appropriate boundaries for their own behaviour whilst also being able to recognise behaviour that is inappropriate in others. As students' progress through the curriculum and develop their understanding of themselves and of social roles it is vital that we have a clear understanding of boundaries. This enables us to maintain good relationships and identify areas of risk that may need addressing.

What do we mean by *good relationships*?

Developing good relationships throughout our community is essential. We value justice and respect and want to ensure that our young people can learn from mistakes. Two of our alive values are, 'We value Ourselves' and 'We are Forgiving' and therefore we endeavour to help students find a way back from challenging situations. Our Behaviour and Good Relationships Policy outlines how we ensure that this happens.

What are our expectations?

Our Alive Accord is the key document that gives an overview of what we expect from students and families, making clear our code of conduct enables everyone to know what behaviour is expected within our 'mini-society' at SMRT, rooting these principles into our belief that Jesus came so that we can all be 'fully alive' helps us to surround young people with the right words, actions, and culture to grow, supporting and challenging each other to be the best version of themselves.

What about bullying?

Bullying is something that we take very seriously as a school. If your child is being bullied, please let us know immediately by contacting us at safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk.

At SMRT we have dedicated Behaviour Support Managers who spend time listening to any concerns students may have and ensuring that they are kept safe, learn from any mistakes they make and are given clear boundaries. They work in tandem with our pastoral Year Teams to ensure that a restorative approach is taken to any relational issues and do all we can to identify and meet the individual student's needs.

Here are links to SMRT's [Alive Accord](#) and Behaviour and Good Relationships policy ([full version](#) and an [Easy Read version](#)). Reading these policies will provide you a comprehensive overview of what our standards are and how we offer support to enable students to be fully Alive.



Regulating Behaviour

One of the key aspects of managing any behavioural issue is a young person's ability to self-regulate. While we can ensure that there are safe boundaries in place and we are meeting the needs of students where they are at, we also expect students to work on regulating their own feelings and emotions, allowing them to develop into young people that value themselves and one another. Please see the end of this newsletter for a resource that highlights 10 top tips to help students manage their responses and emotions in school.

As students return to SMRT and decide on the best mode of transport to get to school, we wanted to provide you some key safeguarding advice on road safety.

You may have noticed that pick up times at the end of the school day can create a lot of traffic outside the main entrance. In order to make sure all students are kept safe; please could you consider picking your children up from **Somerset Street** rather than in the tighter one-way system on Somerset Square.

Somerset Street runs alongside the school, is much wider, and can be accessed by students walking a few meters past the nearby basketball court.



This will help to ensure that students are kept safe and roads in the one-way system are not overcrowded. We appreciate your cooperation!

10 Top Tips on Supporting Children with SELF-REGULATION

Children need to learn to understand and recognise their emotions, while finding healthy ways to process them. Emotional self-regulation, however, depends heavily on age and development. While very young ones or children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it particularly challenging to self-regulate, nurturing these important skills can be hugely beneficial. Here are ten top tips for supporting children with their self-regulation.

1. DESIGNATE A TRUSTED ADULT

It's vital that children feel safe and know that there's someone they can always go to for help if they need it. Schedule consistent times for the child to develop a relationship with this person – ideally through play and games – allowing trust to grow and ensuring that the child is more likely to come forward if anything is wrong, rather than hiding their emotions.

2. MEET CHILDREN HALFWAY

Unless you know where a child is developmentally and tailor your approach to their needs, you're less likely to have an impact. In particular, younger ones and children with SEND can struggle to self-regulate and instead rely on others to help them. We call this 'co-regulation'. Rather than offering strategies for self-regulation, it could be better to start co-regulating with a trusted adult first.

3. FACTOR IN THEIR BASIC NEEDS

Remember that for a child to develop emotional regulation skills, their basic needs must be met first. Children who are hungry, tired, cold and so on – as well as those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences – may struggle to self-regulate. Before you develop strategies with any child, make sure they feel safe, secure and comfortable in themselves.

4. REMAIN PATIENT

If a child is struggling with their emotions, it can often become difficult to stay calm. Remember that dysregulation is beyond their control, so a display of frustration or anger could negatively impact the situation. Instead, children need to be met with comfort and understanding to help them manage these problematic feelings.

5. BE 'A DYSREGULATION DETECTIVE'

While some children can tell you why they become dysregulated, many others can't. You could investigate potential triggers by observing the child and talking to their family. When the child becomes dysregulated, note down details like the time, what they're doing and who they're with – the trigger may be someone they sit near, an unmet sensory need or something else entirely. Once we identify some triggers, we can help to avoid or overcome them.

6. USE SUITABLE LITERATURE

There are some wonderful books that can help you teach self-regulation to children. Reading these with a child can be especially powerful. Take time to discuss the content: ask questions about what feelings the characters had, why they felt that way and what strategies helped them. It can also be useful to refer back to snippets of these books at appropriate moments.

7. TRY SENSORY RESOURCES

An overlap between sensory needs and emotional regulation is possible. Children may struggle to self-regulate if they're experiencing sensory overload (a noisy classroom, for example). Positive sensory input can help calm them down. Use resources such as weighted blankets and fibre-optic lights. Of course, what works for one child might not work for another – so it's important to offer a choice of resources to discover which they prefer.

8. NURTURE INDEPENDENCE

If you feel it's appropriate, let children try out these strategies alone. Always offer them a choice: they could listen to music when they're feeling stressed, for example, or they could write down their worries or draw something to represent how they feel. This may take time for the child to get used to, so be patient. Encourage them to share any helpful strategies with a trusted adult.

9. MODEL GENUINE FEELINGS

Children learn a lot just from watching grown-ups. Don't be afraid to show your own emotions and self-regulation strategies. While you'll obviously want to avoid sharing anything too personal with children, they should still see us experiencing and handling our own feelings. Tell them how you are feeling, then show them how to respond in a healthy manner.

10. FORMULATE A PLAN

As much as we try to prevent children from experiencing dysregulation, it's always wise to have an appropriate plan for when it does happen. Discuss this strategy with the child (if appropriate) and their family. The best approach for an individual child is often a bespoke one; it's hugely important to know in advance what might help and what could worsen the situation.

Meet Our Expert

Georgina Durrant is an author, former teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the founder of the award-winning SEN Resources Blog, where she shares activities, advice and recommendations for parents and teachers of children with SEND.



#WakeUpWednesday

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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:

safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk