

Let's talk about healthy relationships:
friendships and conflict (11-13)

Extension activity pack

The core Healthy Relationships Toolkit provides structured lessons to support Year 7 and 8 students in developing key social and emotional skills.

These extension activities have been developed to reinforce these skills, helping young people to further reflect on and embed them into everyday school life.

The extension activities are flexible tasks that can be used in form/tutor time, PSHE lessons, assemblies, or as home learning.

They are not intended to be used all together; settings can select and adapt the activities that best suit their context, priorities, and students' needs.



The development of these extension activities has been supported by a Young Champion from Anna Freud.



Anna Freud

Activity 1:

advice column

Focus areas:

- Navigating peer pressure and online group dynamics
- Digital communication and respectful online behaviour
- Confidence in responding to uncomfortable situations
- Reflecting on personal values and boundaries
- Identifying sources of support and help-seeking

Task:

Read the first-person account from a student describing a difficult situation in a group chat and write a short piece of advice to the person involved. Consider different choices the student could make, how the situation might affect everyone involved, and what supportive actions could help de-escalate the situation.

"I'm in a group chat with some people from my year and I've been trying to get closer to the group and feel included.

One evening, somebody shared a screenshot of another student and started making fun of them. A few people joined in and others reacted with laughing emojis. I didn't feel comfortable with it, but I also didn't know what to do. I was worried that if I said nothing, people might think I agreed. But if I spoke up, I thought people might turn on me instead.

Then someone tagged me and said, "What do you think?" I felt really unsure and anxious about replying. My heart started racing and I kept checking the chat to see what people were saying next. I didn't want to upset anyone or make things worse, but I also felt guilty staying quiet.

Later, the chat carried on and people were sending messages quickly. It felt like I needed to respond straight away. I started typing a message a few times, but I kept deleting it because I wasn't sure what to say. I kept thinking about whether someone might screenshot my message or whether I might say the wrong thing.

After a while, I noticed I couldn't stop thinking about it. I felt stressed and distracted, and it was hard to relax even after I put my phone down. Part of me wanted to leave the chat completely, but I was worried that would make me feel even more left out."



Anna Freud

Activity 2: conflict rewind

Focus areas:

- Managing and repairing conflict
- De-escalation strategies and perspective-taking
- Peer pressure and group dynamics
- Respectful communication

Task:

Read the scenario and work in pairs to 'rewind' the situation at three different points. At each stage, discuss alternative choices the students involved could have made to prevent the situation from escalating or to support those affected. You should consider:

- how emotions may influence reactions and behaviour
- how pressure from others or the wider friendship group may affect decisions
- how communication choices could change the outcome of a situation
- what strategies might help repair relationships and support wellbeing
- whether support from others may have been helpful at any stage.

"I've been mates with a group of boys in my year since the start of secondary school, and we usually spend break and lunch together. One lunchtime, a group of us were playing basketball on the courts and everyone started getting really competitive.

During the game, one of my friends accused me of fouling them on purpose after they missed a shot. I said they were overreacting and told them to "stop crying about it." They got annoyed and shoved past me to grab the ball back.

At first everyone was laughing and treating it like banter, but the argument quickly got more heated. We started shouting at each other in front of everyone else on the court. Other people in the group began taking sides, with some encouraging it and others trying to calm things down.

My friend then brought up other times they felt I'd embarrassed them in front of people or acted differently when others were around. I got defensive and started bringing up things they'd done too. By this point, it didn't even feel like it was about the basketball game anymore.

I could feel myself getting angrier because loads of people were watching and I didn't want to back down or look weak in front of the group. The argument carried on until one of us pushed the other and a teacher nearby stepped in before it became more physical.

Afterwards, we were both told to walk away and cool off, but things have felt really awkward since. People in the group keep talking about what happened and some people seem to expect us to keep arguing or "have it out properly."

Even though part of me feels angry about what happened, another part of me feels stressed and uncomfortable whenever I think about going to lunch or seeing everyone together again. I keep replaying the situation in my head and wondering how things got so out of control so fast."



Activity 3: perspective swap

Focus areas:

- Empathy and perspective-taking
- Understanding group dynamics
- Reflecting on the impact of conflict on wellbeing and relationships

Task:

Revisit one or both of the scenarios from the previous activities and explore them from the perspectives of different people involved, such as the person being mocked, the person who shared the screenshot, someone joining in, someone staying silent, or someone trying to stop the situation. Discuss how each person might be feeling and what support or actions could improve the situation.

For example: “I think the person being mocked might feel embarrassed because everyone else is joining in. Someone who stayed quiet might have known it was wrong but didn’t want everyone to turn on them too. They could have messaged the person afterwards to check they were okay.”

Activity 4: group chat guidelines

Focus areas:

- Respectful online communication
- Shared responsibility in digital spaces
- Creating positive online communities

Task:

Work in groups to create a set of group chat guidelines or expectations for respectful communication. You should consider how to respond to conflict, gossip, pressure to reply, sharing screenshots and including others respectfully. Compare in your groups your ideas and discuss how these guidelines could support wellbeing and safer online interactions.



Anna Freud

Activity 5:

When is it time to take it offline?

Focus areas:

- Recognising when online communication may be escalating a disagreement
- Understanding how digital communication can affect conflict
- Making considered choices about when and how to respond
- Developing strategies for managing online disagreements

Task:

Disagreements are a normal part of relationships, but communicating online can sometimes make them harder to resolve. Without tone of voice or facial expressions, messages can be misunderstood, particularly when emotions are running high.

Taking time to pause and recognising when a conversation might be better continued face to face can help prevent a disagreement from escalating and support healthier communication.

Highlight the statements where you think continuing to message could make the disagreement harder to resolve.



1. You keep misunderstanding what the other person means.
2. You've asked what they meant rather than assuming.
3. You're getting more annoyed each time you reply.
4. You've both had some time to calm down before replying.
5. You can't tell whether they are joking or genuinely upset.
6. More people are joining the conversation and taking sides.
7. You feel like you have to reply straight away, even though you're upset.
8. You've checked that you understood their message correctly before responding.
9. Screenshots of the conversation are being shared with other people.
10. You're saying things you probably wouldn't say face to face.
11. You both seem to be listening to each other and the disagreement is calming down.
12. The same points keep being repeated and nothing is being resolved.
13. You keep typing and deleting messages because you're worried about how they will sound.
14. You've explained how you feel calmly and the other person has understood.
15. The conversation started between two people, but other people are now getting involved.



Continued learning ideas

Continued learning activities can help students deepen their understanding, apply their learning to real-life situations and share ideas with the wider school community. The suggestions below are intended as a starting point and can be adapted to suit the needs and interests of your students and setting.

- ✓ Support students to plan and deliver a short assembly for peers, staff, parents or carers focused on friendships and emotional wellbeing, including where students can seek support.
- ✓ Use discussion-based activities, including values continuums or debate prompts, as a way for students to consider respectful disagreement and online behaviour.
- ✓ Encourage students to create podcast-style discussions that provide opportunities to reflect on friendship challenges and communication online.
- ✓ Work with students to design posters, displays or awareness campaigns that promote kindness and inclusion within the school community.
- ✓ Facilitate peer mentoring or discussion activities for students transitioning into Year 7 or Year 8, with a focus on belonging, confidence and supportive relationships.
- ✓ Explore opportunities for students to lead initiatives that encourage respectful communication within the wider community.
- ✓ Encourage students to reflect on their friendships and communication habits through journalling or self-reflection activities, including friendship check-ins or digital wellbeing diaries.