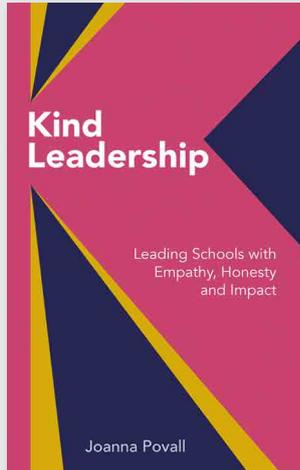


P R E S S R E L E A S E

"Joanna shows us that there is no weakness in kindness. On the contrary, there are high standards, clear boundaries, and proper support."

Paul Dix, Director, When the Adults Change



Kind Leadership

Leading schools with empathy, honesty and impact

By Joanna Povall

ISBN: 9781785837807

Price: £16.99

Published by: Crown House Publishing

Date of publication: March 2026

Demonstrating how genuine strength emerges through leading with empathy, kind communication and accountability.

Scan to learn more:



Reframing Kindness as a Powerful Force in School Leadership

Looking to spread a little kindness, the Princess of Wales¹, in a recent visit to Castle Hill Academy in New Addington, Croydon, told pupils that “kindness is key,” encouraging them to think about the people, places, and experiences that help them feel secure and connected—telling children that such connections are key to their development and wellbeing on her Instagram story after the visit.

At a time when UK organisations—from business leaders recognised on national kindness lists to universities launching compassionate leadership hubs—are embracing kindness as a core leadership value, a new book gives school leaders practical, evidence-informed methods to guide their teams with clarity and influence.

Kind Leadership by Joanna Povall challenges the long-held belief that kindness is weakness in leadership. Drawing on decades of experience in education, she argues that true kindness—grounded in clarity, courage and integrity—is one of the most transformative forces in modern schools. “I wanted to be respected, decisive and strong. Over time, I discovered that the most effective leadership I had experienced—and the most powerful leadership I could offer—was grounded in kindness.”

Opening with the striking quote often attributed to Al Capone, “Don’t mistake my kindness for weakness,” the book explores how traditional leadership models often prized authority, emotional distance and control. Through honest reflection and real-life case studies, Joanna shows how leading with empathy, transparency and high standards builds trust, strengthens performance and creates healthier school cultures.

Central to the book is the **CHASE Kindness framework**, built on five practical principles:

- **Communication** – Enabling trust through empathy
- **Honesty** – Aligning words and actions
- **Accountability** – Raising standards with respect
- **Self-esteem** – Building a sense of worth and belonging
- **Ego** – Leading with confidence, not control

¹ https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/kate-tells-children-kindness-is-key-as-she-joins-in-school-art-class-RNYJIV47RNKHNAPQOZAZPJHZ-BQ/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Rather than offering quick fixes, *CHASE Kindness* provides a reflective, experience-based guide for navigating the moments when leadership is most tested—difficult conversations, underperformance, conflict and mistakes. It argues that kindness is not about being soft or avoiding hard truths, but about upholding standards without sacrificing compassion.

In a post-pandemic educational landscape where teachers and leaders are seeking authenticity and support, *CHASE Kindness* offers a timely call to action: lead with humanity, courage and purpose.

Suitable for all leaders or aspiring leaders in schools.

"This book beautifully captures what we strive for in education – leadership rooted in kindness, integrity, and optimism."

Elodie Vallantine, Executive Head, International School Seychelles

About the author

Joanna Povall is the Principal of Wales International School, Abu Dhabi, UAE. She has over 25 years of leadership in the UK, France and the UAE. Alongside working as a Principal, she supports school improvement around the world in her role as a Lead Improvement Partner for the Council of British International Schools. She is an advocate of kindness as a powerful leadership tool that transforms school culture, raises morale, and strengthens professional relationships. Joanna was awarded *TES* International Principal of the Year in 2024, and her *CHASE Kindness* framework of leadership was shortlisted for the *TES* International School Staff Wellbeing Initiative of the Year in 2025.

Articles and interviews available

Joanna is available for interview, expert comment or by-lined articles on a range of topics, such as:

- How to Be Kind and Still Hold People to Account
- The Cost of Unkind Leadership on Staff Retention
- Kind Leadership During Difficult Conversations
- Creating a Kind Culture Under Pressure



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