



SCHOOL CLOSURES

- ★ SCHOOL IS CLOSED FOR PUPILS
 - Friday 1st May (TransformED)
 - Monday 4th May (May Day)
 - Tuesday 5th May (School Development Day)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

You received our Dates for Term 3 in our last parent news online. Please refer to this for school events and closures in May and June.



INTERNET SAFETY

The internet and the use of modern technology can bring wonderful benefits but also can bring dangers for children such as being exposed to inappropriate material and messages.

We strongly encourage you to place parental controls on any devices your child has if they access the internet. Social media/chatrooms all come with age guidance – please check them out.

Have conversations with your child about their technology usage and ensure they know that they need to report to you anything they are not happy with. We continually reinforce this message in school. Parents regularly checking their child's device is another way of picking up any concerning issues.

We are pleased that many more parents are becoming concerned about phone usage and the effect this is having on our children's wellbeing. The increase in anxious thoughts has been directly connected with many children's use of social media/screens. Limit this usage and get children outdoors!

Let's work together to keep our children safe.

MAY FAIR

The May Fair in Ballyclare Town will be in full swing soon. We hope you will log on to the website link and take part. Our school hopes to participate in the following events.

16th May – May Fair Parade 2pm. *Pupils will be invited to participate via a google form which will come to you soon.

18th May – May Fair Community Concert 7pm Town Hall. Our choir and musicians will be taking part.

19th May – May Fair Day: Pupils will leave school at 12:00 to attend the Fair.

22nd May – It's a Knockout Competition 6pm. We have a staff team entering again this year.

*We also have a Staff Team running in the Belfast Marathon this Sunday (3rd May). Donations are much appreciated for our Cancer Fund for Children Charity.

 STAR OF THE MONTH APRIL 2026 		
P1	HC	IK OKOLI
	FHSEH	CALLUM QUINN
	KSSEH	HARRISON WATSON
P2	KI	TOM KIRKPATRICK
	LMSEH	RUBY BRENNAN
	SHSJM	STANLEY HALL
P3	TB	HANNAH MCCLAY
	RMCA	MATTHEW TWEED
	VG	JAMES JENKINS
P4	CSA	LUANA MASAYILA
	LMCIN	JOSHUA LEVI
	SSMJ	WILLOW DIVER
P5	KR	ERIK BAINE
	KH	LOGAN HUNTER
	JSC	JACK STARRETT
P6	DA	PRESTY MAGUIRE
	RE	SAM FLECK
	DGS	JESSIE SOMMERVILLE
P7	AMH	ZARA MILLAR
	PLMJ	ABBIE WHITE
	RW	ISLA HEASLIP
Well done to all of these pupils for the past month.		

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

Our school photographs have been sent out to you for decision making. We also sent information re: ordering and payment. Please follow these guidelines. Contact our school office if you need any help.

All orders should be made by 18th May at 12:00 noon.

'Working together, towards excellence, for all.'

YOUR GUIDE TO Group Chats

Group chats are a type of communication involving multiple users that happen on most messaging platforms. While they have been around since the invention of online messaging (think chatrooms!), popular use has grown in the last decade.



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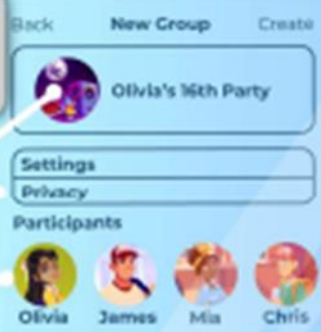
HOW DO THEY WORK?

Once a user creates a group chat on a messaging platform, they can:

Choose the name of the group & select a group photo

Set up the sharing and privacy settings

Add other users as members of the group



After the group is set up, users can:

Video or voice call all members of the group at the same time

Message into the chat

Send photos/videos/GIFS/voice notes

Tag other group members in specific messages

Who can be in a group chat?

Anyone can be in a group chat as long as they are a user on that platform. Most platforms have age restrictions (usually 13+) but there are not always robust age verification processes in place.

Why do young people use them?

- ▷ Stay connected to friends, family, or teammates.
- ▷ Send important information to multiple people.
- ▷ Discuss specific interests or events with others.
- ▷ Organise meetings for school, work, extracurriculars, etc.

More than 8 out of 10 parents



are concerned their child will be cyberbullied on a group chat.

The Risks of Group Chats



Bullying. Many young people have reported being left out of group chats, experienced bullying within them or have been made fun of in a chat they weren't included in.



Image sharing. Young people may feel pressured to share sexual imagery of themselves. Even if they choose to share an image with just one person, they may lose control if it is shared in a group chat.



Disappearing messages. A function of many group chats which allows users to delete messages or automatically make them vanish after a set time (e.g., on Snapchat) which can present opportunities for bullying or coercion when sharing inappropriate images.



Information leak. Being in a group chat could unintentionally lead to private information being shared, such as mobile numbers or live locations.



Stranger interaction. A young person may not know everyone they are in a group chat with, potentially exposing them to harmful interactions.



Inappropriate content. If someone sends in something that is inappropriate, it may expose a young person to content they were not prepared to see.



Excessive screentime. Some group chats might be receiving messages 24/7, which could draw a young person's attention at inappropriate times!

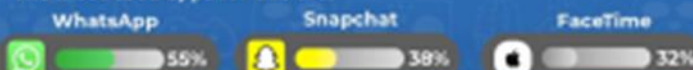
When using WhatsApp, images can automatically save to the user's camera roll, unless adjusted in the settings. This may lead to young people unintentionally possessing harmful or illegal images by default of someone else sending them into a group chat.

The most important thing you can do for a young person is to ensure they know who their trusted adults are and that they can always talk to them without fear of consequences. Here are some other preventative steps that you can take:

- Ensure they understand what information should be kept private.
- Talk about appropriate behaviour towards others online.
- Discuss the risks of sharing nude or semi-nude images.
- Enable and review privacy settings together - use our Safety Centre to help!
- Teach how to block, mute and report other users or chats.
- Adjust auto-saving settings on WhatsApp.
- Set family rules and screentime limits on devices.

Group messaging functions exist across various social media and gaming platforms. The most common way 3-17-year-olds interact online is through communicating via messaging/video platforms.

The most used apps for this are:



If a young person does seek your help...

- ▷ Listen and reassure them that they have done the right thing.
- ▷ Include them in any decisions that follow.
- ▷ Screenshot evidence of bullying as soon as possible.
- ▷ Only ban the use of the platform where necessary for their safety.
- ▷ Involve parents or relevant staff if children are at risk.
- ▷ Contact organisations who can help.
- ▷ Do not respond directly to harmful or hurtful messages.
- ▷ If you believe a child is in immediate danger, contact the police without delay.

SOS

NEVER SCREENSHOT AN INDECENT IMAGE OF A CHILD!

