**Wellbeing Advice Issue 6 – Random Acts of Kindness, Mrs Wardle at Cavendish**

It is fair to say that this pandemic has changed the way we live our lives very dramatically, with all services suspended and our freedom curtailed, standing in ques to go to the shops, it seems quite certain that the way in which we live our lives will never quite be the same. Even though restrictions are being lifted, we still have to consider everything we do and how we do it. Times have been tough and for many, there is still uncertainty in so many forms. Children have left school without their usual celebrations, exams have been cancelled, Proms cancelled, life can seem quite bleak if we only focus on the negatives.

So while we are all concerned about the lack of amenities, cancellation of holidays, children missing out on activities and their education and of course the employment situations some of us are faced with. We also need to find a way of seeing all the positives that have been happening around us. People all over the world have been using this uncertain time to display exceptional human qualities by selflessly helping others. It is very humbling to understand the beauty that is emerging from these difficult times. All of these wonderful selfless acts restore our faith in humanity and inspire us all to be better versions of ourselves moving forward. So many people have found a deeper purpose in life with the emphasis on selfless acts to help those in need. This pandemic has highlighted the fragility of life and how easily people in our communities can slip into helplessness, but the selfless acts of some people within our communities has highlighted the human decency within us all.

Our lives will be different from the lives we lived before the pandemic took hold, we all have to think very carefully about how we live and what we value. This time at home has given us the opportunity to re-evaluate the importance of family and relationships, this quality time has enabled parents to bond with their children and make the most of family time. Routines have changed and relationships strengthened. We are all taking responsibility for things we never did before, parents are educating their children, teachers are teaching remotely, working from home has become routine for some, navigating all these new activities seems to have become our new normal.

The power of kindness is more important than ever. While at the moment we are faced with fears and anxieties, our lives literally depend on the kindness and heroic efforts of strangers. We have praised the efforts of our fabulous NHS and found new heroes in many other industries, our new normal is flooded with super heroes without capes, we are filled with pride, admiration and a new found determination to be better versions of ourselves. Helping our neighbours, supporting our extended families looking out for each other is now more important than ever. Every day if we look hard enough we can find stories of new heroes, people are pushing their own personal boundaries to be better and do better. Never have we admired more people around us or been more proud of our communities. It is so important to value all that we have and be at peace with where we are. During this unique time with our loved ones, we can take the time to teach our children kindness.

[Mental Health Foundation have a fantastic page on random acts of kindness](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/random-acts-kindness)

[BBC News has a lovely article about people performing random acts of kindness](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/c6n9n9p289vt/acts-of-kindness)

I found a great video of 8 year old Eyva talking about Friendships and happiness in a Ted Talk, click [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICmok9ElvXI) to watch it.

Another fantastic Ted Talk by Orly Wahba on Making Kindness Viral through random acts of kindness. Very inspirational to watch the power of kindness, click [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyrsCtme76M) to watch.

Teaching kindness should be fun and enjoyable for all. It should not feel like a stressful task, especially with everything that we are trying to juggle at the moment just to keep the balance. Talking with your children about essential workers and the heroic acts that they are performing during this time of coronavirus is very important. Helping them to understand the bravery of medical professionals, emergency services professionals and all essential workers of all kinds can help them to understand how far acts of kindness can go. Even though some restrictions are being lifted, it is never too late to display signs of gratitude, chalk drawings of thanks on the drive or pavement, being grateful and thankful is a simple way of spreading happiness and encouraging feelings of happiness and wellbeing.

We are all still in close quarters and it is even more important than ever to practice kindness towards each other in the home. Encourage your children to become ‘kindness elves’. Encourage them to come up with different ideas no matter how small to surprise other family members with kindness. Depending on children’s age, elf tasks can range from making beds, cooking meals, making art for each other and surprising family members with surprise hugs.

Although we have limited options regarding interaction with others, this doesn’t mean that there aren’t options for spreading kindness. Just a simple act of smiling at a stranger, leaving freshly baked cookies on a neighbour’s door step, decorating a stone and leaving it somewhere for someone else to find or calling someone out of the blue for a chat, all of these simple acts can make someone else’s day.

No matter how small the acts of kindness you teach your children are, none are taught as well as those learnt from you modelling the behaviour yourself. With your family being more concentrated at the moment due to lock down, now more than ever, your actions and decisions are being absorbed and focussed on by your children.

This in no way means that you can’t have a bad day or be open about emotions like anger and frustration. It just means that you remember the importance of kindness in your actions right now, and that you don’t forget that kindness means being kind to yourself! The more you talk about being kind to yourself and others, the more your children will understand the importance of kindness in your choices.

Please remember that we are always available should you need any help, advice or just a chat if you need to contact us please email on [wellbeing@cavendish.e-sussex.sch.uk](mailto:wellbeing@cavendish.e-sussex.sch.uk) we look forward to hearing from you.