



**'Gossip
happens
daily in
secondary
education
settings,
negatively
affecting all of
the people
involved'**

WANT TO TALK?

Pop in to the mental health
and wellbeing drop-in on a
Thursday lunchtime SF5 to
speak to your school
counsellor

TACKLING SCHOOL GOSSIP

Whether school rumours are fuelled by jealousy or boredom or the power of being the person 'in the know', revelling in the misery of others is as old as time. Gossip, the dangerous weapon that can ruin reputations and poison relationships, defines who's in and who's out.

Grace tried hard not to cry as she stood holding the phone. Two minutes before, she heard from Stacy that Jill and Kim were sure she had the answers to the maths exam before it started, and she was selfish not to share them. It was just a school rumour!

Are all school rumours bad?

According to researchers, everyone begins to gossip almost as soon as we learn to speak. It's a part of human nature as word of mouth is joined by dozens of magazines, television chat shows, tabloids and now cyber gossip via Facebook, Twitter and blogging. If you participate in school rumours

Gossip is like fast food...juicy, delicious, and bad for you. If you gossip all the time, your friends might not trust you with their secrets. They might feel you'd sell them out for a good school rumour to tell. Next time, just try walking away. If the person talked about is a friend of yours, stand by her and say you don't believe it. Don't repeat it.

If you are the target of a school rumour:

while gossip boosts the self-esteem of those spreading it, creating a feeling of intimacy among the 'in' group, and serving as an emotional release valve for expressing negative feelings, it doesn't at all help the person they are talking about.

If you are the subject of a false school rumour:

- Set the record straight, but don't dwell too much on it.
- Try to get through the day as if nothing were different.

Finding who started it and getting revenge might feel good for a moment but will only result in getting you into trouble and making you look guilty. **THESE RESPONSES ARE BASED ON IMPULSES, NOT CAREFUL THOUGHT.** Try choosing how best to respond rather than just exploding with emotion.

- After finding out the truth, confront the person calmly.

LET THEM TRY TO EXPLAIN. If you don't get satisfaction, talking to a teacher might be in order.

TIME WILL HEAL. The school rumour about you will soon be replaced with the next hot story of the week. Your composure might cause that rumour to die an early death.