



NEWSLETTER

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive
School & 6th Form College



Issue: 191

Date: 27th June 2025



Dear all

The Battle of the Bands this week is one of those events that captures the true spirit of our school and community. It represents in a very clear way our four values of learning, belonging, pride and ambition. It's an event where everyone is welcome, everyone has their place to perform and everyone joins in the fun and entertainment. This year, we had 25 acts from new beginners to polished, professional standards of musicianship, groups, solos, duets and everything in between. Everyone gave their best and everyone shone. The event was well attended and we had a full house for the evening. At the end of the event, I said to the families who came to watch that seeing our children stand up and do their thing with such confidence swelled my heart with pride. I can't think of another more 'headteachery' way to say this but it's a feeling I often get when I walk around school or hear about the many achievements of our children. Seeing the children happy and fulfilled, thriving and growing is by far and away the best part of my job.

At the time of writing this newsletter, our children are taking part in sports day. This is another example of how our children are embracing our school values. The way that they cheer each other on and the way they put so much energy and effort into the event is astonishing. We are only half way through sports day but already I know of five school records that have been broken. At least one of these new records has been more smashed than just broken and these new records have been claimed by both girls and boys. Most children take part in this amazing occasion in one way or another and at the end of the day, although there will be one house that wins the cup, it's the taking part and engaging in the spirit of competition that really counts.

Physical activity is a fantastic way to relieve the stresses and anxieties that are so much more openly talked about these days. By encouraging our children to get outside, to be part of a team or club and to leave the mobile phone at home, we can make huge differences to positively affect their mental health, resilience and self esteem. No one is asking our children to be an Olympic athlete but the 'standard' recommendation is at least 20 minutes of moderately intense exercise every day is something that is often referenced as a minimum amount. School obviously plays a part in delivering this but embracing opportunities outside of school is also important. The huge variety of clubs and teams on our doorstep is amazing and there really is something for everyone. A few weeks ago I watched my Goddaughter perform at a street dance show in Crewe. There were well over 40 acts and I recognised dozens of children who come to our school who are also talented performers. Around our community there are loads of clubs, activities and sports teams of every kind as well as gyms, horse riding, yoga, running clubs, badminton cricket etc.

Over the summer, please explore the many options available to engage our children in healthy, physical and activity. Here in school we have a rich extra curricular offer as well and I'd encourage everyone to have a go at something new. We are always looking for ways to develop this and to encourage children to take part in physical activity and competitive sport.

The summer weather continues to be warm and dry. This is great in that it allows our children to access the fields at lunch and break time and to get plenty of fresh air. As a respectful message to all families though, can you help us by reminding your children that they need to fill their reusable water bottle during, not after break and lunch. Also, please remember that their water bottle should contain water only. There is an increasing number of fizzy drinks and worryingly, high sugar, high caffeine energy drinks that children are bringing as part of a packed lunch or in their bags. These are not healthy and not something I want to encourage.

Second and last point. Litter. The amount of debris that the children drop and leave is incredible. After lunch the site team is tied up for an unreasonable amount of time picking up litter that our children have chosen to drop. I am sure that this is something that you will give us full support with. Please talk to your children about tidying up their waste and please do everything you can to avoid children bringing single use plastic bottles into school. This is better for the environment and will make a huge difference to the litter problem.

Have a great weekend and take care

Nigel Bielby
Executive Headteacher



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Curriculum Matters

Curriculum Website

We know that you are keen to support your children with their learning as well as you can.

You will know that we plan to share our curriculum - what we teach and when we teach it - far more clearly on our website. We will also share an overview of what we will be assessing when in each subject.

All of this will help you to encourage your child's independent practice - meaning they learn the curriculum as successfully as possible and demonstrate this in our assessments, mock exams and at GCSE, BTEC or A Level.

We are excited to be able to share with you a first example of how this will look. This means you can give us any feedback before we begin to prepare other pages. Please remember that this page is in draft form - there is information which still needs to be added - but we feel it's important that you can review this before the last newsletter of the year.

On Friday we shared the [new science curriculum pages](#) with our students. This means that you will be able to discuss with them how the pages will work.

As you explore these pages you will see the overview of our KS3 and 4 curricula in science (KS5 to follow) in the form of a roadmap. You can click on each unit of this to see the Knowledge Organiser (KO). This KO contains all of the information that students need to learn and remember - and the retrieval and application of this knowledge will form the basis of all of our assessments.

When you click on the assessment button you will see which of the units will be assessed when. With end of unit tests there will inevitably be a degree of flexibility around the precise week when an assessment takes place, but you should expect this to fall within a 3 week window for each subject.

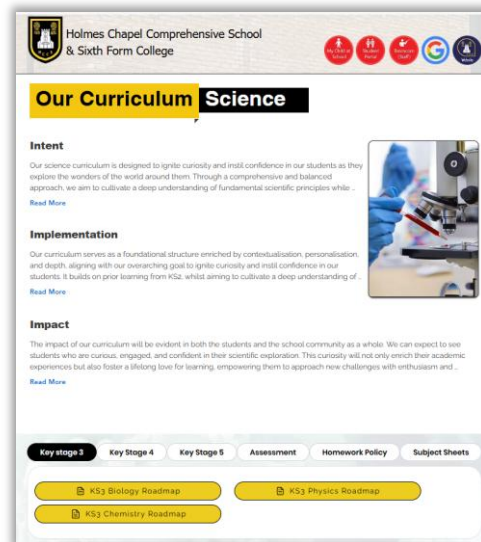
If you click on the homework button - you can see the homework expectations at each key stage - this is the information you should expect to see each week or fortnight shared via the new Satchel One homework app, which we will begin to roll out in September. Teachers will share the official assessment dates here as well.

We know that you will find having easy access to this information helpful. We are hugely grateful to our teachers for the time they have spent reviewing and updating their curricula, designing and refining KOs and preparing curriculum roadmaps. If you have any feedback, please contact [Mr Munro](#).

Key Stage 3 assessment banding

Last week we sent home the third set of interims for our students in Year 7. This is the third time of producing these interims and we have been developing how we automate this process. In some cases this has led to some variation in banding scores compared with previous interims and we are sorry if this has caused you some concerns as parents or carers.

If you are worried about your child's progress or what the score is telling you, please contact the head of subject in the first instance. Remember you can find their details [here](#) on the website.





Alternative Learning Week

Curriculum Website

The preparations for alternative learning week continue. For students not on a residential trip, school begins and ends at the same time but the makeup of the day is different. Students register with their tutor groups and will be given instructions as to the timetable for each day.

More instructions will be given out for each day ion the week before ALW.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Year 7	Activity Day	ALW Task	House Day	ALW Task	Non – Alton Towers
Year 8	Non – Alton Towers	Activity Day/CZ	ALW Task	ALW Task	House Day
Year 9	ALW Task	Army Skills/CZ	Non – Alton Towers	House Day	ALW Task
Year 10	House Day	ALW Task	ALW Task	Non – Alton Towers	Army Skills
Year 12	Helpers/Derby	Helpers/AT	Careers	Army Skills	Study Day

08.45	Tutor
09.10	Session 1A
10.20	Break AM
10.40	Session 1B
11.50	Lunch
12.40	Session 2A
13.50	Break
14.05	Session 2B
15.15	End of Day

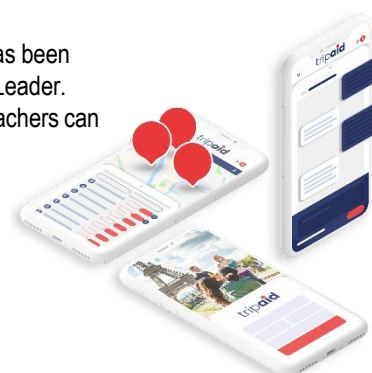


Trip Aid- Students and Staff on Trips

The school has subscribed to a service called Trip Aid. Once the Trip Aid app has been downloaded, students and staff sign into a trip which will be created by the Trip Leader. Once the trip is active, the students will be able to message the teachers, the teachers can locate the students. More information can be found on <https://tripaid.co.uk/>

What you need to do

- Students need to download the app from the App Store or Google Play
- Before the trip starts, they will be given a code by their teachers
- Once the trip is over, the service stops.



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Bus Replacement 42 D&G

A group of parents are currently exploring the viability of organising a private school bus service as an alternative to the existing public number 42 bus route from Middlewich.

To help assess the level of interest and gather information for the planning of this service, the parent group is requesting that interested families complete a short survey. Your feedback is vital in determining the feasibility and potential structure of this private bus service.

If you currently use the number 42 public bus service from Middlewich, or would be interested in your child using a private school bus service from this area, please scan the QR code to access the survey. Please note, the information you submit will not be held by or accessible to our school. This survey is being shared on behalf of the parents who are looking into the issue.

If you are struggling to access the QR code please find the link to here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/YShMSAzkMp>

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HOLMES CHAPEL COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

OPEN EVENING FOR YEAR 5 STUDENTS

3rd JULY 2025

4 – 6.15pm

TALKS TAKE PLACE
4.15pm, 4.45pm & 5.30pm



To Book Your
talk, Scan the
QR Code or
visit

ticketsource.co.uk/hccs1978

****REMINDER – School closes to students on this day at 2.15pm****



Year 6 Transition Days

What a wonderful start we've had with our new Year 6 students during their recent Transition Days at HCCS! It was an absolute pleasure to welcome them into our school community.

Our main goals for these days were to help the students get to know some of the routines at HCCS, make them feel part of our HCCS community, and allow them to meet our wonderful team of staff and students.

From the moment they arrived, our Year 6s jumped straight into life at HCCS. ...Continued



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They eagerly participated in activities designed to familiarise them with our daily routines, from navigating the school layout to understanding our classroom expectations. This commitment to learning was evident in every activity, as they embraced new challenges and absorbed information with enthusiasm.

More importantly, these days were all about fostering a sense of belonging. Through various group activities, and interactions with their new classmates and our current students; our future Year 7s truly began to feel like part of the HCCS family. The laughter and discussions filling our restaurant and classrooms is a testament to the new friendships forming and the connections being made. We saw such a great sense of pride as they engaged in tasks and started to envision themselves as part of our school, demonstrating early ambition for their time here.

Our dedicated staff were on hand to guide and support them every step of the way, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. We're incredibly proud of how our older students also stepped up, acting as fantastic student leaders and helping the new students feel at ease.

We're so excited about the journey ahead with this bright and enthusiastic group of students. Thank you to all the families for your support in making these transition days such a success. We can't wait to see what amazing things our new Year 7s will achieve at HCCS!

Whole School Assembly

This morning, as part of our Sports Day provision, we conducted a whole school online assembly on the school's values. This was led by Mr Bielby, Mr Lowe and Mr Munro. You can view this recorded assembly [here...](#)



WHOLE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

27TH JUNE 2025



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Sixth Form Student Leadership Team 2025/26

We are pleased to announce our 6F Student Leadership team for 2025-26!

Head Students of School - Elizabeth Smith and Lydia Davenport

Assistant Head Student of School - Tabitha Ranfield

Head Students of Sixth Form - Elliot Griggs and Amelie Mitten

Assistant Head Student of Sixth Form - Daniel Pass

Heads of Extended Leadership Team - Lizzie Earl and Phoebe Smith

Extended Leadership Team - Jacob Bardill, Arina Semych, Poppy Cummings, Lottie Evenden and Rachael O'Sullivan.

The application process was extremely competitive and we are very excited to see the impact this team will have across our community. A huge well done to them all!



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Change-Grow-Live: Visit to HC6F!

On Monday 23rd June, HC6F welcomed Natalie Mottram into college for a 'Drugs/ Alcohol Awareness Pop-Up'. Natalie chatted to lots of our students, giving them advice on protecting themselves from issues such as drink spiking and the dangers of drug use. Some of our students also bravely tried on some 'beer goggles', resulting in a few bumps as they tried to navigate their way around.



Work Experience 2026 (present Year 9s)



As previously announced next year's Year 10 will have the opportunity to complete one week of work experience in the week beginning Monday 23rd March 2026.

It is an excellent opportunity for students to gain a feel for the working world and gain an insight into possible future careers.

On Monday all Year 9s will have an assembly to introduce work experience and the online platform called 'Unifrog' which is how the work experience process is administered. All students have a Unifrog account which parents and students can access at home.

All parents/carers should then receive an online letter introducing Unifrog.

Now is an excellent time to begin searching for a placement. Opportunities in medicine, veterinary, legal and media work particularly are very popular and fill up very quickly.

The deadline for all placements is February 1st 2026.

If you require further information please contact Mrs Jill Rawsthorne, email jill.rawsthorne@hccs.info



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As a school we came together to support National School Sports Week. National School Sports Week is an annual campaign highlighting the importance of physical education, sport and play in schools.

During the week our Sports Leaders led assemblies which highlighted how movement can help to support our Physical & Mental Health.

Students were invited to wear a sports t-shirt in their PE lessons where they participated in tournaments inspired by the Euro 2025 countries.



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We also had a visit from an athlete mentor 'Anya Williams' who plays for Manchester Thunder Netball team and England Roses. She led masterclasses, assemblies and question and answer sessions which were inspirational. In addition we had a rugby masterclass led by a local coach this will hopefully lead to some club links next year.

Our staff rounders match was a highlight of the week where almost 30 members of staff got together to enjoy some movement and fun in the sun.

It was a great week enjoyed by many and hopefully the benefits of being 'always active' have been reinforced to our students and staff.





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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

SAFETY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Currently, children are growing up in an immediate and throwaway culture when it comes to content that's consumed online. So much material is now deliberately created to be shorter in nature – and may often contain hidden elements such as advertising, or extreme political and cultural views. With complex algorithms built to keep people on their phones and engaging with social media content, it's becoming increasingly difficult to reduce time spent on these platforms.

1 REDUCE DOOMSCROLLING

It's concerning how common for young people to spend hours 'doomscrolling' trawling through social media and aimlessly viewing every post they see, many of which might make them feel sad or anxious. Social media can be useful for keeping in touch with friends and family, as well as staying up to date on current events. However, it's important to use it with a clear purpose, instead of endlessly scrolling through content, which could lead to young people accidentally discovering harmful material.

2 TALK ABOUT THE CONTENT

It's important to keep apprised of the kind of content that a young person is being exposed to. Discussing what they're watching online can help you understand why they're using social media in the first place. Furthermore, ensure that children are aware of hidden content, such as advertising of a product – and that they know how to spot that the creator is being paid to talk about it.

3 FIND POSITIVE ASPECTS

Despite all the concerns, there's plenty of wholesome content on social media. It's worth spending time with children to help them find something suitable and enjoyable. Perhaps you'll even discover a joint interest, and you can enjoy the content alongside the child. As part of this, you should also point out why certain things shouldn't be given attention, explaining why it isn't suitable and why it's been created in the first place.

4 REDUCE SCREENTIME

Young people can sometimes be unaware of the exact amount of time they spend looking at social media. Smart phones don't just have the capacity to monitor screentime; they also record how much time is spent on each app. Consider setting targets to reduce this and support children to meet these goals, gradually reducing the amount of time spent on different apps.

5 FILL THE VOID

Monitoring and reducing screentime can create a lot of free time to fill, and young people can even face withdrawal symptoms when made to step away from their phones. To mitigate this, consider what offline activities you could introduce the child to, and what they would enjoy. This can ensure that young users will permanently cut down on their screentime, rather than temporarily doing so while they know it's being monitored.

6 REDUCE NOTIFICATIONS

One way in which social media platforms keep people coming back is through notifications. The algorithms behind these apps track people's daily habits, including the times of the day where they're most likely to engage with the platform. This data is then used to deliver specifically timed notifications to draw them back in. To avoid young users being exposed to this tactic, simply turn off notifications for the app in their phone's settings.

7 LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD

Overexposure to social media can distort someone's perception of the real world – from body norms to social conventions. This filtered environment can make it hard for young people to distinguish reality from online content, which is now becoming even more difficult with the rise of AI. To mitigate this concern, take time to teach young people how to discern truth from fiction, both on and off social media.

8 DIGITAL DETOX

Encouraging young people to take a 'digital detox', from even just a couple of the apps that they use, can result in an overall reduction of screentime and less exposure to potentially harmful content. Alternatively, rather than avoiding the app entirely, encourage children to take a 'digital detox' from content creators and influencers, and instead, keep in touch with friends and family – which is generally a far healthier use of these platforms.

9 MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Consider the habits that you're demonstrating to your children. How much time do you spend on your phone? How much do you 'doomscroll'? Comparing your own usage with the child's could put things into perspective for them – or if it turns out that you're also overusing social media, it can turn screentime reduction into a joint mission, which you and the child can work on together.

10 BE CLEAR ON THE "WHY"

Research shows that young people can become addicted to social media. There are many schools that are moving towards being 'phone free' due to the negative impacts of using social media and phones continuously. It's important to explain to young people why managing screentime is important. Set out the benefits and ensure they have all the relevant information, so it's not just seen as a punishment.

Meet Our Expert

John Insley is a senior leader in a Birmingham secondary school and has vast experience in leading schools over the past 15 years – including the development of computing curriculums across primary and secondary schools, writing e-safety policies and supporting schools with computing and e-safety advice.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/top-tips-for-safety-on-social-media>

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10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO MANAGE CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY

Disagreement is a natural part of human interaction. This can seem particularly true when dealing with the sensitive issues that arise for secondary-aged pupils. This guide brings you 10 top tips which can help prevent conflicts arising or mitigate their impacts when they do.

1 INSPIRE RESPONSIBILITY

The best approaches to conflict resolution are restorative. This means that rather than adults imposing their own solutions on children who have had a disagreement, they should work with them. Allowing them to handle it can feel empowering to young people and will hopefully teach them to manage their own disputes as they move towards adult life.

2 ACTIVELY LISTEN

Remember to give every child the opportunity to voice their opinion, regardless of their age, stage of development, special educational needs, or other individual requirements. This can be done using a variety of different communication methods. For example, some children find it easier to express how they're feeling using pictures and drawings, while some prefer to write their ideas down.

3 BE CURIOUS

Demonstrating how to approach conflicts with a mature and empathetic mindset can set a good example to children, which can prove a useful skill for them later in life. Model this by asking inquisitive-yet-respectful questions about the issue at hand. Really try to understand where all parties are coming from, and share information between them when and where appropriate. This should encourage young people to mirror your behaviour, teaching them to be curious about the other sides of a conflict, and thus being more willing to hear them out.

4 PROMOTE DIFFERENCES

Children and young people may come from a range of different backgrounds and cultures or have protected characteristics which may cause them to see things from various angles. Having a school and community culture which celebrates and embraces diversity in all things – including diversity of opinion – means people are more likely to feel heard and understood.

5 BE SUPPORTIVE

Discussions may be sensitive or, in some cases, even trigger negative emotions. Pupils may have mixed feelings about the issue at hand. They could be nervous or anxious before even coming to the table to talk about it. Try and create a space where all parties feel safe, welcome and comfortable. Allow breaks and time-outs if the conversation gets heated, to prevent anyone from saying something they might later regret.

6 MENTALLY PREPARE

Think of how you can approach the conflict in a calm and regulated manner. Consider taking some extra time to prepare beforehand and finding somewhere quiet to relax. Even if you're not directly involved with the conflict, mediating can be a stressful experience in its own right. Make sure you're hydrated, fed and comfortable, and do the same for the young people involved. These may seem like insignificant factors, but it's important to remember that physical discomfort can trigger dysregulation, which can make it much harder to have a calm, productive conversation.

7 GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT

Make sure you have all the facts, figures and timelines of the situation prior to the discussion. This should be done as objectively as possible with the aim of resolving the ongoing issue. You may want to risk assess any problems that may arise and look for possible solutions during your preparation time.

8 STICK TO THE POINT

Make the reason for, and purpose of, any meetings or communications clear prior to setting them up. Provide an agenda. Act as a neutral chairperson who can keep all parties on track. Make sure everyone has a chance to air their concerns about the issue being discussed and try to avoid talking about unrelated incidents. Close off with some action points, detailing what everyone can do to resolve the conflict.

9 BE SOLUTION FOCUSED

It's often said that the art of diplomacy is about giving others ladders to climb down. This means the main aim of any meeting or correspondence should be finding mutually acceptable and amicable solutions. Parents, carers, teachers and pupils should be aware there may need to be a compromise for the common good – and, most importantly, the good of the children you're supporting.

10 DON'T IGNORE OR AVOID CONFLICT

No one benefits from allowing concerns and grievances to fester, as this can lead to further division and mistrust, and ultimately doesn't help the children involved. Use our tips to open meaningful lines of communication. These should help you find a suitable resolution and minimise the number of conflicts you're faced with mediating overall.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a neurodivergent former SENCO and advisory teacher. She founded her company, Neuroteachers, to improve inclusion for neurodivergent people. She works with nurseries, schools, colleges and businesses providing consultancy, training and mentoring to create belonging and understanding for people with the full range of neurotypes.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/supporting-children-to-manage-conflict-effectively>

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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 them 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

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 other.

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.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/choose-respect>

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