

Lesson one: Changing friendships

Ages 11-12

+ Lesson overview

This is the first of three lessons that focus on protecting and empowering young people as they enter new stages of their lives and form new relationships. This lesson explores the nature of friendships and how they change as young people go through transitions. It enables them to see the benefits and opportunities of forming new friendships, and to manage these changes in a safe and healthy way.

Learning objective

- To learn how to manage changing friendships, including the benefits and challenges of making new friends.

Learning outcomes

Young people will be able to:

- Explain why friendship is important
- Describe reasons why friendships might develop and change over time
- Explain some of the benefits of making new friends, and having different types of friends
- Describe some of the challenges of making new friendships while maintaining old ones

Resources

- Box or envelope for questions
- Flipchart paper and marker pen
- Resource 1: *Friends in conversation* (1 per person)
- Resource 2: *Friendship scenarios* (1 per group)
- Resource 3: Friendships: benefit or difficulty? (1 per group)
- Resource 3a: *Teacher notes* (1 copy)
- Resource 4: *Making new friends prompt* (optional – as required)

Lesson summary

Activity	Description	Timing
Baseline assessment	The class demonstrates their understanding of how friendships might change by responding to an 'overheard conversation'.	10 mins
Introduction	Introduce learning objectives and outcomes and revisit ground rules.	5 mins
Friendship scenarios	Small groups explore scenarios detailing changes taking place in friendships.	10 mins
Benefits and difficulties	Groups explore the benefits and difficulties of making new friends and changes within old friendships.	15 mins
Making new friends	Pairs discuss how to make new friends in different situations.	10 mins
Reflection and endpoint assessment	Young people write a list of top tips for making new friends and maintaining old friendships.	5 mins
Signpost support	Remind the class who to go to if they have concerns about friendships including websites.	5 mins

Climate for learning

Make sure you have read the accompanying teacher guidance notes before teaching this lesson. These include guidance on ground rules, the limits of confidentiality, relevant subject knowledge, communication, and handling questions effectively.

Keywords

Friendship, relationship, transition

Baseline assessment

➤ Baseline assessment – 10 mins

Using PowerPoint slide 2, introduce the 'overheard conversation' scenario, and explain that the characters are about the same age as them and are discussing friendships as they are just starting at secondary school. Give everyone a copy of *Resource 1: Friends in conversation* and ask them to add to the speech and thought bubbles, showing what the other characters might be thinking and saying.

Once everyone has completed this, ask them to share their ideas with the class. Use the feedback from this discussion to measure individuals' current understanding of changing friendships and adapt teaching accordingly.

➤ Introduction – 5 mins

Revisit ground rules and remind the class of the importance of keeping personal stories private. For example, young people should not share with the class things that have happened to them or their friends. Draw attention to the question box and remind them they can submit questions during or after the lesson.

Share the learning objective and outcomes. Explain there are different types of relationships that young people can have, eg family members, friends, online communities, people at school, romantic relationships. Today, the class will be focusing on how friendships between people can develop and change over time, especially when people are making changes like moving on to secondary school.

Core activities

➤ Friendship scenarios – 15 mins

Ask small groups to discuss why and when they think friendships – even the closest friendships – might start to change. Examples might include: when someone moves away; when another person comes into the group; if there's an argument. After gathering some ideas, hand out *Resource 2: Friendship scenarios* and ask the groups to read through them. For each friendship scenario, ask them to discuss:

- What has caused the friendship to change?
- How might the friendships change?
- Can the people involved stay friends?
- What can the people involved do to stay friends (if they want to)?

Key learning:

Take some feedback, highlighting the following key learning:

- Friendships can change for different reasons, such as: new friends, moving to a different school, influence from other friends, feeling left out, or people not making an effort to see each other and stay in touch.
- Friendships change in different ways; sometimes friendships might become more distant as people grow up; they might grow apart as they have different interests or through meeting new people. As young people gradually use more online technology to communicate, this can also change friendship dynamics, for example, using group chats, liking each other's profiles, and feeling more pressure to be included. Friendships can also get stronger as they go through difficult times together and learn how to communicate better or work hard to stay friends and find new ways to keep in touch.
- People can work together to stay friends. For example, they can try to make time for each other, check in with one another, ask them to join in, check in with each other's feelings, admit when they are wrong and apologise, find new interests to share together.

Support: Ask individuals to focus on just one scenario and the key question: What has caused this friendship to change? They can discuss their ideas with a partner before feeding back.

Challenge: Ask individuals to imagine that one of the characters have come to them for help to continue their friendship. What advice would they give them? Are there any cases where it might be okay to not continue the friendship, if so, why?

➤ Benefits and difficulties 15 mins

Ask groups to reflect on the challenges faced by friends in the scenarios from the previous activity. Explain that within any friendship, new or old, the people involved will experience benefits as well as some difficulties. As a class look at slide 5 which shows Anna with a new friend she met at an after-school club. Display the suggested benefits and difficulties of this new friendship and ask the class if they can think of any other ideas not already listed.

Next, hand out *Resource 3: Friendships: benefit or difficulty?* Ask groups to read through each situation and discuss what the benefits and difficulties might be for each one. Ask:

- What might the benefits of these new friendships, be?
- What difficulties might the characters have in their new friendships?

Key learning:

Take feedback from each group, referring to the key learning on *Resource 3a: Teacher notes*. In relation to Madison and KC_2012's scenario, explain that not everyone is who they say they are online, and it is important to be especially careful if making friends who aren't also known offline. For example, when answering questions or sharing personal information, young people should think first about why the person might want to know this, or if it is too much information to share. People do not have to share anything online that they do not want to or that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Challenge: Ask individuals to suggest what could be done to overcome the difficulties they have identified. Ideas might include: being brave about meeting new people, putting time aside to spend with old friends, using technology to keep in touch (text, video calls, etc.), being honest about concerns, speaking to an adult for advice, remembering safety advice about speaking to people online.

➤ Making new friends 10 mins

Show slide 9 and discuss with the class how people can become friends with one another. Explain that it can happen in different ways, for example, playing a game in the playground, meeting at the park, connecting with someone online through a shared interest or sitting next to someone new in class. Working in pairs, ask the class to think of some opportunities and record their ideas on a board or flipchart which can be referred back to.

Next, show the examples of different opportunities for people to become friends on slides 10-13 and ask the class to think of different things someone could say when trying to make new friends in these, or other situations. Add ideas to the flipchart which can be displayed around the classroom as useful strategies.

Possible responses may include: asking someone's name, saying hello, asking to borrow a piece of equipment/sharing a piece of equipment, including new people in a game, waving and smiling.

Support: Give individuals *Resource 4: Making new friends* prompts and ask them to sort the prompts into 'good ways' and 'not so good ways' of making friends.

Challenge: Using the things they have listed, ask individuals to identify one way to make a new friend which they would find tricky and write down two to three things that might help them to do it. For example, smiling at someone before saying hello or making friends with one person rather than a big group.

Plenary/assessment for end of learning

➤ Reflection and endpoint assessment – 5 mins

Ask the class to take a moment to reflect on what they have learnt during this lesson. Ask them to think of top tips to give someone, to help them when trying to make new friends and maintain old friendships.

➤ Signposting support – 5 mins

Remind young people of sources of support at home and school by asking them who they could talk to if they had worries about friendship changes. Ensure sources of support identified include:

In school - class teacher / form tutor, support assistants, head of year and other relevant staff.

At home - trusted adults eg parents, carers, grandparents etc.

Remind the class support can also be accessed through: www.childline.org.uk

Extension activity

Ask everyone to select one of the scenarios from *Resource 2: Friendship scenarios* and draft a script where the friends have a conversation about how they are feeling and what might happen next for their friendship. The script should try to demonstrate:

- Honest, kind, respectful communication between friends
- A way to resolve the problem and maintain the friendship