

Participant Information - Online Discussion Group

Exploring peer relationships at school



What is the Online Discussion Group?

The online discussion group will involve a group of girls the same age as you. Each girl will use their own computer or laptop to talk to each other.



Sheila will post questions to the online Facebook discussion group which she will invite you to join.

Instead of talking to the other girls in person you will talk to them online through posting your responses to Sheila's questions by sharing your views about your experiences at school.

HOW CAN I JOIN?

Sheila will set up a Facebook group and provide you with a 'made up name' that you will use to set up your own Facebook account. Sheila will then invite you to join the discussion group.

WHY?

Why do I need a 'made up name'?

The reason why you will have a made-up name is to make sure that no one, except Sheila will be able to identify who you are.

Sheila will then send you an invite to join the Facebook group. **Only those girls invited into the group by Sheila will be able to join the discussion group.**



How long will I have to take part in the online discussion group for?

You will take part in an online group discussion for 4 weeks.

On a Monday of each week, Sheila will advise you when new questions have been posted to the Facebook group.

- Using your Facebook login details and password you can then discuss with other girls in the online discussion group your experiences at school.



When should I have completed the questions?

You should complete your responses to questions posted by Sheila by the Friday of each week.

Sheila may also ask you to further explain some of the comments you have given. This is to make sure that Sheila understands what you mean. There are no right or wrong answers, Sheila is just interested in hearing your views and opinions.



It is ok if you do not wish to discuss some of the questions that Sheila posts to the group.



What will I be asked to discuss in the online group?

Each week Sheila will talk to you and the rest of the discussion group about a different topic. These include:

Week 1 – Your interests for example about your likes and dislikes at school.

Week 2 – Your identity – how you view yourself in terms of your personality, thoughts, feelings about who you are and what type of person you view yourself as.

Week 3 – Your feelings about your relationships with your peers.

Week 4 – About friendships.



Rules for taking part in the Online Discussion Group

Why do we need to have rules for the Online Discussion Group?

It is important for the online discussion group to be welcoming and safe for everyone using it.



There are 8 rules provided on the next page. You need to read these carefully. If you do not understand any of the rules ask your mum or dad or the person who looks after you to explain them to you.

The consent form you have for girls aged 13 to 15 years will ask you to agree to following these rules should you be selected to participate in the online discussion forum over a 4 week period.

If you do not agree to follow these rules, then you are not eligible to participate in the research project.

The 8 RULES are:



1. Only Sheila (the Researcher) can invite people to join the online discussion group. You are not allowed to ask anyone to join the online discussion group.



2. Do not include personal information or ask others for personal information in messages.

This is to protect your privacy. Personal information includes:

- (a) Your name or your parents' names
- (b) Your home address
- (c) The school you attend or your school address
- (d) Your email or your parents email address
- (e) You or your parents mobile phone numbers
- (f) Your home telephone number



3. Do let others in the discussion group know about:

- (a) a service or book that you have found helpful

- (b) your experiences with peers at school
- (c) how you feel at school



4. Do not post message that may be hurtful to other users.
- (a) You should not use inappropriate language such as swear words
 - (b) Posting threatening images or name calling is not allowed.
 - (c) If you do not agree with what someone has posted this is ok. Give your opinion but do not post messages which may hurt someone's feelings. For example, by using words or phrases such as "your opinion is stupid" or "you are silly" or "I think your view is wrong". Instead you could begin by saying "I have a different view from this" or "I feel...(then post your view and how you feel using words or phrases that are not hurtful to others).
 - (d) Do not post inappropriate messages that are offensive. This may include: sexist, homophobic, racist, intolerant of religious beliefs, obscene or discriminate against others. This is not allowed in the online discussion forum. This also includes links to porn or hate sites.



5. Do not post emojis as others in the discussion group may find these upsetting or difficult to understand. Emojis are small images used to express an idea or emotion which look like these images.



You should also not click on the poke button. A "poke" is basically someone trying to get your attention. It is a feature on Facebook that is used just to annoy someone.

The poke icon on Facebook looks like this.



6. Naming individuals or specific services that you are not happy with may be considered illegal and your post may be edited or removed.



7. If any of the rules are broken then the research team that Sheila is working with will discuss the situation with you and try to resolve any problems. Sheila reserves the right to edit or delete any posts that may be considered to have legal implications.



8. Continuously breaking the rules may lead to your right to post being suspended. When rules continue to be broken we may need to close your account.

I hope you enjoy being part of the online discussion group and find it a friendly, helpful and safe place for you to voice and share your views and opinions.

Thank you for taking the time to read these rules.



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This investigation was granted ethical approval by the School of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Strathclyde.

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the investigation, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed or further information may be sought from, please contact:

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