

## **Friendship lessons from a fishbowl**

Helping students understand friendship and its dynamics can sometimes be a rather challenging task.

Clinical psychologist Kristina Morgan makes use of the imagery of the fishbowl in referring to friendships in school.

### **Choose carefully who you swim with**

Often children find themselves in the crossroad of being popular in school and having real friends. However, it is important to draw a clear distinction between friends that are around you because of your social status and friendship that is based on mutual love and respect for one's authentic self. With the help of these questions, we can help our students reflect on the nature of their friendship.

- Do I feel good around this person?
- Do I like myself when I am around them?
- Do we have things in common and enjoy doing things together?
- Do I trust them?
- Are they there for me?
- Do I feel my calm self around them?
- Do they add to my life or take from it?

### **Don't dirty the water you have to swim in**

As in life, all things come to end, and sometimes so do bonds of friendship. Making new friends throughout life's journey is an inherent quality all humans possess. However, the finality of a friendship does not need to be marked with drama, gossip and back-stabbing behaviour. There might be negative emotions such as sadness and anger, but we should see those feelings as an opportunity to learn to care for themselves emotionally.

The fishbowl analogy further propagates that since we must keep swimming in the same fishbowl for many years, the toxicity in the environment can lead to an overall negative experience with respect to school and friendships.

The following website was referenced in the preparation of this article:

[Friendship lessons from a fishbowl, Lourdes Hill College, Brisbane.](#)

**Taylor Fletcher (Kinder–Year 6)**

**Rachel Sylvester (Years 7–12)**

**SMC Counsellors**

[tfletcher@smc.tas.edu.au](mailto:tfletcher@smc.tas.edu.au)

[rsylvester@smc.tas.edu.au](mailto:rsylvester@smc.tas.edu.au)