



# School Counsellor Newsletter

Edition 32

## Being the best friend you can be

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### Part 2 - Active kindness

Part One of this newsletter theme focused on being a good listener - making sure your son is supported to actively listen to his friends and to be respectful by not sharing his friend's information unless they are happy for him to do so. Being a helpful friend is also about being kind and supportive by being there when a friend needs you. This newsletter shares some ways you can talk about this with your son.

A great friend is often described to me as someone who is there when you need them. For example, helping you when you are hurt, supporting you if you are finding the behaviour of someone else difficult, reminding you of the rules if you have forgotten them, picking up something you may have dropped, making you laugh or cheering you up when you feel down. These are all great skills in a friend and to take these a step further I would encourage you to talk with your son about being a proactive friend by acting before things happen. For example, letting your son know that when they see their friends each day, they can say, 'Hello' but also ask, 'How are you doing today?', 'How was football practice last night?' or 'How are you feeling about the test we have today?' By checking in with their friends and asking how they are, your son is able to be supportive and show active kindness in all situations. It may sound simple to us as adults but it is important for young people to develop these skills, and so role modelling this in your behaviour with them is important.

Another important friendship skill to role model is being kind if a friend makes a mistake. It is okay to feel disappointed by this behaviour, yet it is

also important to be able to work through this with a friend. Some useful ways your son can talk about this with their friends include: 'It made me sad when you told someone about our private conversation but I know that we all make mistakes', 'Can we talk about what we could both do differently so that it is better next time?', 'I have made this mistake before and what was helpful for me next time was...' Most importantly, it is vital that your son is kind to himself if he makes a mistake or lets a friend down. We all do this at times and the best we can do is reflect on our own actions and make sure we learn from them for the future. In situations like this it is important that we talk with our children about what they did and what they could do differently in future situations, as well as how they can let their friend know about this. The best friends are often those who understand we all make mistakes sometimes and that we can make things better by being kind to ourselves, taking responsibility and having a chat about it.

I hope that this newsletter provides some useful ideas about how you can talk to your son about being an actively kind friend. It might also help us as adults to reflect on our communication skills and how we can best role model this to our children. I often say to my children, 'Sorry, I got it wrong when I said that. Next time I will aim to take a breath when I feel frustrated and talk to you when I feel calmer.' It is important to be kind to ourselves when we make mistakes too!



## Jenelle Hooson

**Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).**

If you wish to discuss the services the School Counsellor can provide, please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim

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