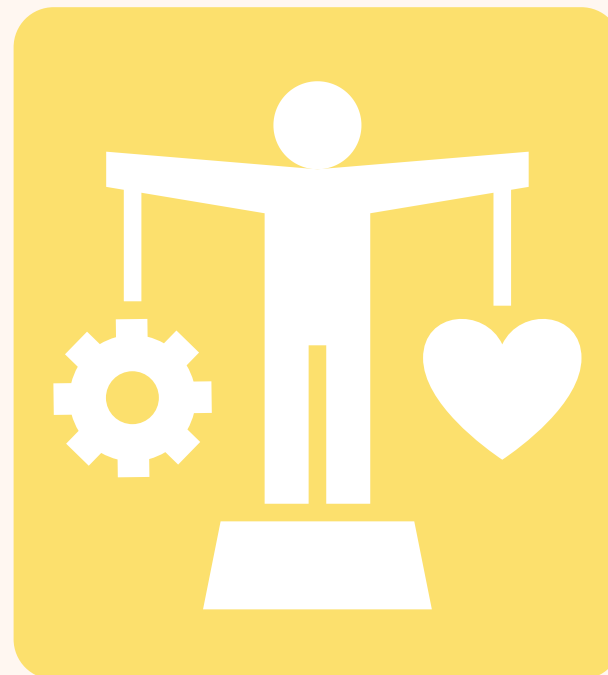
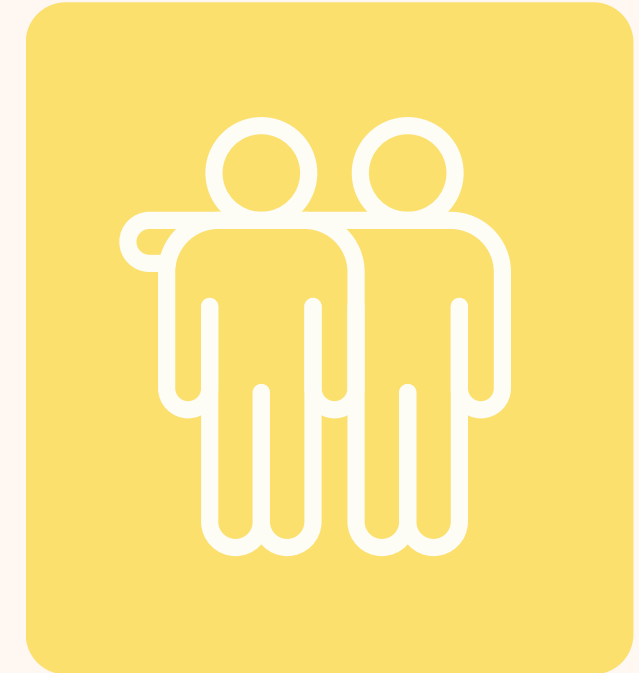




THE BALANCE BULLETIN

**Supporting the mental health and
wellbeing of our school community**

*Sharing information and signposting to
support to help your family thrive*



WELCOME

Welcome to our March edition of **The Balance Bulletin**, our monthly communication focused on shining a spotlight on all things mental health and wellbeing.

This month we are reflecting on the success of our SCARF workshop day which launched our celebrations for Children's Mental Health Week and culminated in a very colourful 'Dress as your Emotion' Day where every child had the opportunity to express themselves through their choice of clothing.

We are also looking ahead to World Book Day, which is celebrated this year on the **Thursday 5th March**, and thinking about how books and reading can have a really positive impact on our wellbeing.

As ever, we are also sharing information, advice, and signposting you to courses and workshops, that can support your family's wellbeing journey. We really hope our Balance Bulletins are helping you to foster a happy, healthy environment for your family to grow and thrive.





Mindful March 2026

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1 Set an intention to live with awareness and kindness

2 Notice three things you find beautiful in the outside world

3 Start today by appreciating your body and that you're alive

4 Notice how you speak to yourself and choose to use kind words

5 Bring to mind people you care about and send love to them

6 If you find yourself rushing, make an effort to slow down

7 Take three calm breaths at regular intervals during your day

8 Eat mindfully. Appreciate the taste, texture and smell of your food

9 Take a full breath in and out before you reply to others

10 Get outside and notice how the weather feels on your face

11 Stay fully present while drinking your cup of tea or coffee

12 Listen deeply to someone and really hear what they are saying

13 Pause to watch the sky or clouds for a few minutes today

14 Find ways to enjoy any chores or tasks that you do

15 Stop. Breathe. Notice. Repeat regularly

16 Get really absorbed with an interesting or creative activity

17 Look around and spot three things you find unusual or pleasant

18 Have a 'no plans' day and notice how that feels

19 Cultivate a feeling of loving-kindness towards others today

20 Focus on what makes you and others happy today

21 Listen to a piece of music without doing anything else

22 Notice something that is going well, even if today feels difficult

23 Tune into your feelings, without judging or trying to change them

24 Appreciate your hands and all the things they enable you to do

25 Focus your attention on the good things you take for granted

26 Choose to spend less time looking at screens today

27 Appreciate nature around you, wherever you are

28 Notice when you're tired and take a break as soon as possible

29 Choose a different route today and see what you notice

30 Mentally scan your body and notice what it is feeling

31 Discover the joy in the simple things of life



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together



This month's calendar from **Action for Happiness** is full of simple ways to **pause**, **breathe** and **notice** what's around you.

We can't always control what's happening around us, but we can choose how we meet each moment. *How many will you try this month?*

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS - MINDFUL MARCH

SCARF AND CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

February was a busy month for mental health and wellbeing with our special **SCARF** workshop day and thinking about **belonging** through the 'This Is My Place' theme for Children's Mental Health Week.

We welcomed Caroline from SCARF (plus Gerald the Giraffe!) in a whole-school Collective Worship on the SCARF values, followed by themed workshops - **Online Behaviours** (Y5&6), **Gratitude** (Y2) and **Acceptance** (Y3). The children engaged really positively with their sessions and reflected on their wellbeing, demonstrating their growing awareness of the importance of mental health and the steps we can take to look after it.

Each class took part in a range of different activities across Children's Mental Health Week to continue the conversations around mental health and how we can support it. Colour monsters were made to represent different emotions, the different groups we belong to were explored, and pictures were designed which will be used to help create a mosaic display to reflect our belonging to a school community.

Our next wellbeing event is a **Health and Fitness Workshop** day on Thursday 26th March when pupils will be exploring how an active lifestyle contributes to positive mental health and learning daily health tips that can support wellbeing.



#WakeUpWednesday: Creative Ways to Encourage Reading

To link with World Book Day, this guide contains ten practical, creative ways to help children rediscover the joy of reading and build lifelong literacy habits.

With reading for pleasure in decline, this guide suggests thoughtful ways to reignite children's **enthusiasm for books** and explores how adults can nurture positive reading habits both at home and in school. Digital tools, audiobooks and augmented reality are also considered as engaging ways to support today's readers. It also highlights the power of **social connection** – recommending books, reading together and meeting authors – alongside the importance of modelling reading ourselves.

These supportive, achievable ideas can help young people reconnect with reading and see it as a meaningful part of everyday life. This can in turn boost their mental wellbeing as reading is proven to help **reduce stress, offer escapism, and improve emotional health.**

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday empowers and equips 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 CREATIVE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE READING

Reading regularly has a life-long impact, yet recent data from the National Literacy Trust shows a decline in reading for pleasure among 8- to 18-year-olds, with just 32.7% enjoying it in 2025. Despite growing distractions, there are practical ways adults can spark a love of reading. This guide offers strategies and resources to help inspire young readers.

- 1 VALUE ALL READING**
When we think about reading, it's very easy to picture a young person reading a fictional novel; however, reading is so much more than this. To help them understand, why not show them how to create a 24-hour reading diary? Jot down all reading and then discuss this with them. By doing this, you can demonstrate the many ways we turn to reading.
- 2 WIDEN THE SELECTION**
Once we know reading can be varied, we need to think about the selection of reading material they can access. Visit a shop selling magazines, the library and a bookshop, and consider the range of material that is available within them. Then consider how you might broaden their reading choices, so all young people have access to a wide and varied selection.
- 3 GIFT A BOOK**
One simple way to encourage reading is to make books feel special. Gifting a book adds value and shows it's something to be treasured. Whether it's as a reward or for a celebration like a birthday, let the young person choose a title or pick one you know they will enjoy. You could also include a personal note inside.
- 4 CONNECT WITH AUTHORS**
Meeting authors can certainly spark an interest in their reading material. This might be through a live event in a school/bookshop or by using the wealth of online material that is now available. Encourage young people to look at ways to connect with authors using free resources such as Authorly and Just Imagine's Children's Authors Live.
- 5 BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE**
Access training about reading for pleasure to widen your understanding of this topic and, more importantly, how to develop it. Explore a wide range of free resources that can be found online. The more you know, the better placed you are to inspire a love of reading in others.
- 6 TALK BOOKS**
There are times when we need silence to read and focus on our book; however, we know that reading is a social experience, so we must also factor in discussion time. Reading the same book gives two people a connection and the opportunity to voice their thoughts and questions about it. Why not buy two copies of a book and read it together? Start the connection.
- 7 RECOMMENDATIONS**
As well as talking about the content of books, we can share what we are reading or have read recently. This can often act as a trigger for someone else to explore it. How often have you watched a film or series because someone else has recommended it? It's the same with books. If you know the young person well, you can tailor your recommendations and share why you think they'll enjoy it.
- 8 GO DIGITAL**
With the rise in online digital material, we can easily focus on the negatives; however, it also brings a wealth of opportunities. Resources can aid and enhance the reading experience for young people. They can read along with audiobooks, translate, and track their reading goals with resources like Polylingo and apps like Goodreads for older children. Augmented reality books also bring books to life and offer a great way for engagement.
- 9 RECONNECT**
There can come a time when a love of reading seems to disappear. It does not mean it's gone forever; it generally means they have lost the connection. How do we get it back? Find the next piece of reading material that sparks their current interests. The National Year of Reading focus of 'Go All In' captures this well as it is their key theme. As children grow and change, so do their interests. A visit to the local library is a great way to support the reconnection.
- 10 LEAD BY EXAMPLE**
Let them see you reading. If you make time to read, you send a strong message to children's reading matters. Share why you enjoy it. Is it to relax, escape the world, learn something new or to be entertained? When children see reading as a normal and valued part of everyday life, they are more likely to adopt it themselves.

Meet Our Expert
Carl Pattison is a literacy advisor and early reading expert at The National College. Through his programmes, he supports schools to enhance reading and writing. In addition to his independent work, he also works for a large academy trust in the East Midlands as the strategic lead for their English Hub and Literacy Excellence Centre.

#WakeUpWednesday
The National College

See full reference list on our website
@wake_up_weds /www.thenationalcollege @wake.up.wednesday @wake.up.weds
Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 04.03.2025

SOMERSET PARENT/CARER FORUM

WISE UP WORKSHOPS



Somerset Parent Carer Forum offer a comprehensive programme of **WISE Up Workshops** (**W**orkshops for **I**nformation, **S**upport and **E**ducation). These sessions are aimed at parents/carers of young people with additional needs. They are completely **free** - you just need to be registered on their database to be able to add yourself to workshops. Click on the icon below to find out more.



Somerset Parent Carer Forum C.I.C

WISE UP WORKSHOPS
Empowering Parent Carers to succeed

WORKSHOPS RUN BY:

- Communication through play- SPCF
- Help your Neurodivergent child manage their Anxiety- CYPNP
- When siblings needs clash- Platypus
- How visuals can help you SEN child- SPCF
- EBBSA- SPCF & EP Service
- How to talk to your young person about Neurodiversity- CYPNP
- Low demand parenting- NeuroConnect
- AuDHD- Understanding those with co-occurring ADHD & Autism- Neurodiverse training
- Introduction into SEND- SPCF

MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
01	02 Communication through play 10.00-12.00	03	04	05	06 Help your Neurodivergent child manage their Anxiety 12.30-14.30	07
08	09 When siblings needs clash 10.00-12.00	10	11	12 How visuals can help support your SEND child 10-12	13	14
15	16 EBBSA 12.30-14.30	17 How to talk to your young person about Neurodiversity 10.00-12.00	18	19 Low demand parenting 12.00-14.00	20	21
22	23 AuDHD: Understanding those with co-occurring ADHD & Autism 18.30-20.30	24	25 Introduction into SEND 12.30-14.30	26	27	28
29	30	31				

LOCATION

Minehead	Taunton	Glastonbury
Online	Highbridge	Frome
Yeovil		



March 2026 Timetable

All sessions delivered live online via zoom. 90 minutes long

£24 each or FREE with School Membership

Book online at facefamilyadvice.co.uk

Recordings available for 48 hours (excluding Free Talk)

Improving Family Communication	2 Mar 10am
Autism - Improving Communication	2 Mar 7pm
Understanding Addictive Behaviour	3 Mar 10am
Supporting a Child with ADHD	3 Mar 7pm
Anxiety Based School Avoidance	9 Mar 10am
Understanding Anger	9 Mar 7pm
Supporting Healthy Screen Use	10 Mar 10am
Facing Defiance	10 Mar 7pm
Cannabis and Ketamine Awareness	16 Mar 10am
Anxiety Explained	16 Mar 7pm
Introduction to OCD	17 Mar 10am
What is ACT	17 Mar 7pm
Raising Self-Esteem	23 Mar 10am
Decreasing Depression	23 Mar 7pm
Supporting Healthy Sleep	24 Mar 10am
Understanding the Teenage Brain	24 Mar 7pm
FREE Anxiety Based School Avoidance	26 Mar 7-8pm



FACE

FAMILY ADVICE • COMMUNICATION • EDUCATION



FACE: Family Advice - Communication - Education

FACE gives practical, accessible and affordable support to parents through their programme of live, online talks (via Zoom) sharing up-to-date information, effective and easy to apply interventions, and the opportunity to ask questions and get practical advice.

Click [here](#) to book your online place or to receive an email to a link of the recording if you can't make the live session.

This month's free session is about **Anxiety Based School Avoidance** - if you are concerned about your child showing signs of this, sign up to find out more.

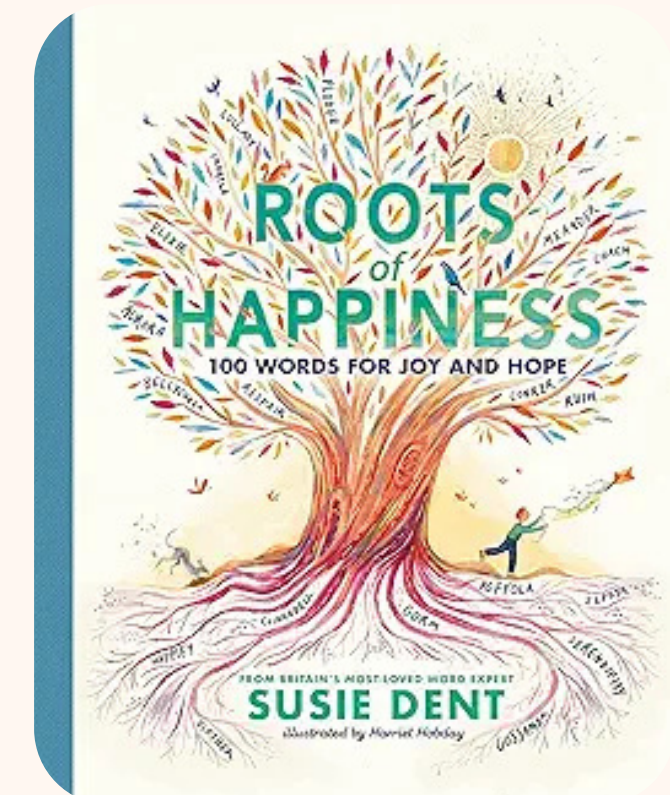
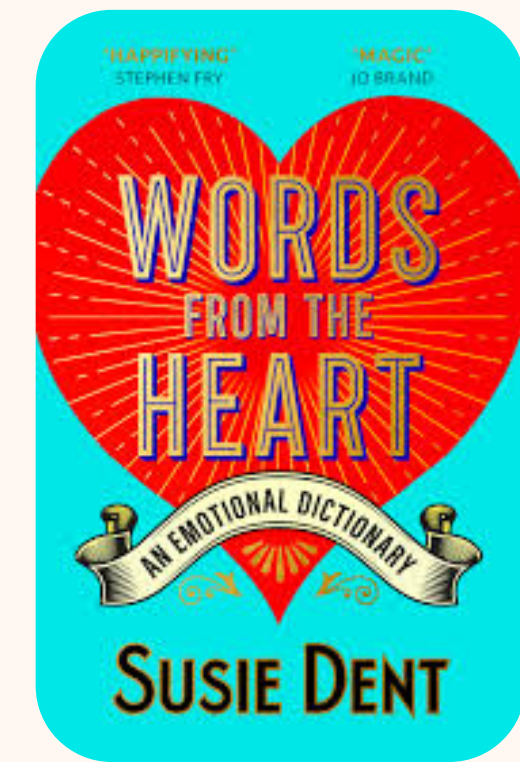
BOOKS TO SUPPORT EMOTIONAL LITERACY



To link with our 'word' theme for World Book Day, this month we are recommending two books all about **emotions** and **words**. Both books are by renowned language expert Susie Dent, and give readers the opportunity to express their emotions whilst also expanding their vocabulary.

Words From The Heart is aimed at adults and offers **1001** words to help you precisely say how you feel. It is full of fascinating words and stories that will both deepen and extend your vocabulary. Whether it's the distress of a bad haircut (**age-otori**) or longing for the food someone else is eating (**groaking**), the pleasure found in other people's happiness (**confelicity**) or the shock of jumping into icy water (**curglaff**), you will find a word to help you accurately express your emotions!

Roots of Happiness is a beautifully-illustrated book for readers young and old full of positive words to show how wonderful language can be and how you can use your words to make the world a happier place. This is the perfect book to lift you out of your **mubble fubbles** (a slightly sad mood), make you grin like a **gigglemug** (someone who never stops smiling), and have you feeling **forblissed** (extremely happy) in no time!





READ FOR EMPATHY 2026

EmpathyLab have launched their **#ReadforEmpathy** book collection for 2026! This year's selection of **diverse** and **brilliant** books has been carefully chosen by a panel of judges to do a specific empathy-building job.

Click on the image to load their informative guide and discover a wide range of **picture books, early readers, novels, graphic novels, non-fiction** and **poetry** which have been specifically selected for their power to boost empathy for, and understanding of, **other people's feelings and life experiences.**

These books have the power to help young people to experience, understand and practise **empathy** - a key, **learnable** life skill that is at the heart of **strong relationships** and **positive wellbeing.**



2026
Read for
EMPATHY
Collection

Read for
EMPATHY
COLLECTION
Celebrating 10 years

A guide to empathy-building books for children aged 3-11

The HIDEYSAURUS
LION INSIDE
KACHEL BIRCH
CHRIS CHUTEKICH

LEAVE THE TREES PLEASE
BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH
MELINA CARROLL

THE DOUGHNUT CLUB
KRISTINA RAHIM
BOB CROK

The Dinosaur Next Door
David Litchfield

GORAL RUMBLE
Jakub's Otter

THIS IS NOT A SMALL VOICE
BLACK POETS
TRACI N. TODD
JADE ORLANDO

PEOPLE LIKE STARS
PATRICE LAWRENCE

Vicky and June
Friends at Play
Patricia Teht
Hoang Giang

★ ★ ★ 40 titles selected by experts ★ ★ ★

GO ALL IN. | Empathy Lab

Mental Health and Wellbeing Help for Young People and Families

Mindline Somerset, Open 24 hours a day, seven-days a week, Mindline is open to people of all ages who need urgent mental health support. The helpline is the first port of call for mental health help – it is operated by people in your local area who will know how best to support you.



Parents of children 0-4:

Confidential help from the Health Visiting Team Just send a text **07480 635514**

Parents of children 5-19 years: looking for confidential help and advice? Just send a text to your School Nurse Team. Text **07480 635515**

Young People 11-19 years: Discreet and quick, it only takes one text to start making a difference. You'll get confidential advice from a local School Nurse. You don't have to give your name if you don't want to. Text **07480 635516**



ChatHealth is a mobile health service for parents and young people in Somerset making it easier to get health and wellbeing advice. **Monday-Friday 9am - 5pm.**

Young Somerset's Wellbeing Service - Free wellbeing support for young people experiencing low level mental health needs. Find out more here: www.youngsomerset.org.uk



Having good mental health helps us relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more. We have expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing. **Every Mind Matters** - www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/



Kooth - Safe and anonymous online support for young people **until 10pm** - friendly counsellors, self-help and community support. www.kooth.com



Suicide is the biggest killer of under 35's in the UK www.papyrus-uk.org



Mental Health and Wellbeing Help for Young People and Families

Somerset Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) webpages

We offer a variety of teams and services for young people aged 0-18 years old who are struggling with their mental health. www.somersetft.nhs.uk/camhs/

Recommended Support Apps

Calm Harm - www.calmharm.co.uk

distrACT - Available on the Apple App Store and Google Play



2BU Somerset

If you're a young person living in Somerset, you may find that being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender, or questioning your sexuality or gender identity can be difficult. This site is for you, have a wee look around. www.2bu-somerset.co.uk



Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

Text 'Shout' to **85258**



For Health & Wellbeing tips, advice & information including self-help support for young people, parents and carers visit: www.cypsomersethealth.org

For information about adult mental health support and resources in Somerset please visit: Support with your Mental Health - Healthy Somerset www.healthysomerset.co.uk





A FINAL TAKE-AWAY...