

Managing relationships and friendships

A guide for young people



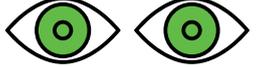
South West
Yorkshire Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

You probably haven't seen your friends or your teacher for a long time. Life during the coronavirus lockdown has been different for everyone.

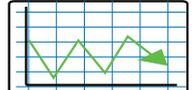
Soon you will be going back to school and seeing more friends and teachers. This leaflet will help you keep those friendships and relationships healthy.

Why and how friendships and relationships change

Friendships or relationships might change if...

 <p>Someone moves away</p>	 <p>You don't see that person very often</p>	 <p>If another person joins the group</p>	 <p>If there's a falling out or disagreement</p>
 <p>If you grow up and start to like new things</p>	 <p>If something bad happens to someone</p>	 <p>If someone loses a person they love</p>	 <p>You start to view someone differently</p>

Ways to manage changing friendships

 <p>Try to remember both the good and not so good things about your friend - nobody is perfect!</p>	 <p>Remember that you might have changed too.</p>	 <p>Try to accept that friendships do change and this is okay.</p>	 <p>Don't assume that they will still like the same things - ask them!</p>	 <p>Be honest - if something isn't working for you, tell them and remember most friendships have ups and downs.</p>
--	--	---	---	--

Going to a new school, college or university

Make a plan for you to both keep in touch and be willing to put in the effort:

- Create a fun ritual that is special. It could be weekly, fortnightly or monthly.
- Travel to see each other whenever you can. This will help you understand and stay involved in each other's lives.
- Show them you care with a quick message, gif, meme or old photo.
- Use technology to your advantage - video call or create a group chat if you haven't already.
- Be understanding. You might both be busy so try not to worry if your friend doesn't reply straight away

Just because you don't see someone every day doesn't mean you can't stay friends. People maintain friendships for years from other sides of the world.

Making new friends

There are both benefits and difficulties with making new friends. Here are three factors that will help:

- Build your confidence
- Stay approachable
- Get involved



Building your confidence

Breathe calmly

Take deep breaths as you think about making new friends. It's okay to be nervous, but try not to let this put you off trying. Remember that you're not likely to be the only one looking for new friends. There might be groups that have already formed, but there are usually others just like you trying to make new friends.

Be yourself

Do not change who you are to try to fit in. You deserve friends who accept you for who you are, even if you think you're a bit different.

Making new friends (cont.)

Building your confidence

Wear your favourite outfit

Focus on wearing clothes you like rather than something you think will impress people. Your clothes can help express your personality, but it's also important you feel comfortable in how you look. If your school has a uniform, see if there are ways you can make it fit your style.



Visualise your goal

If you are nervous or naturally quite shy, it can be easy to only think of how difficult it will be to make friends. Instead, close your eyes and imagine yourself succeeding and meeting new friends. Picture striking up conversation and enjoying the interaction. If you think positively, it is more likely to have a positive outcome.



Recognise all the steps you take along the way, such as asking someone new a question, or smiling and making eye contact with someone new.

Reflect on your qualities.

It'll be easier to make friends if you see yourself as a worthy friend. Write down some positive things about yourself and keep the list to hand, so you can remind yourself of these anytime.



Remember that nobody is perfect - even the most popular people have some not so good qualities!

Be approachable

SMILE. Nobody is going to think you're silly for smiling, even at people you don't know. Try to hold your head up and make eye contact with people rather than look at the floor. This can be hard if you're shy, so every time you manage it, give yourself a virtual high 5!



ASK A QUESTION. It's good to introduce yourself and tell people a bit about yourself, but asking questions about others can help them feel like you're interested in them. You can also ask questions about the school/college or compliment someone and turn it into a question.



Getting involved

- **Make the first move** - since you're new, people are more likely to be curious about you.
- **Join after school activities** - it's usually easier to make friends with others who have similar interests as you. A new school is a chance to reinvent yourself, so don't be afraid to try new things.
- **Try to sit in the middle of the classroom** - You'll have more chance to make conversation with people and are more likely to be paired up with a variety of people for group work.



5 reasons why it's okay to break friendships off

- 1 People change**
A big difference in adulthood is about choosing who you surround yourself with; you don't just need to befriend people because they're in the same class as you.
- 2 Or, people don't change**
As you learn more and get older, you will build up your particular beliefs and ways of thinking. Sometimes friends don't grow up in the same way as you, or may not seem to have grown up at all.
- 3 You have new priorities**
You will have more on your plate as your studies increase and you take on more commitments. You might have to prioritise who you spend your time with.
- 4 Toxic friendships**
Some friendships can turn sour, particularly if there is jealousy involved or peer pressure to behave in a certain way. You deserve friends who support you and make you feel valued; if this isn't the case, it may not be worth the time.
- 5 You have enough friends already**
It's okay to have different kinds of friends, and if you develop new ones, you might not feel the need to maintain the old ones. Try to prioritise friendships that bring out the best in you, but also be aware that sometimes your friend might really need you to be there for them.

With **all of us** in mind.