



# Safety Rocks

Working together to keep children safe

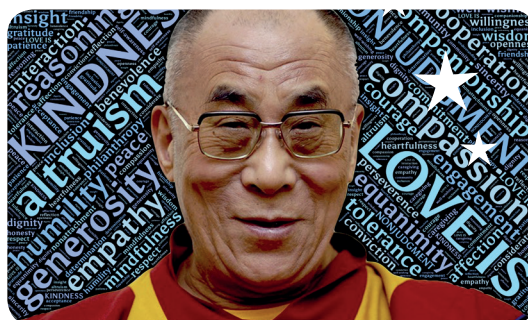
★ Parent & Carer Newsletter ★ Autumn 2016

The Kindness Edition: welcome to the Autumn edition of 'Safety Rocks'. This term we focus on the importance of kindness; in preventing bullying, helping us to manage stressful times and look after ourselves and others.

## ★ Anti-Bullying Week – “The Power for Good”

The national theme for anti-bullying week this year is 'Power for Good'. Brighton & Hove City Council is working in partnership with schools to use this as an opportunity to promote the positive values of kindness and standing up for others across the school community. Some schools will be encouraging children and young people to carry out random acts of kindness and families might want to do the same.

As always, schools will be reminding the whole community that bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. In this way, bullying is different to one-off acts of unkindness. Parents and carers who want to know more about bullying or how to support their child may want to read the Council leaflet which can be found here: [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/schools/bullying-schools](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/schools/bullying-schools)



★ **World Kindness Day** is celebrated on November 13th as a day to celebrate and promote kindness in all its forms. Why not join in by carrying out an act of kindness on that day or any other day for a neighbour, friend, family member or even a stranger?

## ★ Competition time!

Every year, Safety Net produces a colourful calendar which is distributed to parents and carers across the city. This year we are inviting children to send us their drawings on the theme of 'Power for Good'. This could be about something that they could do themselves to do good for others in their family or community, or about the power of good that other people have done for them. The winning entry will receive a £30 amazon gift voucher, and 2 runners up a £10 voucher each. Other winning entries will feature in our calendar and be given out to parents and carers through primary schools across the city. Please send or email us your



drawing, picture or poem on a piece of A4 paper, to the Safety Net address:

*Safety Net, Emmaus Offices, Drove Road, Portslade BN41 2PA.*

The entry needs to include your child's name and age and your contact details so we can let you know if yours is a winning entry! Please send your entries to us by Wednesday 23rd November.

## ★ Encouraging kindness

Did you know there are 7 billion people in the world? It's really hard to imagine what that might look like. Now try to imagine if all those people showed one another kindness and respect what kind of world it might be?

What about if we all started behaving like that towards each other in Brighton & Hove? What might our city be like as a place to live? It may sound idealistic, but we have to start somewhere and it's surprising how big the effects of a small act of kindness can be on ourselves, our families and the people around us. The best thing about being kind is that research shows that when we are kind to others, we feel better too.

Research has found that children are hard wired to be considerate and kind and as parents or carers, it's our job to help encourage their natural urge to help out so that it becomes a lifelong habit. We can do this by being a good role model ourselves. Here are some of the things we can do to make helping a part of family life.

**Do Unto Others...** Find opportunities to help out your neighbours and friends and get your children involved too. That could be checking on an elderly neighbour, looking for a lost cat, baking a cake, taking in a parcel or sending a card.

Set a good example by being kind and polite to strangers; let someone go ahead of you in the queue at the supermarket, help someone cross the road or take time to talk to your local shopkeeper. Teaching your children to notice what's going on in people's lives encourages empathy and can inspire them to become keen helpers.

**Share what you have** Think about the things that you have that you could share with others, it could be some flowers out of your garden, clothes you don't need anymore, books or toys that you've read and could pass on, or some of your time to help someone out. If children see you sharing your time and things, they are more likely to do the same.

**Ask children to do jobs** Children need to understand that a certain amount of helping at home is requested and required "just because"; they're members of the family, they live under the same roof, and just because it's the right thing to do.



So show them where the cat food is and how to clear the dinner table, make their beds and clean up after themselves. And keep a chore chart to track and reward them when they complete their tasks.

**Look on the Bright Side** Sometimes, it can seem as if bad news is all around us. Point out to your children the good things that are happening and the good people who are helping others. This makes children feel better about the world they live in and also gets them thinking creatively about the small acts of kindness which can make a big difference.

**Don't criticise children's efforts** Even if you can do jobs around the house quicker and better than they can, if you are too critical and impatient or end up taking over, it will leave your little helpers feeling inept, unskilled and less likely to offer their services again. So give praise for any efforts to help them feel valued and like they can make a difference at home.

**Be nice** Compliment a stranger on how they handled a difficult situation with their child, say "good morning" to a neighbour or thank the pizza delivery person. Sometimes a simple acknowledgement or expression of appreciation is just the boost someone needs to get through the day. Be kind to the environment by picking some rubbish off the pavement and putting it in the bin or feeding the birds in your garden.

*Adapted from Kristine Breese '14 Little ways to encourage kindness' [www.parents.com](http://www.parents.com) & thanks to Katrina Byrne for helping with this article*

### SOME USEFUL RESOURCES

- ★ **Random Acts of Kindness:** [www.randomactsofkindness.org](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org)
- ★ **Pay It Forward:** [www.payitforwardday.com](http://www.payitforwardday.com)
- ★ **Book:** *Have you filled a Bucket Today? A guide to Daily Happiness for Kids*, by Carol McCloud.



## ★ The value of kindness

**Did you know?...** Doing acts of kindness reduces anxiety. During four weeks, researchers asked people with high levels of anxiety to do kind acts for other people at least six times a week. The researchers found that doing nice things for people led to a significant increase in people's positive moods, relationship satisfaction and a decrease in anxiety.

**Teaching kindness is good for children's physical and emotional health:** an expert in neuroscience reports that: *"Kindness changes the brain by the experience of kindness. Children and adolescents do not learn kindness by only thinking about it and talking about it. Kindness is best learned by feeling it so that they can reproduce it."* Patty O'Grady PHD.

**Happy, caring children:** the good feelings that we experience when being kind are produced by endorphins which activate areas of the brain associated with pleasure, social connection, and trust. These feelings of joyfulness are proven to be contagious and encourage more kind behaviour by both the giver and receiver. Acts of kindness help us form connections with others which are reported to be a strong factor in increasing happiness.

**Greater sense of belonging and improved self-esteem:** studies show that people experience a "helper's high" when they do a good deed. This rush of endorphins creates a lasting sense of pride, well-being, and an increased sense of belonging. Even small acts of kindness are proven to increase energy, and give a wonderful feeling of optimism and self-worth.

**Increased peer acceptance:** research among adolescents showed that being kind increases children's popularity and ability to form meaningful connections with other people. Being well-liked is shown to be an important factor in children's happiness and good mental health.

**Improved health and less stress:** there are a number of physical and mental health benefits that



result from being kind. These actions trigger a release of the hormone oxytocin, which can significantly increase a person's level of happiness and reduce stress levels. Oxytocin also protects the heart by lowering blood pressure which means that being kind could also slow down the aging process!

**Increased feelings of gratitude:** when children are part of activities that help others less fortunate than themselves, it provides them with a real sense of perspective, highlighting their own good fortune. Being generous helps them appreciate what they have, makes them feel useful, and encourages empathy.

**Better concentration, mood and improved results:** kindness is a key factor in helping children to feel positive and good about themselves as it increases serotonin levels. This important chemical affects learning, memory, mood, sleep, mental and physical health, and digestion. Children with a positive outlook have greater attention spans, more willingness to learn, and better creative thinking to improve results at school.

Adapted from Lisa Currie's  
article for Edutopia:  
[www.edutopia.org.uk](http://www.edutopia.org.uk)



## We would love to hear from you!

★ **If you have a question** or would like to suggest a topic for future editions, email us at [newsletter@safety-net.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@safety-net.org.uk). For an online edition, visit [www.safety-net.org.uk](http://www.safety-net.org.uk) or [www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk](http://www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk)

★ **Join our Editorial Team** - If you would like to get involved in suggesting topics, giving feedback and helping put this newsletter together, why not join our community editor's team? This could be via email, phone or coming to meetings at our offices. It could just be one or two hours' a month or more if you have time.

# Topics for the Term

## ★ Christmas Break



Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, it can be hard to avoid the hype and the pressure that can surround it.

For many people it's a lovely time of year with families spending quality time together without the pressures of work and school. However for some families, Christmas is a really difficult time with unachievable expectations of what a perfect family Christmas should be.

In a recent poll some people rated Christmas as more stressful than divorce or being burgled! This can lead to arguments or feelings of resentment.

If you feel this starting to build up, try to make sure that you plan ahead and share the load for example of buying presents and doing shopping; be realistic in what you can afford to spend and try to focus on the things that are free or low cost as part of the enjoyment.

Why not find ways in which you can save some money whilst getting the children involved? You could have lots of fun making new Christmas decorations together or perhaps you could go Bake Off style and make some biscuits or cakes to give to someone as a Christmas present. Check out the Christmas for kids recipes at [www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/christmas-kids](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/christmas-kids) ★

For more present ideas go to [www.allfreechristmascrafts.com](http://www.allfreechristmascrafts.com) ★

If you have some free time over Christmas, why not spend some time volunteering? You could get your children involved and help make someone's Christmas that little bit less lonely. For ideas and opportunities, take a look at [www.welovebrighton.com](http://www.welovebrighton.com). ★

## ★ Keeping safe online

If you are planning on giving your child a new mobile phone, tablet or laptop for Christmas then you will need to consider ways in which to keep them safe online.

Top tips include:

- ★ Setting up parental controls
- ★ Discussion around taking & sending pictures/sexting
- ★ Public Wi-Fi hotspots
- ★ Using the device too much
- ★ Location tracking

One local school head teacher recommends parents look at the Common Sense Media website for advice. He says: "We have been referring parents to this website when we have an issue with children playing inappropriate games (e.g. Call of Duty) or watching

films, as well as the obvious social media sites. It also includes books - recently we had a problem with a child reading pretty explicit horror novels. The parent was just happy he was reading but was really shocked to find out the content..."

Check out Common Sense Media's website for top online safety tips: [www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)



**For further information on keeping your child safe online, you can sign up to an online safety session for parents run by Safety Net. For more details, email us at [training@safety-net.org.uk](mailto:training@safety-net.org.uk) or call 01273 420 973.**

**Working with communities to keep children safe**

Manor Offices, Emmaus, Drove Rd, Portslade, BN41 2PA

Registered Charity No. 1108772 Company Limited by Guarantee: 05319388

[www.safety-net.org.uk](http://www.safety-net.org.uk) ★ tel: (01273) 411 613 🐦 @safetynetbtm f safetynetbrighton  
[www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk](http://www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk) 🐦 @LSCB\_Brighton



This newsletter is sponsored by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service