



Helena Romanes School - Primary
SAFEGUARDING UPDATE
Spring 2 2024



Dear Parents and Carers,

Each half term we aim to bring you relevant help and advice on safeguarding issues we feel will be of importance to you. Teaching children how to keep themselves safe is a key part of our curriculum and we develop these skills through PSHE and computing lessons, assemblies and various events and visitors across the year. You will see information at the bottom of the page about who to speak to if you have concerns about a child's safety or welfare. In our 'Be happy, stay safe' assemblies this half term we will be focusing on wellbeing, so we have included some information about some of the things the children will be learning about.

Physical Activity

Children should get at least 60 minutes physical activity every day. The NHS recommends children take part in two types of physical activity to stay healthy:

- Aerobic exercise (e.g. walking to school, skipping, dancing or cycling)
- Exercises to strengthen their muscles and bones (e.g. gymnastics, football, martial arts or jumping)

Physical exercise is good for our bodies and minds and it is fun! Playing games and sport is a great way for children to make friends and socialise.

The Power of Nature

Spending time in nature can help boost our physical and emotional health, help us to sleep better and support our immune systems. There is even evidence to show that bringing nature inside, in the form of plants, can reduce stress levels and improve concentration. Being in nature can help to calm feelings of anxiety, so if your child is feeling worried about something, you could try going for a walk together or taking them to the playground.



Safeguarding at Helena Romanes School

We are here to help



If you are feeling **sad**, **upset**, **hurt** or **worried**, please talk to our team.



Miss Knowles
Deputy Safeguarding Lead
worrybox@hrs.education



Mrs Hone
Designated Safeguarding Lead
worrybox@hrs.education

Mindfulness

Everyone has a mixture of thoughts and feelings that might help us or might make things harder for us. We have some control over which thoughts we choose to pay attention to and which ones we choose to let go. Mindfulness is about paying attention to our thoughts and feelings with kindness. Mindfulness is a practice – it is something that we have to keep practising to get better at.

Being mindful doesn't require lots of space or time. You can practice at any time by just sitting or standing up straight, closing your eyes and taking 3 deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Notice how your body and mind are feeling. With mindfulness we are not trying to feel relaxed or calm – we are simply paying more attention to how we are feeling at that time and what we are thinking.

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

The National College