

## Supporting Vulnerable Students

The following are responses and discussion points shared by staff during a session on supporting vulnerable students.

Which groups of students may feel disconnected at KWS?

1. Socially awkward or isolated students e.g., long-term home schoolers, new to schoolers, or eccentrics.
2. Neuro-diverse students.
3. High achievers or those who suffer tall poppy syndrome.
4. Those who stand-up for the right thing.
5. Students with wellbeing issues – variance in mood, disposition etc.
6. ESOL students – language and culture barriers that isolate from peers. Different cultural status within ethnic group.
7. Ethnic diversity – minority groups within the community. Small number of MELA, Māori and Pasifika.
8. Those students who do not have a faith in Christ. Counter cultural within the KingsWay community.
9. Students who are geographically isolated – e.g. locals vs outsiders.
10. LGBTQIA+.

How can we as staff contribute to the experience of disconnection?

1. Shutting down conversations unduly.
2. Not seeing the individual
3. Holding to the truth
4. Reinforcing negative stereotypes or deficit modelling.
5. Unconscious bias – own worldview clashing with student perspectives.
6. Not having shared activities that connect all students. See lack of participation in community days. Do not speak to certain students' strengths or preferences.
7. Lack of welcoming communal spaces.
8. Normative stereotypes that reinforce outdated understanding of culture, neurodiversity, gender norms etc.

What changes can we make to help reduce student vulnerability?

1. Provide a mechanism for students to share that is non-confrontational.
2. Provide a range of activities that reach a broader spectrum of students.
3. Frequency 'temperature taking' of student wellbeing.