



# Woombye State School

95 Pinegrove Road,  
Woombye, Qld 4559  
Phone 07 5451 3222  
Fax 07 5451 3200  
Email: [admin@woombyess.eq.edu.au](mailto:admin@woombyess.eq.edu.au)  
Web: [www.woombyess.eq.edu.au](http://www.woombyess.eq.edu.au)

## Information Statement - Friendship

Dear Parents

This information Statement has been prepared to assist parents help their children through the ups and downs of their friendships. I hope you will find this useful.

Regards

Gwen Sands

Principal

## Helping Kids With the Ups and Downs of Friendships

It is not always easy for children to know how to manage friendships. Problems with friends can affect how children feel about themselves and their enthusiasm for activities that involve others. Parents and carers can help children learn the kinds of friendship skills they will need as they grow and develop.

Learning how to make and keep friends involves a number of skills. Children learn more and more complex social skills from those around them as they develop.

Home life has an effect on the development of social skills. A child who has an adoring little sister is likely to have more skills of leadership. A child who is the little sister may be more used to fitting in with what others want to do. These children are likely to react differently when they go to school and meet other children with different life experiences and different social skills.

### Friendship skills for children include:

- **Cooperation** - how to share, how to take turns, how to work together towards a common goal
- **Communication** - using words to explain what you want and listening to others respectfully; paying attention to body language, e.g. making eye contact, smiling and being able to read others' nonverbal reactions
- **Understanding and managing feelings** - being able to express feelings in ways that help others understand you; recognising and responding to others' feelings
- **Tolerance - Accepting and including others** - recognising others' needs for respect and friendship.

Many children need explicit instruction in developing these skills. They don't happen automatically.

### How Parents and Carers can help:

#### Be aware of feelings

Children need to learn that having angry feelings is normal and okay, but that reacting aggressively towards others when you're angry is not. Adults can help children become aware of feeling annoyed, frustrated, angry or furious by naming

feelings. Learning to say, 'I'm feeling angry' or 'I'm really frustrated' gives children a way to separate feeling angry from how they react.

### **Time to talk**

Talking to Dylan about what has put him in an angry mood will help him see that feelings have causes and that solutions can be found. Once you find out what he was angry about you can help him think up better ways to handle the problem. This kind of conversation doesn't work while he is really angry. Sometimes it must wait until later.

Children often find it easier to talk in informal situations where they feel less pressure. Find a relaxed time to talk to children about feelings. Asking, 'When you are angry what are you thinking about?' can be a good way of starting a conversation about anger.

### **Find alternatives**

Getting children to think through a difficult situation helps them develop problem solving skills. Asking,

1. 'Is that what you wanted to happen?' or
2. 'What else could you have tried?' or
3. 'What else have you seen other children do when they are in a situation like this?'

encourages children's helpful thinking. Thinking of alternative solutions helps children plan different ways of reacting next time. Be sure to praise their efforts.

### **Have ways to calm down**

When emotions are strong, it is easy to act without thinking. Encourage your child to take control and allow time for the emotions to subside by trying one of the following : practising breathing, walking away, using a quiet spot to think, riding a bike or listening to music, or talking to the family pet.

### **Try a Problem Solving Approach**

When problems arise in friendships it is important not to blame children but to show them how to find a solution. A problem solving approach is often helpful.

1. Encourage your child to describe what has happened
2. Ask them about what they did
3. Ask about how they felt
4. Ask them how they think the other person might see it and how they might be feeling
5. Get them to think of ways they could do things differently next time (use the hand – how to handle a bully)
6. Encourage them to try the new approach – get them to practise with you so they feel more confident. Role play with children is very powerful for developing assertiveness
7. Check back with your child the next day to see how things turned out

As parents our job is to help our children to develop skills that will, not only serve them well, but also skills that they can pass on to their children.