



St. Mary's News

"SHINE AS A LIGHT IN THE WORLD"

Matthew 5:16

Newsletter No: 1

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome back to a new year at St. Mary's. Despite the sadness of this week in the death of Her Queen Elizabeth II, it has been a pleasure welcoming all of our pupils back and hearing about their adventures over the summer holiday. It is also wonderful to welcome our new staff to St Mary's. Mrs Dodd teaching Sycamore Class, Miss Whitaker teaching Oak and Mrs Molloy our new SEND Co across the federation. Have a wonderful weekend and see you all on Monday.

*Many thanks
Mrs NR Brennan*



Hi I am Mrs Dodd and I am so excited to be teaching Sycamore class. My first part of the week has been fantastic and I have loved getting to know all the brilliant personalities in our class! Although this is my first teaching post, I have worked in schools for 10 years. I love to add a creative edge to the curriculum and I cannot wait to explore the talents we have in our class. (I have been astounded so far) I am thrilled to be joining the St. Mary's team.



I'm Miss Whitaker and I'm the new class teacher for Oak year 1. I'm so excited to begin my teaching career in such a beautiful school with such wonderful children. I will be looking for ways to get creative with the children during lesson time, so stay tuned for Dojo updates. I look forward to watching the children of Oak learn and grow throughout this academic year and beyond!





Species	Percentage
Cherry	97%
Willow	100%
Oak	94.4%
Silver Birch	95.5%
Sycamore	96.4%

or above..

★ Star of the week ★

A massive well done to all children
for all their hard work this week.
We are proud to call you a part of
our St Mary's Family

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

Accessing through messaging apps, on social media and in online gaming group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Group chats are often used by three primary individuals: those group chat users to arrange messages, images and videos to everyone in the group. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Unflattering comments or images which are purposely a mix of an individual and a group chat – bullying and abuse – can be a risk. If a person is in a group chat, it's possible that content is shared in a group of their peers. If a person is a member of a group chat, it's possible that content is shared in a group of their peers. If a person is a member of a group chat, it's possible that content is shared in a group of their peers.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: adding a new group, for instance, but also excluding a certain child. Unlikely, the chat may take place on an app which has a chat room access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else was at but their friend wasn't.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some individuals in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and other inappropriate images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message feature, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – they may share with others. A message, photo or video with others outside of the group or someone that isn't in the group. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know in the group.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of a friend, but not necessarily friendly beyond that point. It's also for young people not to share personal details and they agree that they have to control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's phone will be pinged with an alert. Potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day, not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could mean them to do things as a group, which could upset others in the group. These young people to be nervous, but also, people might feel if they engaged in this behavior. If your child does share a message or their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their behavior.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or phone number. It's also important to be seen wisely, knowing that what you're sharing in a group, they can see it or share it with others and how it might be used.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Tell your child that they can ask you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat. Confide in your child to be the person who's upset. Validate their feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. As a parent, you need to be able to support your child to speak up if they're in a group chat where they're being bullied or excluded.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them. To avoid this, encourage children to be aware of who they're talking to and to avoid them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Make sure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, ideally, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the person sending the material, report them to the host of the chat and leave the group. If any of the content could be a crime, report it to the police. It's also for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't think is safe to be in.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a mental health and distraction issue. Encourage your child to turn off notifications for the group chat. If they can't, encourage them to turn off notifications for the group chat. If they can't, encourage them to turn off notifications for the group chat.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Aitchison is an online safety consultant, a founder and researcher who has developed and implemented and taught good online safety, advice for parents. She has written numerous online safety guides and worked with schools for the last 10 years. She is a member of the National Online Safety Council and a member of the National Online Safety Council.



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday