



THE WAY

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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT WELLBEING - SENIOR SCHOOL

R U OK? Day: Any Day, Every Day

Life is full of ups and downs, and it's important to remember that the people around us may be going through their own challenges. R U OK? Day, which falls next week on Thursday 12th September, serves as a reminder to check in on one another and have meaningful conversations.

By regularly engaging in open and honest conversations, we can build trust and create an environment where it feels safe to share our struggles. R U OK? Day encourages us to normalise discussions about mental health and well-being, ensuring that everyone knows they have someone to turn to when they need support. A simple conversation can make a significant difference not just on R U OK? Day, but every day.

Many factors can contribute to someone feeling low. It isn't always easy to know whether someone is OK, particularly if they haven't talked about it or young people have yet to recognise the importance of changes in behaviour. However, there are signs young people can become familiar with which could indicate that a friend might not be OK.

What causes struggles?

A range of circumstances can lead to a young person feeling low, including:

- Big life changes like moving house or school
- Experiencing grief or loss
- Being around people going through tough times
- Arguing with someone
- Problems with schoolwork
- Being bored
- Having a medical condition or chronic illness
- Not sleeping well
- Not exercising enough
- Hormonal changes
- Special needs

When to bring it up

It's a good idea to check in with a friend and ask, "Are you OK?" if:

- They've been showing signs of being upset or angry for some time
- Their mood is having an impact on others
- They're not enjoying school or life in general
- You're worried about their safety
- They start to miss school, or don't want spend time with others or take part in their favourite activities

What signs can young people look out for?

Going through difficult times can have a big impact on a young person's life, including their:

- Relationships with other people
- Physical health
- Emotional health

So, it's a great idea to be aware of certain behaviours and signs that can indicate a friend might be struggling. The first thing to look out for is changes in behaviour. When people feel low, they often:

- Withdraw from their friends or their family
- Lash out at people and get angry or upset easily, including towards the people they care about
- Cry or become emotional
- Lose interest in activities and things they usually love
- Have changed sleeping patterns. They might be sleeping all the time, not sleeping much at all, or sleeping at strange hours (such as in the middle of the day)
- Have a changed appetite. They could be eating more than usual, or less

Young people cannot be expected to fix someone's problems, nor know the best way to help and support. However, as a College community, we can encourage and equip them to listen to what their friend is saying, let them know they care and tell a teacher, school counsellor or trusted adult if they are worried about their friend. To help navigate a conversation when someone says, "No, I'm not OK" remember:

1. **Ask**
2. **Listen**

3. **Encourage action**

4. **Check in**

To help spread the message and support R U OK? Day in our Senior School, will be having a gratitude wall, as well as having meaningful conversations around a cupcake stall and BBQ. Hopefully these conversations may also help spark meaningful conversations within the community.

Dr Anna Nalla

Director of Student Wellbeing - Senior School
