

Friendship Bench Information Sheet



Here are the highlights about the benches for students, staff and parents...

What are they?

Two wooden benches made by the student in C10 and C12. They are light brown and have the words "Friendship Bench" carved into the top.

Where are they?

They are placed in the primary playground area. One will be placed up near the school while the other will be placed more towards the trees/path.

How are students to use them?

A student might feel lonely at recess and want to join a group but he/she doesn't know how to go about it. This student can seek out the bench and have a seat on it. This acts as a visual to other students that this student would like to be asked to play. The students already playing can then approach the student on the bench, introduce themselves, and invite him/her/them to join in with the game or activity. It is also possible that two or three students sitting on the bench might decide to play together!

What students need to do...

Students wanting to play - They need to sit on the bench and also be patient (it might take a few minutes to be invited)

Students already playing - They need to remember to give the bench a quick check with their eyes throughout recess. If they see someone sitting there, be a good friend and go over to invite them.

Why do we have the benches?

The students in C10 and C12 thought that these benches would be a great way to help build friendships, get students playing with different groups, practice including others, and make everyone feel good at recess

Who can use them?

Any MJ students on the primary side at recess can use these friendship benches. Mme Hutton and Mlle McManus are available for questions or concerns.

Safety rules

- The benches are to be used for friends looking for friends to play with, not for simply sitting and chatting/hanging out. If you are sitting on this bench it means "I am looking for someone to play with and would like to be invited to join a group."
- Sitting only on the bench. Please sit on the seat part of the bench, not the arms.
- No climbing on any part of the bench.
- Please do not move the bench in any way.
- DO NOT write, carve, or damage the bench in any way. The students worked hard on these benches and would like them to be respected.

We have also provided some directions for teachers on how to monitor the use of the benches outside.

Teacher Reminders:

- Ask all students to be a part of the program by keeping an eye on the bench and asking anyone there to play. We want to avoid the idea of “Hmmm... I will ask this kid to play, but not that kid to play.”
- On the other side of the spectrum, remind students who are sitting on the bench to be open to invitations and give the activity/game a try. Again, we want to avoid a child who sits all recess and continues to turn down various invitations to play.
- We imagine the benches will be a novelty in the beginning with many students trying them out even if they don't need them. We realize it will take a while before things settle down and the benches are used properly.
- Feel free to take your whole class (or small groups) out to actually see the benches when they are out. This way you can see and practice how the benches are to be used.

If you are on primary duty

- We are asking if you might help the program out by keeping an eye on the benches during recess. Teachers on primary duty will be asked to monitor the benches. This does not mean having to police the benches, it simply means keeping an eye out for inappropriate behaviour and stopping it, or helping coach students who have been sitting for a while get into a group so they don't sit alone all recess long.
- Also, encourage the PALS leaders to check the bench every so often as they are a perfect group to invite a child to play.

