

# Hidden Connections

**RECENT** times have shed clear light on the importance and power of human connection. A new wave of recognition for the value of interpersonal relationships and face-to-face contact is inspiring many to take stock and focus on their own core values, including the educational choices for their children. For our young people, as well as ourselves, being in secure and genuine relationships with others lowers anxiety, regulates emotions, increases self-esteem and even improves the immune system. Lack of human contact can be more harmful to your health than smoking or high blood pressure. This may not seem as surprising to those of us who have experienced lockdowns the impact of a lack of interaction with others over the last year.

In school, these benefits run alongside the values of learning through moments of shared struggle and shared joy, through support and team work. The educational environment around our children holds huge opportunity for developing their connectivity. Their grounding comes from their key relationships with their parents, their teachers and with their peers. However, positive school relationships do not end there.



Fostering strong connections between teachers and staff, as well as between teachers and parents, holds the school community together and raises the energy and positivity of the school experience.

At my school, pastoral care has always been a top priority, where connections are nourished through thoughtful and purposeful interactions. Life skills around relationships and wellbeing are directly taught. Annual events are carefully selected to give opportunities to value relationships between parents, grandparents, children and

staff, supporting connections in every direction. We are all eagerly awaiting the return to face-to-face interactions, both for our children and for ourselves. The rich wealth of adapted online experiences are temporarily bridging the gap, but as we strive to protect and nurture our connections in their physical absence, hold strong. We will find, those uplifting, positive and genuine connections are still there, just waiting for us to embrace again.

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## St Catherine's Prep, Bramley

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