

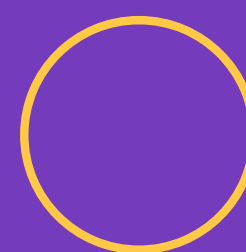


KIDSCAPE

Help With Bullying



Guide to Friendship



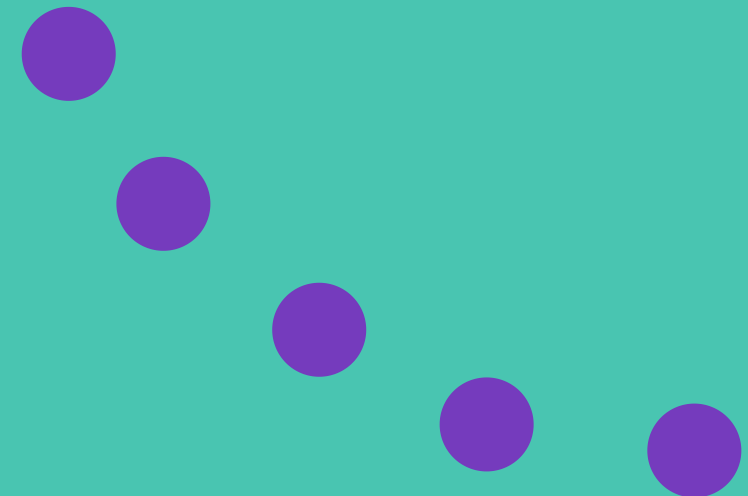
About this guide

Friendships are vital for our health and happiness. Friends are there in the good times and the tough times. They help us work through our problems and make us smile. Friends can come in all shapes and sizes, with different backgrounds and experiences. While it can feel easier to make friends with people who are like us, people who are different to us can teach us new things and ways of seeing the world.

Friends make us happy, but there are times when they may also make us angry or sad. For example, there may be times when we find it hard to make friends, or a friend lets us down. This is all part of being human!

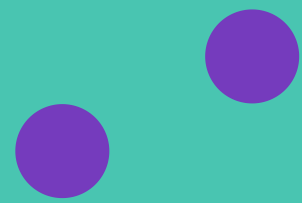
This is a guide to help you understand friendships. We hope that you will find good friends who give you the love and respect you deserve and that we can all learn to be better friends to others.





What makes a good friend?

Having good friends makes you happy and you can make others happy by being a good friend to them, too. Write down the qualities you look for in a friend:



The qualities of a good friend

1.

They make you feel good

They say and do things that make you feel good, give you compliments (say nice things about you) and are happy for you in the good times.

If you're feeling down, a good friend will support you

2.

If you need help, a good friend will try to help you out.

3.

Good friends listen

This means they listen to you talk and don't interrupt you. They're interested in what you have to say.

4.

**4.**

Good friends don't always have everything in common

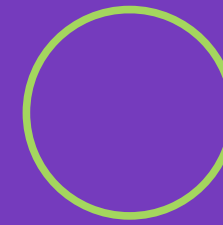
They accept and value your differences. Even if you're not into the exact same things, a good friend will encourage you rather than making you feel bad for liking different music, sports, TV shows, activities, or animals! A good friend understands that sometimes you do your own thing and enjoys doing the things you have in common together.

**5.**

Good friends are loyal

If you tell a good friend something private, they won't share it. You can trust a good friend not to laugh at you or say things behind your back. Brene Brown calls this 'the vault.' A vault is like a room or a box where things can be locked away safely. We cannot trust someone if they share private things without our permission.



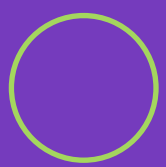


6.

Good friends are reliable

There are times when we all forget something we were meant to do, but most of the time good friends will do what they say they will do. They will turn up on time, they will remember important dates, they will be there for us.





Good friendships go both ways

7.

It's not a good friendship if one of you is always doing all the talking and the other is always doing all the listening. Good friends make each other feel good, rather than one friend receiving all the compliments and the other giving them all the time. In a good friendship, you make each other feel great!

**8.**

It's good to have more than one friend

Don't limit yourself by having just one "best friend." Your friendship is something special that you can share with everyone who needs a friend! Sometimes friends start having less in common with one another or stop being in touch. That's a part of life. Having more than one friend means it's easier to manage the end of friendships.

**9.**

Friends not followers

In the online world, like on the internet or social media, you can feel under pressure to have lots of friends and followers. Remember that you only need a small circle of friends to be happy. It's also a good idea to keep your most precious (and private) thoughts and moments for those that really care about you.



How to make friends

It's important for all of us to have friends – people who care about us and make us smile. Whether you're feeling lonely, starting a new school or just open to exploring new friendships, here's how you can make new friends.

Meet other people

Joining a club, youth group, or getting involved in an activity you enjoy is a great way of meeting new people. It's also a boost to your confidence to do something you love! Research what's available where you live and choose something that interests you. If you are unsure where to start, ask someone to help you, or ask others for ideas.





Help other people

Volunteering in your local community can be a fantastic way to meet other people.

Be a great listener

Introduce yourself to new people, ask questions about them, really listen to their answers, and look for things you have in common.

Think about your body language

If you look like you're trying to make yourself as small as possible, or you look threatening, people might not want to talk to you. Practice your body language in the mirror until you look like someone who is open and friendly. For example, practice smiling and looking relaxed. Think about facing towards someone and making eye contact (you can look at the tops of their ears if looking someone in the eye is difficult), and standing, or sitting near but not too close.



Make an effort



Don't wait for others to arrange to meet, or take part in an activity.. Ask your new friends if they'd like to hang out! Invite them to take part in activities with you.

Be a good friend



Be a good friend to your new friends. Be trustworthy, listen to them, be respectful and supportive. Read Kidscape's "What makes a good friend" guide for tips on good friendships.



Choose good friends

You deserve good friends. Surround yourself with people who make you feel good and remember it is okay to end a friendship if it doesn't make you feel good.

Friendships and 'frenemies'

Sometimes people who claim to be your friend can show bullying behaviour. Sometimes we call this a 'frenemy' or 'frenemies'.

- They might say “honest” things to you which are unkind or hurtful
- Put pressure on you to do things you don't want to do
- Be manipulative (e.g., “If you were my friend, you would...”)
- Put you down
- Laugh at you, or encourage others to laugh at you
- Talk about you behind your back or share your secrets
- Deliberately exclude you from group chat and activities
- Take the “banter” too far
- Make you feel bad about yourself



When banter goes too far

Banter between friends can be fun, and when everyone's in on the joke and enjoying themselves, it can be an important form of communication that bonds people together.

However, it can turn into bullying when someone is upset, hurt, or offended, and the other person refuses to stop. For example, if someone keeps teasing you about something, even if they can see you don't find it funny, it is becoming bullying behaviour.





Another form of banter that can turn into bullying behaviour is when friends make jokes or comments that relate to skin colour, ethnic background, religion, sexuality, or gender. You might feel under pressure to laugh or be told ‘it’s just a joke,’ but it creates an unsafe environment where people can’t be themselves – and suggests prejudice towards other people.

What to do if you have a frenemy

If you think you might have a frenemy, or if your friends have started to bully you or others in the group, here's what to do (and remember: the problem isn't you. It is important to remember this. Their behaviour might make you feel bad, but they need to change, not you.).

Talk to them about how their behaviour makes you feel. Explain calmly what they have done and the impact it is having.

Be specific, for example "I feel upset that you kicked me out of the group chat" or "I feel upset when you say that about my hair." Tell them what you'd like to happen – for example, setting a boundary such as certain topics being off-limits. Our guide to assertiveness offers you tips on how to sound calm and get your point across.





Their response will tell you whether this is someone you want to remain friends with. Sometimes we don't realise that our behaviour has hurt people. A loyal friend will be sorry that they made you feel bad, and not do it again. A frenemy is more likely to say you're overreacting or blame you for how they treated you.

If they say sorry, and it feels safe to do so, give them another chance.

If they mean it, they'll change their behaviour and stop making you feel bad.

However, sometimes frenemies might pretend to be sorry, but afterwards their behaviour doesn't change. If they're still making you feel bad despite what you've told them, it's time to move on.

Make new friends



Moving on can be scary, but you deserve people in your life who support you and make you feel good about yourself. See our guide to making new friends for help.

Don't retaliate



It can be tempting to encourage others to exclude your former frenemy, or to put them down behind their back. Don't do this: you're only showing the same behaviour you found difficult in them.

What if they retaliate?



After the friendship ends, your former friend might try to hurt you, or spread rumours about you. In time it's likely they'll get bored and moved on, but if the bullying carries on, visit the Kidscape website for help.

Friendships in the online world

The online world creates opportunities to meet new people who share our interests. They may be from our local community, somewhere else in our country, or even from around the world. Research from America found that over half of teenagers had made a new friend online, (Pew Research Center).

There are lots of positives to making friends online:

- We can find many people from around the world who share our interests.
- We don't have to worry about how we look, our body language, the school we go to, the area we live in, or how much money we have. It's harder to make quick judgements about other people.
- We are not limited by time and place. We can make contact at any time.
- If we don't feel comfortable with someone, it can feel easier to end the friendship.

But there are also things we need to look out for:

- People may not be who they say they are. Someone might pretend to be our age or pretend to like the same things as us because they want to hurt us or steal from us.
- There can be misunderstandings. It can be hard to understand how someone is thinking or feeling if we only communicate online. This can also make it harder to sort out disagreements and arguments.





- They might share private content with others. There is a danger that our posts, messages, or videos might be shared with others. It is important to be careful about what you share with others – particularly if you don't know them very well. Also remember that all relationships can come to an end.
- Our friends may quickly disappear. It's easy to end a friendship online with no explanation. It can be hurtful if someone suddenly unfriends us, stops talking to us or 'ghosts' us.

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Final note on friendship

Some people have the same friends for life. It is also common for friends to come and go as we start new schools, go to college, university or start new jobs, try out new sports, hobbies, and activities, join online forums or gaming sites, travel the world, or move to new neighbourhoods. There will be times when we have lots of friends, and times when we feel lonely. Sometimes it can feel like it is hard to find friends.

This is all part of being human and you are not alone. The most important relationship you will ever have is with yourself. Remember who you are, what you love and like, and don't stay in any relationship that makes you feel bad or sad. The right people are out there for you. Here's to all good friends – finding them and being one.





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