



# Parent Wellbeing Bulletin

Date and Year, 2023

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## Purpose of the Parent Wellbeing Bulletin:

To provide our Wantirna College Parent/Carer community with a platform to share what's going on in the broader community, offer parenting advice and ideas from various organisations, and give you the opportunity to tell us what topics you would like included in the bulleting.

It's our way of connecting with you!

## Student Wellbeing Team:

### **Guiseppa Relia**

*Student Wellbeing Coordinator*

### **Lea Marrison**

*Mental Health Practitioner*

### **Tajinder Wulff**

*Mental Health Practitioner*

### **Talea-Jane Simpson**

*Student Counsellor*

**Susan, Yvonne, Johara, Candace, Olivia,**

**Jane, Aaron, Isabella, Kasun and Donna.**

*Counselling/Social Work Placement*

### **Eva Gray, Melissa Wade**

*School Nurses*

## Key Dates:

<b>Fri 10 February</b> School Photo Day	<b>Wed 8 March</b> Year 7 Immunisations
<b>Mon 13 February</b> VCE Parent Info Night, 6:30pm	<b>Tue 14 March</b> Parents of Performing Arts AGM
<b>Tue 14 February</b> Catch up Photo Day	<b>Wed 15 - Fri 27 March</b> NAPLAN
<b>Wed 15 February</b> Year 7 Family Night, 5:30pm	<b>Wed 15 March</b> Year 10 Immunisations
<b>Mon 20 - Wed 22 February</b> Year 7 Camp	<b>Thu 16 March</b> Staff Concert
<b>Tue 28 February</b> Whole School Swimming Carnival	<b>Mon 20 - Fri 24 March</b> Year 8 Challenge Week
<b>Wed 1 March</b> Curriculum Day	<b>Tue 21 March</b> College Council AGM
<b>Tue 7 March</b> SRC Free Dress Day	<b>Tue 28 March</b> OPEN DAY!

## Community Support Services:

### **Knox Children, Family and Community Services**

*Knox offers a range of inclusive and accessible services to support children, families, seniors and those living with a disability.*

**Address:** 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South VIC 3152.

**Email:** [knoxcc@knox.vic.gov.au](mailto:knoxcc@knox.vic.gov.au)

**Phone:** (03) 9298 8000

### **EACH Community Health**

*EACH provides a range of health, disability, counselling and mental health services across Australia.*

**Address:** 1063 Burwood Hwy, Ferntree Gully VIC 3156

**Phone:** 1300 003 224

### **headspace Knox**

*headspace Knox offers young people aged 12-25 a welcoming environment where they can access confidential and free mental health support, health advice, and general information.*

**Address:** 2 Capital City Boulevard, Westfield Knox Ozone, Wantirna South, Victoria 3152

**Email:** [info@headspaceknox.com.au](mailto:info@headspaceknox.com.au)

**Phone:** (03) 9801 6088

# Teenage Friendship Challenges: How to Support Your Child

Your child hasn't yet managed to find a group they feel truly comfortable with; their "tribe". Maybe they are on the edge of a friendship group, or flitting between a few. Or perhaps they do not have a longed-for close friend. Perhaps they have moved up from primary school and lost contact with old friends, whilst struggling to make new ones.



## How Can I Support My Child With Friendship Problems?

### Open a Discussion

The first step in helping a child with something is always to understand what is contributing to the problem. This is what psychologists call "formulation". We act like detectives, uncovering clues. Then we put the clues together, make sense of them, and develop a plan. So, chat with your child. Why do they think a happy and settled friendship or friendship group has been elusive to them so far? Is your child's view accurate, or could it be a little skewed? For example, some teenagers lack insight and may assume that if they haven't got friends, there is something wrong with them. Or, they may assume that there is something wrong with the people around them.

### Keep an Open Mind

Teen friendships are complex. It is not your fault or your child's fault that they are having problems. Here are a few possible reasons why your child may and not have found good friendships yet.

### Possible Challenge One: A difference in levels of maturity between your child and their peer

In some cases, children might identify more strongly with older children or young adults. In other cases they may gravitate towards younger children. There is nothing wrong with this. The only problem is that at high school, it may mean that there are not many children in the same year group who would be a good match. Teens may try to respond to peer pressure by doing things they are not ready for or gravitating towards types of friends who make them feel stressed – potentially unhealthy friendships or even toxic friendships.

How to help my teenager with friendship problems if there is a maturity gap:

### Give them opportunities for contact with different ages

Don't worry that your child doesn't have many close friendships of the same age or in the same school year. Look out for opportunities for connecting with peers of the age that they feel most comfortable with. For instance, lunchtime or after school clubs with other year groups.

Don't try to change who they are

### Don't try to mould your child into something they are not.

Development-wise, where they are is where they need to be. If you try to force them into friendships of their age, perhaps by pushing an interest in a particular area, your child will just end up spending time with people they don't feel an affinity with rather than a true friendship. Your child's integrity of identity will be compromised.

### Possible Challenge Two: Your child is struggling with essential social skills

Sometimes young people have a skills gap. By secondary school age there are certain skills that most children will have mastered, which will help them develop sound friendships.

# Teenage Friendship Challenges: How to Support Your Child (Continued)

These include for example:

- Showing an interest in others e.g. asking questions about them
- Taking part in a two way conversation in social interactions e.g. listening to somebody's response and building on it
- Taking turns

If your child lacks one or more fundamental skills for developing teenage friendships, this is not a cause for panic. The good news is these tend to develop in time. Here are some tips:

## **Work on one area at a time**

Friendship skills can be learned. The brain is very flexible, especially at this age. Some organisations, including Everlief, offer friendship skills coaching, but you can also work on these at home.

Don't work on more than one skill at a time and don't spend so much time "coaching" that you take the fun out of it. You risk overwhelming your child and denting their self confidence if you try to do this. Take a look at my blog article on this topic to guide you further.

## **Be patient**

Yes, friendship skills can be learned. However, it takes time. Trust the process, and trust that if your child has positive character traits (of course they do!) then one day they will become a very good long-term friend to someone. Try to reassure your child of this and remind them of their positive traits.

## **Possible Challenge Three: Your child isn't sure what they're looking for in their friendships**

This is one of the most common reasons why teenagers feel they haven't found a friendship or a solid friendship group. Teenagers are still trying to figure out what's important to them, so they are likely to be unclear what is important to them in a friendship. They can end up flitting between different friendship circles as their sense of identity changes. They may end up in a certain group which isn't right for them, because they have joined the group for the wrong reasons. For example, because they are not clear what's important to them, they might join a peer group because it seems "cool". After a time they realise that they do not feel comfortable or relaxed in this group, and cannot be themselves, which can take its toll on self esteem.

Here's what to do:

### **Have a discussion about what to look for in a friend.**

Even though what's important to your teenager may change over the next few years, you can increase their conscious awareness of what's important to them right now.

### **Make it concrete**

Bringing your values and beliefs into conscious awareness is really important as it helps you act on them. Transforming them from vague thoughts into a concrete written list is a powerful step. If you want to go even further, make it into a picture or diagram. The brain responds better to pictures than words.

### **Help your child identify their values**

Values are simply what is important to your child. They are different to morals. They can change, especially in the teenage years. However, helping your child identify their values is one of the most helpful things you can do, to steer your child towards successful friendships and positive relationships.

# Letting "Grow"

Though it may be hard, giving our children the space to fall down and get back up again imparts two important life lessons: responsibility and resilience. It's an innate instinct to want to take away the pain, struggle, and discomfort of our children, no matter their age. When times are challenging and life is testing your child's resilience and fortitude, we want to intervene and shoulder the burden ourselves because it's our deepest desire to see them happy and thriving. In doing so though, we actually disrupt the natural course of events and realizations that accompany every demanding lesson. We ultimately rob our kids and teens of the opportunity to grow.

There is a simple, yet profound tale about a boy and a butterfly that illustrates this best. It tells of a young boy who came across a butterfly cocoon and brought it into his house. Over the course of hours, he watched as the butterfly struggled to break free from its confinement. It managed to create a small hole in the cocoon, but its body was too large to emerge. It was very tired and became still. Wanting to help the butterfly, the boy snipped a slit in the cocoon with a pair of scissors, but the butterfly was small, weak, and its wings crumpled. The boy expected the insect to take flight, but instead, it could only drag its under-developed body along the ground, incapable of flying.



The same goes for our kids. When they fall in the playground, feel rejected in team games, don't pass an exam, start befriending the wrong crowd, are unhappy in their job, or are faced with death or loss, our instinct to swoop in, make amends, and help heal might not be the best tactic.

Psychologist Melanie Kelly from the Central Coast of NSW reframes the conversation from 'helping' our children to encouraging responsibility and agency, and it all starts when they become toddlers. "Young children love responsibility," Kelly shares. "It gives them a sense of achievement, and a chance to learn about internal and external rewards, however, it's important to note that the type of responsibility needs to be in line with their developmental age. Some parents find it easier to not involve their children in household tasks like cooking, gardening, cleaning, and tidying. While it will definitely take longer and often be a messy process, [such tasks help] to establish self-confidence and an understanding of what it means to be a part of something bigger, to be part of a team. It teaches kids to feel pride in their own actions, consideration of others, and will inspire them to take on more challenges.

"During the process of learning about responsibility and independence, children need lots of encouragement, both external validation for their efforts (even if it didn't quite work out), and reinforcement to keep trying. This will help them build resilience, be able to effectively problem solve, take on challenges, and build a baseline for grit and determination," Kelly adds. She also warns not to give kids and teens too much control and freedom that the parent-child dynamic is rocked. It's important to have healthy boundaries, and to remember you are the adult and call the shots.

Annie Fox, parenting expert and author focused on healthy tween and teen development, advises giving teens space. In an article for HuffPost, she shares her top tips for creating this space mindfully"

## **Talk less and listen more**

Always be a 'safe' and available person for your child to talk to. That doesn't mean you have to accept or agree with everything, but letting your child talk openly, without interrupting, gives them a chance to hear their own ideas played out loud. It also provides a window into their problem-solving strengths and limitations.

## **Respect boundaries**

It's often a challenge for parents to grant their teens increasing privacy and autonomy, but in order to develop good judgement, they need lots of opportunities to make mistakes and to learn from them. Encourage their learning.

## **They're always watching**

You want your child to be trustworthy, responsible, honest, resilient, and good-hearted. Make sure you're modelling those values in your own life.

## **Be real**

Just because you're the parent, doesn't always mean you know best. Admit your own confusion and mistakes and apologise when appropriate. Show your kids that just like them, you too are also a work-in-progress. That's all any of us can expect from ourselves and others – progress, not perfection.

Every day, I step back and watch my son at play in his world, discovering new words, skills, and parts of his personality, as he grows a little more into the footsteps he will one day fill. My heart is pulled in two directions. I want to hold him so tightly and whisper sweet nothings into his ear, wishing him to stay just as he is, small and mine. But then the wiser part of me knows, that isn't how we love as parents. We love by giving our children the universe; the sun, the moon, the stars, and every human experience in between.



 **Ask Izzy**

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This always was, always will be Aboriginal land.



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# Online | Parents Building Solutions

28  
Feb  
2023

**Time:** 7:00pm - 8:30pm  
**Price:** FREE  
**Contact:** Michelle Brown  
**Phone:** 0429 174 150  
**Email:** [michelle.brown@anglicarevic.org.au](mailto:michelle.brown@anglicarevic.org.au)

Open to Parents & Carers of Teenagers. Come & share experiences, ideas and learn new strategies. Join the interactive sessions online.

- Feeling stuck or struggling with your teenager.
- How to get your teenager to listen, without having to yell.
- Building a better relationship with your teens.
- Discuss and share strategies that work.

**Date:** Tuesday 28 February 2023  
**Time:** 7pm - 8.30pm  
**Where:** Online via Zoom  
**Cost:** Free

**Knox Festival**  
 Saturday 4 March  
 Free event



**MOVE YOUR WAY**  
 Move Your Way is back!  
 13 February - 12 March 2023  
 Book your free classes today  
[knox.vic.gov.au/MoveYourWay](http://knox.vic.gov.au/MoveYourWay)

Knox City Council

DIFFERENT JOURNEYS PRESENTS  
 AN ALL AGES EVENT

# Autism Family Swim Night

It's a private event so the pools all ours!  
 BBQ dinner included in the entry price  
 Events may be claimed on NDIS plans if applicable

**Knox Leisureworks**  
 35 Tormore Rd,  
 Boronia, Vic

**\$10pp**  
 LIMITED

**Book Online**  
[www.differentjourneysautism.com/new-events/](http://www.differentjourneysautism.com/new-events/)

Check out our events calendar

**Further Enquiries**  
[differentjourneys@gmail.com](mailto:differentjourneys@gmail.com)

**SUPPORTERS**

The Autism Family Swim Night has been supported by a grant from the Knox City Council Community Development Fund

## Community

### Social Groups

**Walking Group for Beginners**  
 We will start with a 30-40minute walk followed by coffee and build up our stamina to gradually increase our walks.  
 Wednesdays 9:30am from Coonara  
 During school terms  
 Cost: FREE

**Let's Go Explore**  
 Visit interesting places around the local area or further afield. Stay and join the group for lunch at your own expense.  
 Every second Wednesday  
 10:30am - 12:00pm  
 Start date: 8th February  
 Cost: \$10 membership fee  
 Own transport required.

**Knitters/Crochets Group**  
 Do you like to knit or crochet? Do you want to help those in need stay warm during the cold months? New knitters always welcome. Materials supplied.  
 Wednesdays 10:30am - 12:30pm  
 During school terms

**Mahjong (Western Rules)**  
 Come and join this fun group and play the great game of Mahjong. It is best played with 4 people but 2 or 3 can also play together. It is played with tiles and racks at a card table or similar. Snacks and drinks will be provided for beginners.  
 Tuesdays 10:00am - 12:30pm  
 Starting on 17th January  
 Gold coin donation (no charge for members)  
 During school term only

**Coonara Dues Club**  
 Contact Coonara as membership is subject to vacancies.  
 Second Wednesday of the month  
 7:30pm - 8:30pm  
 Membership \$45 single or \$65 family

**Mindfulness Colouring-In**  
 Come along and colour in with the adult colouring books. Join us for a chat and cups.  
 Wednesdays 1:30pm - 3:30pm  
 Cost: FREE  
 During school terms

**Crochet for Children and Adults**  
 Please register your interest.  
 Call 9758 7981 or email [enquiries@coonarahouse.org.au](mailto:enquiries@coonarahouse.org.au)

### Events

**Industry Forum**  
 Continuing on from a successful Industry Forum event in 2022, we would like to meet again with Service providers to collaborate with us and discuss your client's training needs to develop education pathways and connect with industries, job needs and strategies. Industry experts available too discuss job opportunities and return to work strategies for employees and explaining the needs of training. A wealth of information to be explored. Light lunch provided.  
 Thursday 9:30am - 12:00pm  
 20th March 2023

**Wednesday Community Lunch**  
 On Wednesdays, volunteers prepare a low cost, delicious lunch for the community. For catering purposes, please let us know if you are coming.  
 Wednesdays 12:30pm  
 Cost: \$5

### Volunteer

**Growing and Propagating Food**  
 Join other volunteers to keep our fresh food growing which is collected for our community lunches and our Grow Free cart.  
 Tuesdays 9:30am - 12:30pm

### Children's Activities

**Preschool Music and Dance Classes**  
 In this creative development program, children will learn to listen, dance routines to music choreographed by the trainer. Parents attend the class with the children.  
 Mondays 9:30am - 10:15am  
 6th February - 3rd April (8 weeks)  
 No class on 13th March  
 Cost: \$60  
 Suitable for children 2.5 to 5 years  
 Info on clothing & footwear provided

**Introduction to Coding**  
 Learn simple Drag & Drop Block coding to program a small showcase of 25 Games made with Scratch 3.0 as well as an introduction to creating Pixel Art sprites with MS paint - which we will be using in our games as a bonus.  
 Fridays 4:00pm - 5:30pm  
 26th February - 21st March (6 weeks)  
 Cost: \$60  
 Suitable for children 12 to 12 years

**Junior Chef**  
 Does your child enjoy cooking? Then enroll them in this simple cooking class. Participants will get to take home what they make.  
 Wednesdays 4:15pm - 5:45pm  
 8th February - 5th April (9 weeks)  
 Cost: \$150 (includes ingredients)  
 Thursday 4:15pm - 5:30pm  
 16th February - 6th April (8 weeks)  
 Cost: \$140.00 (includes ingredients)  
 Suitable for children 8 to 12 years  
 Limited places

**Drawing and Painting for Kids**  
 Introduction to art, a fun and creative class:  
 • Basic understanding of how to draw  
 • Learn how to use colour wheels  
 • Form shapes, shading and textures  
 • Step by step cartoons  
 • Painting, rock painting, well known artist reproductions  
 Wednesdays 4:30pm - 5:30pm  
 20th February - 2nd April (8 weeks)  
 15th February - 5th April (8 weeks)  
 Cost: \$114 (includes materials)  
 Suitable for children 8 to 12 years

**Sewing for Children**  
 This class is designed to learn sewing skills. This term the children will basic sewing skills and make a simple upcycled backpack. Made from a men's business shirt and will also make a shirt and to use sun discs to embellish it.  
 Mondays 4:30pm - 5:30pm  
 20th February - 2nd April (8 weeks)  
 No class on 13th March  
 Cost: \$107.50 (includes materials)  
 Suitable for children 8 to 12 years

**Guitar Classes**  
 Learn to play Electric Guitar, Rock and Metal Music.  
 Thursdays 4:30pm - 5:30pm  
 23rd February - 30th March (6 weeks)  
 Cost: \$72  
 Suitable for children 12 to 16 years

**Coonara Early Learning Centre**  
 Kidfun - 3-Year-Old Kinder & Occasional Care. Contact us to register for 2023.  
 Phone 9758 7981 or email [enquiries@coonarahouse.org.au](mailto:enquiries@coonarahouse.org.au)

Bookings for all courses are essential due to space restrictions. Should Covid restrictions return, courses would revert to Zoom, if possible. Students will be contacted.