



Title: Friends: Kindness and empathy

Level: FIRST

Code: 1.5.2

Links to Curriculum for Excellence

- I am aware of how friendships are formed and that likes, dislikes, special qualities and needs can influence relationships. HWB 1-44a
- I understand positive things about friendships and relationships but when something worries or upsets me I know who I should talk to. HWB 1-44

These Experiences and Outcomes sit within HWB Responsibility of All and span across all five levels to recognise the nature of development and learning in HWB. There are no Benchmarks for these Experiences and Outcomes.

About this activity

In the second activity on the theme of friends, the children will focus on feelings – their own and those of others. This focus takes the learning to consider ideas of empathy and kindness. Children will be reminded that when we talk about friendships they need to remember that they do not need to be *best friends* with everyone, but they can be friendly and kind.

Resources to support this activity

- Slides
- Big sheet sugar paper for poster (A2 if possible)
- Chunky multi-coloured chalk for drawing in the playground

Activity

1. Begin in a circle. Remind children that they have started to think and talk about friendship – about being a good friend and being friendly to others. Talk about what they remember of the Friendship Tree and the game played.
2. To get started, ask the children to think about a friend they have. Pose the question and get some conversation going: *What do you like to do with your friend?*
3. **How we feel.** Explain that an important part of being friendly and being a friend is to pay attention to how we feel and how other people feel. Ask the children to work in a pair, explain that you have some feelings that you will share on the whiteboard and the children are to have a chat with their shoulder-partner about this feeling, thinking about: HAPPY/SAD/ANNOYED/TIRED/BORED/NERVOUS. Start with the first slide as an example in the big group, speaking from your experience. *When I am HAPPY then I...* Then ask for some initial responses from a few children. Acknowledge how the children talk about this, they may be talking about other feelings that come with (being HAPPY) or what they do when they have this feeling

(jump about, hug people, etc.). Start with HAPPY, then work through the slides just in pairs. Go back to the beginning and get a bit of feedback.

4. **How does a friend feel?** Explain that this time the children are to consider how a friend might be when they have these feelings. Explain to the children they can think of one friend, or different friends. So, the sentence becomes: *When my friend is HAPPY then they....* Try this as a big group to ensure understanding. Have the children respond to the prompt on the slides one by one with a partner. Again, have some feedback, and explore: *So, what is it that you see or hear or feel when your friend is....?*
5. *Depending on your class/group you may want to introduce the idea of empathy.* Put the word on the whiteboard. Explain that you have been talking about how friends feel, and that if we understand how another person feels, we can use the word empathy. A definition is provided as a slide, discuss to ensure understanding. (Note: Empathy is introduced at Second Level when discussing relationships and bullying)

What is empathy? Empathy means when you really understand what is happening to another person and how they feel. There is an expression that helps us understand what we mean by empathy: empathy is 'to put yourself in someone else's shoes'.

If you do not use the term empathy, then end the discussion by recognising that it is important in our friendships to understand how we feel, and how our friend might feel.

6. **Kindness.** Introduce the idea that an important part of making friends, being a friend and keeping friends is being kind. Ask the children: *What does being kind mean to you?* Then share the slide/definition and see where it fits with their ideas.

What is kindness? Kindness is when you are friendly and think about other people's feelings. Kindness is about what you say to others and what you do for them.

7. Ask the children if they can tell you if they have been kind today or recently. They may be able to tell a story, but some children may need some support. These questions can help: *Who were you kind to? (was it someone they knew, or didn't know) What did you do that was kind? How did it make the person feel? How did being kind make you feel?*
8. Acknowledge that the children have shared lots of ways to be kind. Explain that what they will do now is make a big poster about all the different ways they can be kind to each other, to other people they know, and to people that they don't know. Have a large sheet of A2 (sugar paper or similar) prepared with the title: **We are being kind.** Ask the children to go back to their tables and work in a small group to list as many things as they could do to be kind. Emphasise that many things we do that are kind are the small things, give some examples of the kindnesses that you have seen from them this week.
9. Bring all the groups back together and with some feedback start to populate the poster. Recognise where there are similar suggestions and that we need only name something once. If there are many more ideas than time, pause the activity and say you will catch up with each group through the day and capture everything.
10. **Playground messages.** End with acknowledgement of all the great ideas. Finally, tell the children that you would like them to surprise all the other children in the school by sharing some of their ideas for being kind. All of the children should pick one thing from the **We are being kind** poster,

and with chalk, they can write and draw the idea on the playground for others to be surprised by when they next go out to play. (Tell your colleagues in advance so that they can prompt their children to look out for the surprise in the playground)

11. **At the end of the day**, remind children that when we talk about friendships we need to remember that they do not need to be *best friends* with everyone, but they can be friendly and kind.

Additional ideas

There are lots of ways to extend learning or initiate projects in the class or whole school on the theme of kindness.

- **The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation** wants to change schools, the workplace, families and society through kindness. They work toward that goal by creating free content that promotes kindness toward others and teaches important kindness skills to children. Teaching resources are available: <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>
- **Kindness UK** has created and designed Kindness Packs for schools contain activities and resources for teachers to use to incorporate kindness into the curriculum. These Kindness Packs have been sent out free to 30,000 schools in the UK. <http://kindnessuk.com/schools/>
- 13th November every year is **Kindness Day** http://kindnessuk.com/world_kindness_day_kindness_day_uk.php
- **The poster 100 Acts of Kindness for children** is provided just to give you some inspiration: From <https://www.coffeecupsandcrayons.com/100-acts-kindness-kids/>

Further learning activities are available that connect to this RSHP curriculum content

1.5.1 My friends/Being a friend

1.5.3 When friends fall out

Practitioner Notes