



What Makes a Healthy Friendship and Relationship

KS3 CITIZENSHIP

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

What Makes Friendships Work?

A **healthy friendship** is built on a few really important things. The strongest friendships have **trust** — this means you believe your friend will keep your secrets and won't let you down. **Respect** is equally important, which means you care about what your friend thinks and feels, even when you disagree.

Communication is the bridge that holds friendships together. When you talk honestly about how you feel, when something upsets you, or when you need help, you're keeping the friendship strong and real. Good friends listen to each other without interrupting and try to understand each other's side of the story.

Think of it like a building. Trust is the foundation, respect is the walls, and communication is the glue that holds it all together.

The Building Blocks of Healthy Relationships

Kindness and support matter more than you might think. Healthy relationships mean being there for each other during good times and bad times. You celebrate your friend's wins and help them through tough moments. Real friends don't try to change each other or make you feel bad about who you are.

Boundaries are also really important — this means knowing where one person's space ends and another's begins. It's okay to say no sometimes. It's okay to spend time alone or with other friends. A healthy relationship means having room to be yourself.

Think of it like a garden. You need sun (good times together), water (support and care), and space (personal time) for it to grow beautifully.

Red Flags to Watch For

Not all friendships are healthy. Watch out for relationships where someone puts you down, makes you feel uncomfortable, or doesn't respect your feelings. If a friend

gossips about you, gets angry when you disagree, or tries to control who you spend time with, those are **warning signs**. You don't have to stay in friendships that make you feel bad about yourself.

The best relationships — whether with friends, family, or romantic partners — are built on **mutual respect, honest communication, and genuine care**. They're worth the effort to build and protect.