Dear Parents,

This week in “Circles” we will exploring the BIG topic – friendship. This has been something that has come up again and again in the “Issue Box” this term. Students have told us about feelings of loneliness, teasing, worries about lying and not feeling they can trust their friends. The students are in the midst of a developmental stage in which friendships are of increasing importance and complexity, so it is vital that they learn the skills to reflect gently on their own emotions and behaviours (empathy for self) as well as the emotions and behaviours of their peers (empathy for others). If students are not shown empathy for their own world first, then it is very difficult for them to have empathy for the experience of others.

So, this week we will be exploring what a “Good Friend” looks like and what we expect in our friendships. We will be reading the book “Friends” by Kathryn Cave & Nick Maland and, as we can only control our own actions, will be looking at ways in which we ourselves are true friends and areas in which we are not-so-great friends at times e.g. being happy for our friend when something good happens to them, having their backs if they mess up or do something embarrassing, bringing out the best in them.

Again, we will finish with our fun whole group ball game activity which has been very effective in helping the class reflect upon and discuss the inevitable challenges that come with working as a team.

Have a great week,

Melissa Ford

**Guidance Counsellor**