



A Message from Our Head Girl – Mary Keogh

Hello to all the members of our school community! My name is Mary Keogh, and I am delighted to introduce myself as the Head Girl for the 2023-2024 school year.

Taking up this important role is such an honour, as it is an appropriate way to thank and give back to the place that has equipped me with the essential skills and capabilities, making me the young woman that I am today.

I am so grateful to have been recognised for this role by my peers and teachers alike and would also like to extend my huge congratulations to my amazing team of Deputy Head Girls: Grace McCaughey, Ellen McDevitt, Sophia McGinnis, Beth McCool, Kyna McGuinness and Aoife Clarke. I am lucky to be joined by such a great team of remarkable role models, and collectively we are thrilled and enthused to represent our school community and be proactively involved in enhancing daily life here at Thornhill for every student.

As I embark on my final year in Thornhill College, I fondly reminisce on the life-long memories created here and this deepens my gratitude for being selected as your Head Girl. This time 6 years ago after having made the daunting transition from Hollybush to Thornhill, I could never have imagined becoming the person I am today. Opportunities provided here at Thornhill have enabled me to blossom into the confident and capable individual I am today, allowing me to be a role-model, mentor and ambassador for my school. Being at a school as special as Thornhill has nurtured me immensely, enabling me to realise my full potential and to believe in myself. The friendships formed with both students and staff over the past 6 years, has filled me with a strong sense of belonging like no other and has made my time at Thornhill so special, making me extremely proud to be your Head Girl.

Over the next year, my aim is to make daily life at Thornhill the best it can possibly be for each and every one of you. I want to instil a community of friendship and support in which everybody feels involved, valued, heard and important. Reflecting on my own time at Thornhill, I want to be a Head Girl that people can approach with any concerns or worries that they may have, allowing me to provide them with advice and support in every step they take.

As we approach the Halloween midterm break, I would like to take this time to congratulate my fellow pupils for all your dedication and hard work over the past two months. Keep up your commendable work ethic and resilience, stay safe and most of all enjoy this well-deserved break! I hope the next year can be one filled with memories, excitement and fun for all our students. And to my fellow Year 14's, as we begin the final stage of an unforgettable 7-year journey together, I hope your final year at Thornhill is filled with joy, laughter and happiness! May we treasure the special memories we make this year at Thornhill and forever remain proud Thornhill girls.

Mary Keogh (Head Girl)



Thornhill College Senior Prefect Team



2023-24



Mary Keogh
Head Girl



Aoife Clarke
Deputy Head Girl



Beth McCool
Deputy Head Girl



Ellen McDevitt
Deputy Head Girl



Grace McCaughey
Deputy Head Girl



Sophia McGinnis
Deputy Head Girl



Kyna McGuinness
Deputy Head Girl

Senior Prefect Team 2023-24

Congratulations to our new elected Senior Prefect Team. We wish them every blessing in their leadership roles in the year ahead.

Head Girl: Mary Keogh

Deputy Head Girls: Aoife Clarke, Kyna McGuinness, Sophia McGinnis, Grace McCaughey, Ellen McDevitt & Beth McCool

Senior Prefects: Ava Ward, Chloe McCann, Cora McGlinchey, Dara McCahill, Erin Irvine, Eve Kearney, Hannah Mullan, Isla Wallace, Jodie McGilloway, Kate McMenamin, Lilly Brownrigg, Moya Gilmore & Tara Burns



Middle Prefect Team 2023-24

Congratulations to our new elected Middle Prefect Team. We wish them every blessing in their leadership roles in the year ahead.

Head Prefect: Cadhla Foster

Deputy Head Prefects: Anne McGinley & Emily Flanagan

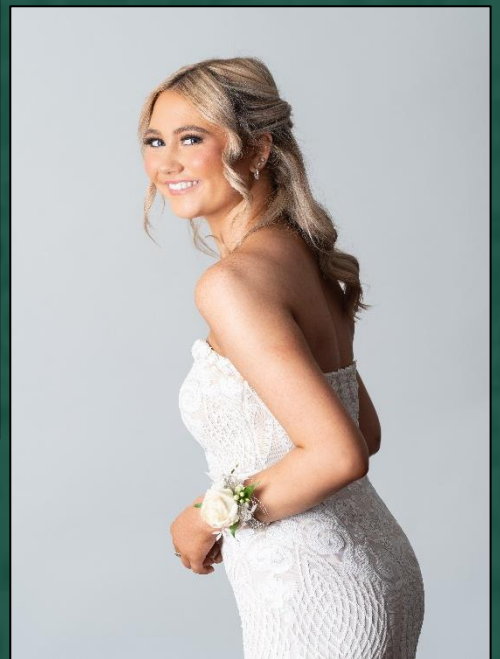
Middle Prefects: Niamh King, Ellie McGuinness, Erin McBride, Ava O'Kane, Alannah Kelly, Sophie Duffy, Shannon McCartney, Zoe Thompson, Megan Kelly, Taisce McLaren, Aoife Doherty, Emma O'Kane, Eva McConnell, Eva McCaughan, Evie McGuigan-Crawford



Year 14 Formal 2023

Our Year 14 students and staff enjoyed the beautiful occasion of the school formal on Friday 29th September in the White Horse Hotel. It was a wonderful evening for all who attended, with our students acting as fantastic ambassadors for our school community. Our thanks go to the Year 14 Formal Committee for all their work in co-ordinating such an elegant evening.







International Choral Festival Success

Our congratulations go to our Senior Choir who were awarded 1st place at the City of Derry International Choral Festival 10th Edition Post-Primary 3/4 part competition last week and were awarded the Bishops' Award for outstanding performance in the schools' competition for their performance of Las Amarillas. Our Junior Choir were also successful being awarded joint 2nd place in the Post-Primary Union/2 part competition. We are extremely proud of both choirs, their talented performances and their great success! Our thanks and congratulations also go to Mrs Elizabeth Quigley (Head of Music) and Miss Margaret McCay (Music Teacher) and their accompanists Mr Nicky Morton and Mr Louis Fields who played such a pivotal role in this fantastic success for our Music Department.

A number of our choir members also performed as part of the Festival Chorus with the Ulster Orchestra, performing Verdi's Requiem in the Millennium Forum and 20 singers from our school represented us on stage in the Guildhall Square for a Derry Girls Big Sing of the Cranberries song, Dreams. It has certainly, has been a busy time and extremely successful half-term for the Music Department! Well-done to all involved!





Year 12 OCNNI Success

We had the pleasure of welcoming the parents/guardians of our twenty Year 12 students who successfully completed their Level 2 OCNNI in Mental Health Awareness for Young People. During the programme, our young people had the opportunity to learn more about mental health, gaining a wealth of knowledge including understand mental health and mental illness, understanding the impact of mental illness, being aware of mental health interventions and support, and understanding the person-centred approach to mental health improvement and the legislative framework.

We wouldn't have been able to facilitate this course without the funding from Right Time, Right Place and we thank Michaela O'Hagan who came to our award ceremony and congratulated the girls on their success. We are also indebted Mark and Danielle who delivered the course and thank them for their passion and encouragement throughout the programme which was delivered every Tuesday lunch time during Term 3 of last year. A huge thank you goes to the Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum with particular thanks to Orlagh Robson and Aisling Hutton for organising this opportunity for our students. Finally, thanks go to our Vice Principal, Mrs Donnelly for establishing our link with the BBHF and providing this opportunity as our girls have had such an enjoyable time completing the course.

Our Mayor, Patricia Logue presented the students with their certificates and spoke during the event. It was also a pleasure to have our Children's Commissioner, Chris Quinn present for the award ceremony.

It was a delightful event where students, parents/guardians, teachers, and members of our wider community came together to celebrate the success of our students. Congratulations girls!







Visit from the N.I. Commissioner for Children & Young People

At the start of October we welcomed Chris Quinn, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) to our school. Chris had just been recently appointed to the role and was keen to get speaking with the young people of Northern Ireland to learn about their concerns so that he can address these within his role.

Chris spent the afternoon speaking with representatives from Years 9-14, celebrating the awarding of the OCN Mental Health Award to some Year 12 pupils and visiting Cuan. Three of our Year 14s were very interested in the issue of University funding and course choices and raised the continued lack of development at Magee with the Commissioner. We are looking forward to the opportunity to meet with the Commissioner, MLAs and the Permanent Under Secretary in charge of Further and Higher Education, to discuss this further.

The Commissioner's visit was the first in a series of events this year to re-establish our Student Council and ensure our young people have a voice.

The Commissioner was also delighted to meet two of our students, Holly and Síofra, who are involved with NICCY Forums online.





Junior Prefect Team Visit to Meet Mayor Logue

Our Junior Prefect Team enjoyed a very successful trip to the Mayor's Parlour to see Mayor Logue on Tuesday 17th October. The team got the opportunity to visit the 'Derry Girls' Museum and then enjoyed an informative tour of the Guildhall - ghost stories included!

We enjoyed an hour in Mayor Logue's company as she told us what a day in the life of the Mayor looks like. She told us what makes a successful leader – both the delights and the challenges involved. The prefects asked plenty of questions and the Mayor Logue spoiled us with lots of gifts before we left. A great morning visit, enjoyed by all.

Ms M. Auld (Head of Year 10)





Mercy Moments Awards

The Mercy Award is awarded to pupils demonstrating and living out our Mercy Values of: Compassion, Respect, Integrity, Justice, Hope and Joy. Congratulations to our September winners:

Year 8: Aoibheann, Mary-Beth & Ellen

Year 9: Eva & Maeve

Year 11: Mya, Oonagh & Lucia

Year 12: Clodagh Curran

Year 13: Ellie & Amy

Mercy





Irish Quiz Success!

The Comhghairdeas! Congratulations to the Year 9 team who won 1st place in the Annual Gael Linn Irish Language Grammar School Table Quiz recently at the White Horse Hotel. Maith sibh! Well done to team members from 9C: Aoibhin Foster, Ria Harkin, Anayah Lee agus Aaliyah Wilson. Iontach cliste!



St. Anne's Primary School Visit

We had the pleasure of welcoming the Primary 6 girls from St Anne's to Thornhill College on Thursday 19th October where they took part in a range of activities to celebrate Maths Week Ireland. The Primary 6 girls were welcomed by our Primary Links Ambassadors and directed to our Lecture Theatre where they were buddied up with our Primary Maths and Numeracy enrichment students from Year 13. The Primary 6 girls took part in a Maths trail around the school where they worked out numerous puzzles as well as getting to see the different departments and areas around our school. The girls were then treated to a snack in our school canteen and then returned to the Lecture Theatre for a Maths quiz where there was a very competitive atmosphere to see which group would be our prize winners!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Duffy and Mrs O'Brien for bringing the Primary 6 girls to Thornhill. A special thank you also goes to Mr Khera, Mrs O'Donnell and the Primary Maths and Numeracy enrichment classes for planning and delivering the activities for the girls from St Anne's. It was such an enjoyable morning building links with one of our local Primary Schools.

Miss L Cullen-Byrne (Primary Secondary Links Co-ordinator)





Wear it Pink Day

Many thanks to everyone in our school community for their contribution to our fundraising efforts for Breast Cancer Awareness and the Hive Cancer Support Group with our Wear It Pink Day on Friday 20th October. The total raised was £611.86, well-done to everyone involved and especially our students who so enthusiastically engaged in the spinathon.

Our thanks also go to the members of Hive who so generously gave their time to raise awareness of breast cancer prevalence in Northern Ireland, distribute leaflets, provided demonstrations and answer questions from both our students and staff.



AS Geography Fieldwork

Well-done to our Year 13 Geography students who worked so diligently during their fieldwork, investigating plant succession at the Umbra Dunes nature reserve with Miss Frizelle, Mr McSorley and Natalie from Magilligan Fieldcentre.



Thornhill Welcomes Dianaall the way from Mexico!

Every year we welcome a language assistant to the Spanish Department in Thornhill to help us gain experience of speaking to a native speaker and to increase our fluency in our chosen language. This year Diana Ramirez Gomez has joined our school community. Diana is from the State of Mexico. Mexico where she lives with her family, dogs Max and Roco and cats Blanca and Pelusa.

Thankfully, Diana has fallen in love with Derry and its greenery but sometimes struggles to understand our accent and Derry slang. She has been particularly baffled by our use of the word "wee". Weather wise, Diana is used to cold temperatures as Mexico can be cold too- so she isn't completely freezing! However, she does think the temperamental weather is a bit of a challenge. We can definitely all agree with that!

Diana has excellent fluency in English as she has been learning it for 10 years!! She travelled to Oklahoma, USA to learn English for one month and later returned to USA to teach Spanish at Ferrum College in Virginia. Between America and Ireland, Diana has certainly travelled a lot. She also spent 6 months as an exchange student at a university in the Czech Republic and her favourite place to go on holiday is Rome.

We hope Diana enjoys her time in Derry and at Thornhill and that everyone makes her feel very welcome. If you spot her in the hallways don't be afraid to say "¡Hola!"

Aoife McGonigle & Cora McHugh (Year 13)



Spanish Treasure Hunt

As part of the activities to celebrate European Day of Languages, the Spanish Department, along with Year 13 Spanish Language Leaders organised a fun Treasure Hunt for all junior school pupils. Girls looked for clues all around the schools and then translated these into Spanish! The following girls were announced as the winners and won prizes!

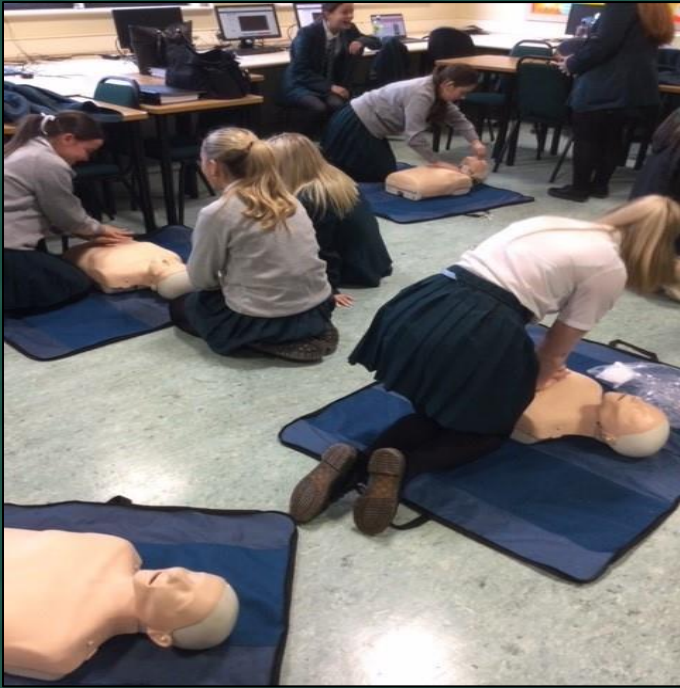
Freya Seymour, Kara McCann, Erin Patton, Elsa Roberts, Nicole O'Reilly, Niamh Crowe, Ava Harkin, Ava McKinley, Beth McLaughlin, Megan McLaughlin, Jessica Graham and Sarah McAleavey.

¡Enhorabuena, chicas!



Yr13 Health Promotion Team

Mrs McCarry's Year 13 Health Promotion Team have been training as lifesavers as they learned how to place an unconscious patient in the recovery position and perform CPR on an unconscious patient who is not breathing. They are looking forward to passing this lifesaving training on to other classes in the school.



Visiting Spanish Students

Yesterday we bid a fond farewell to our visiting Spanish students from Vigo in Galicia. The girls thoroughly enjoyed their experience in Derry and were a pleasure to have in our school.



Congratulations Erin!

Congratulations to Erin who attended Hillsborough Castle last week to be commended for her poem celebrating 25 years of the Good Friday Agreement. The competition organised by Stormont invited young people to reflect on what the agreement meant to them.



Tomorrow's Engineers & Maths Week Ireland



Once again the Math's and TD department have joined forces to host a range of activities both inside and outside the classroom to shine a spotlight on engineering, engineering careers and engineering professionals as well as encouraging and enhancing a positive attitude towards learning Math's regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, background, needs or abilities.

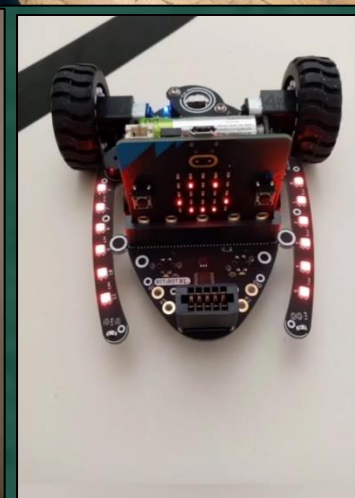
This Year our Year 8 and 9 pupils took part in the Energising Futures Fashion fixers Stem Challenge and tried to think of new and innovative ways for dealing with many of the issues created by Fast Fashion.

Our Year 10 pupils were treated to a STEMstarts workshop hosted by Deloitte where they had a chance to develop their team-work skills and complete a number of fun challenges – building spaghetti towers and lifting cups with keyrings and string. It was a great day made even better as several of the hosts were past pupils.



We wrapped our week up on Friday with a 'pink' brektime celebration and got to enjoy some sweet treats (and cake) as well as a jam packed afternoon of fun STEM activities for our KS4 and KS5 pupils which included flying (and crashing) the drone, epoxy resin casting, vinyl cutting to make keyrings and pencil cases and getting to grips with microbit programming and our new BitBots.

It was a busy week and we are looking forward to next years events already!





**Congratulations
Aurora & Miss
Doherty**

Our congratulations go to our Year 8 student Aurora & Miss Doherty who both won gold at the Irish Open Brazilian Jujitsu competition in Dublin recently.

What a fantastic achievement by them both!



**Congratulations
Orlaith!**

Congratulations to our past pupil Orlaith McCorriston who has recently secured the KN Cheung and SK Chin scholarship from Queens and All-Ireland JP McManus scholarship.

Well done Orlaith we are so proud of you and your achievements, they are richly deserved!



Queen's University Belfast @QUBelfast · 1h

Replying to @ThornhillDerry

Congratulations Orlaith! #LoveQUB



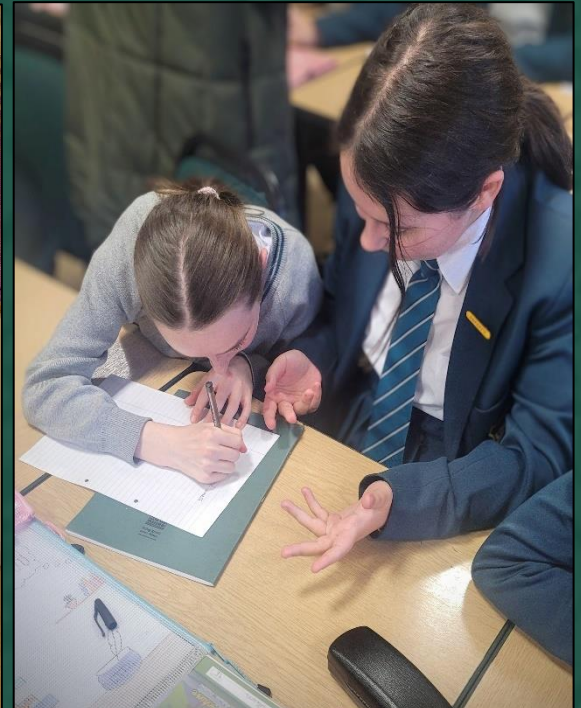
Year 12 Drama Workshop

Our Year 12 GCSE Drama students recently participated in a workshop with past pupil, Catriona McFeely who is now a professional actor and Kathy Moore (Outreach Officer from the Lyric Theatre, Belfast) on a production of *Rough Girls* written by Tara O'Neill. This was made possible by our Lyric affiliation scheme and the students gained a tremendous amount from it.



Year 9 Poetry Workshop

A massive thank you to Gráinne McCool who delivered a Poetry Workshop to Year 9 students this week. Gráinne informed them about this year's Foyle Schools Poetry Competition and helped them get their creative juices flowing! We look forward to our Year 9's submitting their entries after the Halloween break.



Year 13 Health Promotion Team

Our Year 13 Health Promotion Team & Mrs McCarry were delighted to be joined by Ciara from the Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum to explore how they can promote healthy eating in our school community through the use of their nutrition toolkit. An exciting partnership project we are delighted to be involved in.



Year 8 Gaelic Blitz

Well done to our Year 8 Gaelic team attending their first blitz of the year! The girls displayed a high level of skills across a number of matches! Thanks to Ulster Ladies for the invite; the girls loved it!!





Some of our
Year 8 girls
wearing their
new gold
badges!

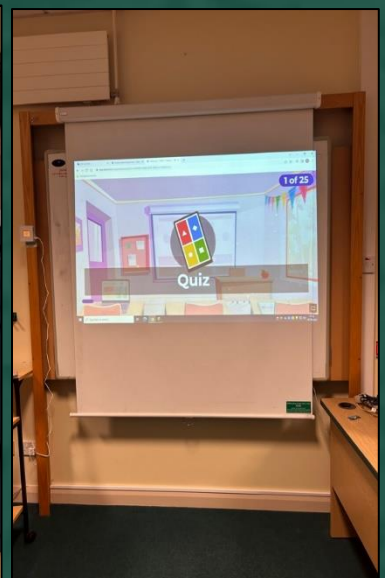


Maths Week Ireland

Bronagh, Roise, and Maebh (Year 13) visited Year 9's to deliver a fun maths game for Maths Week Ireland. The game was based on The Chase where a Year 9 class was challenged to beat their teacher in quick maths questions, which they won and were rewarded with a free maths homework pass. They were faced with mental math problems which consisted of multiplying, area, and square numbers. It was clear to see they had a blast!



Róisín, Grace-Lily, Beth and Clara (Year 13) created a Maths Kahoot! for Maths Week Ireland which they then presented to a Junior School class. They really enjoyed the activity and had lots of fun. The class really got involved with the game and it was great to see them having fun with maths.



Another group visited Mr McEldowney's Year 9 Form Class during registration to deliver a treasure hunt game. The girls thoroughly enjoyed the game as it challenged them intellectually as it included riddles and equations to stimulate them early in the morning. They communicated and worked well together as they enjoyed participating in the Maths Week Ireland game. The aim of the game was to eventually discover the prize, which was a bag of sweets and chocolate, which was a pleasant surprise for them.



As part of Maths's Week Ireland, another group created an interactive basketball maths game for Year 10 pupils.

This involved each student answering a maths question and then running to the basketball net with the correct answer. There was then three distances that the students could shoot from. If they made they scored at the closest distance they got 1 point, 2 points for the next distance and 3 points for the furthest distance, however, if the students didn't make the shot they did not get any points.

They had a ball!



During maths week Ireland, a group of Year 13 students set up a Maths-PE game to show that maths can be incorporated into games. They visited a year 9 PE class and we put them into 4 teams.

They showed 2 teams an equation, and to get the right answer, they needed to complete the obstacle course to get the right answer that was stuck to the wall. Congratulations to the red team who won the final! The entire class were very involved and were very enthusiastic!

Eva and Faustina organised for 10A to participate in a game of Tic Tac Toe for Maths Week Ireland. They enjoyed a great game of giant tic tac toe with a maths twist during their PE lesson. The aim of the game as everyone knows is to get 3 in a row, however the girls added a twist that to place a counter on the grid they had to answer a maths related question.

The class did very well with answering the questions and were very co-operative.




 THORNHILL COLLEGE INVITES PRIMARY 5, 6 & 7 STUDENTS TO TAKE PART IN OUR
HALLOWEEN
COSTUME DESIGN
 TASK: DESIGN A HALLOWEEN COSTUME WHICH MUST INCLUDE THE FRONT, THE BACK AND A TITLE FOR YOUR CREATION





SPOOKTACULAR PRIZES TO BE WON!

Scan or take a photograph of your design and send it to:
thornhillpslinks131@c2ken.net
 with your name, class and Primary School attached.

You can also post your entry to:
 Primary Links, Thornhill College, 142 Culmore Road, Derry

**DEADLINE: FRIDAY 27TH
 OCTOBER AT 5PM**



Jog in the Bog

Well done to all the members of our school community who took part in the annual Colm Quigley Jog in the Bog organised by the Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum.

There was a great turn out and of course all raising much needed funds for counselling services.



DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING DAILY

Are your Safe Search Filters Active?

Visit our Online Safety Centre and help protect the children and young people in your care from stumbling across harmful content online.



Talking to your Child about War and Conflict

Helping Children and Young People Make Sense of Distressing News

We live in a time of constant news streams and updates. It's hard not to be filled with uncertainty and heartache every time you switch on the television or look at your phone. It can be difficult to process news about wars or conflict in the world. However, it is especially concerning for children and young people.

To help you guide those in your care through this uncertain time, our online safety experts have created this support for parents, carers, teachers, and safeguarding professionals.



Why is it important to talk about what's happening?

Children and young people are naturally curious. They want to know about what is going on in the world as much as they want to know the latest TikTok trend. Even if you try to limit the content they consume, they will inevitably hear about big world events from various outlets, such as television, social media, friends, family,

and school environments. They might even overhear something from one of your conversations! If it's what everyone is talking about, their interest in the topic increases.

It's difficult to know what content the young person in your care is viewing. If you don't acknowledge

questions or concerns they may have, they could 'fill in the gaps' with the wrong information. This might cause further anxiety, ignorance, or worrisome behaviour. Educating those in your care *yourself* assures they know how to process news reports on their own with critical thinking and media literacy skills.

How children react to distressing world events

While news can be upsetting and worrying for everyone, it is not the first disruptive event to affect the children and young people in your care. In their lifetime, they have already spent over two years adapting to a pandemic, endured lockdowns and being isolated from their friends and family. They may even have lost loved ones during this time. If someone in your care is struggling, they might be:

- **Fixated**, spending more time on phones or tablets to stay 'up to date'.
- **Anxious**, especially about future plans or dreams.
- **Irritable**, over-reacting to minor inconveniences or issues.
- **Withdrawn**, not engaging with their friends, school, or extracurriculars.
- **Distressed**, with disruptions to regular eating, sleeping, or personal hygiene habits.
- **Obsessive**, thinking over every circumstance and talking about possible outcomes.

Top Tips for how to talk to children and young people about war and conflict

Acknowledgement - Don't deny what is happening or negate their worries by telling them it will 'all blow over soon'. Instead, tell them their concern is completely understandable and that you want to discuss it with them.

Honesty - It's important that you refrain from lying in your responses or ignoring any questions or thoughts your child has. It's okay if you don't know the answer. This allows you to open up a discussion with your child. You could even suggest seeking the answer together!

Sources - Discuss trustworthy news sources and how difficult it is to confirm things during times of conflict.

Validation - It is likely these emotions are complex and confusing for them. Remind them that, in this situation, feelings like this are normal.

Listen - No matter how worried or anxious you are, they will look to you for reassurance.

Set your feelings aside and give the young person in your care the attention and space they need to feel heard.

Limits - If they feel they are unable to look away from the news, suggest they switch it off.

If this isn't realistic, advise them to only check news sources 1-2 times per day.

Gratitude - Discuss gratitude around the dinner table or during morning drives to school. If a young person in your care seems to struggle with guilt, remind them that they have nothing to feel guilty about - just things to be thankful for! Suggest researching places that are taking in donations to bring to refugees or other ways to help the crisis in a local capacity.

Support - Your reactions to their reactions are key to helping those in your care feel protected and loved.

Tell your child you love them. Give them hugs or hold their hand. Allow them space when they need it, but remind them that you are here for them.



Every child is different.

Their ability to process information will depend on their age, character, and resilience. As their guardian, you will know them best, but assessing their abilities can help you choose the level of information you share with them.



saferschoolsni.co.uk