



Student Guidance: Friendships & Social Pressure

Friendships can be one of the best parts of school, but they can also feel complicated at times. Understanding what healthy relationships look like can help you make choices that feel right for you.

As you grow older, friendships change. Disagreements, new groups and social pressure are normal parts of this stage of life. The key is learning how to recognise what feels positive and how to step back from situations that do not feel safe or respectful.

What healthy friendships look like

- Mutual respect and trust
- Feeling comfortable being yourself
- Being able to disagree without fear
- Support rather than pressure

Managing conflict calmly

- Take space if emotions are high
- Listen as well as speak
- Avoid posting or messaging when upset
- Try to resolve issues face-to-face where safe

Making choices that match your values

- It is okay to say no
- You do not have to follow the crowd
- Pause and think before agreeing to something
- Choose what feels right for you

Recognising peer pressure

- Feeling pushed to do something risky
- Being told you will be excluded if you refuse
- Doing something just to “fit in”
- Remember you can walk away

Practical steps you can try

- Spend more time with people who make you feel relaxed and valued
- Mute or step back from group chats if they increase stress
- Practise a simple phrase to say no in advance
- Remind yourself that real friends respect boundaries

Ask for help

If friendships start affecting your mood or attendance:

- Speak to your college pastoral team
- Visit [Kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)