

## An Adult's Guide to Supporting Your Child with Friendships.



As adults bringing up young children, you may have noticed that one of the hot topics of conversation at the end of the school day is very often about friends! We tend to ask questions like, "Who did you play with today?" "Who did you sit with for lunch?" "Have you made any new friends?" Children in return will often reference: - the enjoyable things they did with their friends, if there was a dispute/ disagreement, or a period of feeling lonely that day.

Many adults understand and appreciate the benefits of good, healthy friendships with others, and therefore naturally desire their children to be able to experience these benefits too and in most cases, they do! It is also normal for children to fall out with their friends and make up in a short space of time.

What about when friendships are not going well and your child is finding it hard? What about when your child does not seem to understand the complexities of friendships and how they work? To support this, we would like to provide you with a "toolkit" of information, activities, and resources for you to use when you are talking about friendships with your child. The aim of this is for you to be able to support your child in understanding: -

- 1) *Healthy friendships*
- 2) *How to be a good friend*
- 3) *How to manage disagreements*
- 4) *What to do if you feel lonely*

We hope that you find these useful, however, if the presenting issues continue and are causing your child considerable distress on a regular basis, please make an appointment to discuss this with your child's class teacher.

We would also like to remind you that Abbots Green has a "**zero tolerance**" policy regarding bullying, which all staff take incredibly seriously and will endeavour to deal with as a matter of urgency.

**Step 1:-** Encourage your child to talk about the worries/difficulties they are having with friends. **Listen carefully.** Encourage them to discuss their feelings in relation to the situations they are describing and encourage them to also consider how the other person/people may have been feeling in the situation. Reassure them that you have heard them, and you are glad that they have shared their worries with you.



**Step 2:-** Encourage your child to resolve the friendship issues themselves in the first instance. Children can be much better at this than we sometimes imagine! This may be in the form of suggesting they talk to their friends the next day; writing an apology note; accepting an apology from another; or sometimes just accepting that by the following day, yesterday's disagreement will probably be forgotten.



**Step 3:-** Remind your child about the strategies and processes in place already at school to support friendships such as the, "the friendship" bench at playtime and telling an adult on the playground if they feel lonely. It is much easier to deal with an incident as it occurs than after a period of time.



**Step 4:-** Try out some of the friendship activities and resources found in our "friendships" tab on the website. Choose which resources may be most appropriate for your child, or adapt them to suit your child's needs. The activities aim to support discussion and understanding. Encourage your child to think about things from both viewpoints.