



Relationships: The Basics Q&A

Below are some common questions which may arise during teaching of this topic, along with suggested answers.

Please ensure that you follow your school's safeguarding policy when dealing with sensitive topics, and pass on any welfare concerns or disclosures from students.

Q: Are all relationships romantic?

A: A relationship is the way in which people are connected and behave towards each other. There are many different types of relationships; some relationships may be romantic, but some involve family, friends and other groups of people.

Q: Is friendship the same as a relationship?

A: A friendship is a type of relationship between individuals who care for each other, enjoy each other's company and may share common interests. Friendship is usually based on a combination of affection, loyalty, love, respect and trust.

Q: How do I know if a relationship is healthy?

A: The characteristics of positive and healthy relationships (in all contexts, including online) include trust, respect, honesty, kindness, generosity, boundaries, privacy, consent, the management of conflict, reconciliation and the respectful ending of relationships. It is not always easy to know whether a relationship is positive and healthy, so it can be useful to discuss concerns with someone you trust (for example, a parent or close friend), as long as you are maintaining respect for the person you're talking about while doing so. It might also be useful to think about each of the characteristics of a healthy relationship and if there are any that are not being met.

Q: Should I keep secrets in a relationship?

A: Trust and respect are two important aspects of any relationship. Telling lies and keeping secrets can hurt those bonds of trust. Equally, being 'brutally honest' to someone in a way that's hurtful or humiliating can negatively impact their self-esteem. We should never be asked to keep a secret which makes us feel uncomfortable, and it can put us in danger to keep certain things from people close to us.

Q: How do I find friends?

A: We tend to make friends with people we cross paths with regularly, for example, people we go to school with or live close to. The more we see someone, the more likely a friendship is to develop, so look at the places you go to regularly as a way of looking for friends. Another big factor is common interests. We tend to be drawn to people who are similar, with a shared hobby or cultural background, so many of us choose to join clubs or groups to find people with whom we have things in common.

**Q: Other people are getting involved in my relationship when I don't want them to. What do I do?**

A: It can be really difficult when people outside of your relationship are getting involved when you don't want them to, and it can sometimes cause (or contribute towards) problems within the relationship. If you find that this is becoming an issue, the best thing you can do is have a conversation with the other person/people in the relationship about this, explain what the issue is and how it is making you feel, and try to come up with a solution that suits everybody. This might mean coming to a compromise so that everyone's feelings about the situation are taken into consideration. It might also mean having a conversation with the person/people who you feel are becoming too involved, in a way that is respectful of their feelings too.