

Questions: Primary School

Introduction:

To celebrate Universal Children's Day on 20th November, Koulla Yiasouma, the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) and CCEA joined together to host her first ever live chat for primary and post primary teachers and pupils to learn more about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Pupils had the chance to explore and ask questions about issues affecting them and find out more about how their lives are governed and how they can participate to improve the quality of their own lives.

Understanding of children's rights and the UNCRC are key aspects of the PD&MU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) curriculum and can be further explored with workshops and exercises in the UNCRC Resource Hub.

Engaging with children's rights can help pupils to:

- Respect their own rights and the rights of others;
 - Recognise the interdependence of people, communities and the environment; and
 - Contribute to the welfare of school, the community and the environment.
- Foundation, KS1 & KS2 pupils can progress through PDMU Strand 1 (Personal Understanding and Health) and Strand 2 (Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community).

During the Primary School webinar session, the Commissioner for Children and Young People – Koulla Yiasouma– was sent over 80 questions. Koulla had time to answer almost 30 of these during the session. She promised to follow up with answers to all questions, which can be found within this report.

As far as possible, questions have been grouped into common themes to avoid repetition. As appropriate, reference has also been made to the actual recoding of the webinar and to the responses made from the panel to the incoming questions from schools.

Links have been added to provide additional information on the various issues.

If you have any further queries or questions, please contact the Participation Team on 028 90311616 or participation@niccy.org.

Personal questions to the Commissioner:

- **“Tell us about how you became involved in the Rights of the Child?”** From Ryan at Longtower PS, Derry.
- **“Why did you want to work for children's rights?”** From St Joseph's PS, Crumlin.
- **“When did you find out you wanted to work for children's rights?”** From Leah at Florencecourt PS, Fermanagh

“It wasn't my first choice as a career but as I looked into it a bit more I realised that we are not doing enough for children and young people to get the best start in life and that we

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sometimes blame them when things do not work out and that this isn't fair. So I wanted to change that and an international document that our government, like the UNCRG, has signed up to seems a really good place to start when you want to know what more needs to be done."

See also webinar response to **"What's your role?" @ 3 mins** into recording)

And, webinar question **"What inspired you to get involved in children's' rights?"** from Mount St. Catherine's PS, Armagh (@13.40 mins)

- **"Why do you think it is necessary to have children's rights Commissioner?"**
From Harvey at Rasharkin PS.

"Because our government could do better and they must have someone whose job is to make sure that they try much harder. It is really important that children know that there is someone who is listening to them and do the job."

- **"Who do you admire in our world?"** St Joseph's PS, Crumlin

"I admire lots of people who stand up for people's rights, especially those who do the right thing even if it's unpopular!"

"If I had to pick one, I would say I particularly admire Malala Yousafzai - an education advocate who, at the age of 17, became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize after surviving an attack on her life. Malala is known for supporting human rights, especially the education of women and children in her homeland of Pakistan but also all over the world."

- **"What do you think is the most important right for children?"** From Rasharkin PS.
- **"Which right means the most to you?"** From Luke at St. Columba's PS, Kilrea
- **"Which is the most important right?"** From Mollie at St. Columba's PS, Kilrea

"All rights are very important but there are two which we must do a lot more work. Firstly making sure that all children have their best interests (Article 3) taken into account because it reminds us of the importance of seeing each child as an individual. I also like Article 12 that is about making sure children have a voice in decisions about their lives because as I always say "the main expert in a child's life is the child themselves."

"Oh, and I also like Article 31 – the right to play"

See also webinar response to **"What is the most important right?"** From Rasharkin PS. (@ 18.55 mins).

For further information see link to NICCY's child rights publication.

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- **“Do you think children are faced with many challenges today?” From Anahorish Primary School, Toomebridge.**

“Every generation of children face different challenges but yes I think that today’s children are faced with many challenges that many adults do not always understand like social media. Therefore we have to make sure that we make surer that they get their rights met in these new situations.”

- **“What is the best part of your job?” From Oskars at Mt. St. Catherine’s PS, Armagh**

“Meeting with children but far and it makes up for all the boring and grumpy adults that I have to meet.”

- **“When you were a child, did you feel that your rights were not met?” From Rosie at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast**

“The UNCRC did not exist when I was a child. But generally I was very happy.”

- **Do you have children and do they help you with your job? From St. Joseph's PS, Crumlin.**

“I have two daughters (18 and 21) and yes they always make sure that I know when I making a twit of myself.”

- **Is there anything tough about your job? From Odhran at St. Mary's P.S. Portglenone.**

“The fact that we don’t have a government makes it very difficult and also when some adults do not take children’s rights seriously.”

- **“Who is the most famous person you have met?” From St Joseph's PS, Crumlin**

“I haven’t met very many famous people”

See also webinar response @ 39 mins

- **“If you were to create a new right, what would it be?” From St. Columba's PS, Kilrea**

“Not really sure but maybe a Right to Be Happy.”

- **“Are there any groups that you know that we could invite into our school?” From St Joseph's PS, Crumlin**

“Well, you could invite me but I know you have an ECO group so maybe the National Trust or the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).”

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- **“Do you like your job?” From Harry at Florencecourt PS, Fermanagh**

“Yes very much, particularly when I meet children and young people.”

See also webinar response @ **28.30 mins.**

- **“Could we get a visit from the Commissioner to our school?” From Mt. St Catherine's PS, Armagh**
- **“We'd love you to visit us in Forge!” From Forge Integrated PS, Belfast**

“And I would love to visit both Forge and Mt. St. Catherine's.....and any other school that wants to invite me. Just use the diary@niccy.org email to drop me a line.”

See also webinar response @ **38.40 mins.**

- **Would you ever go to schools directly to answer and solve problems? From Daniel at St Malachy's PS, Bangor**

“I have spent far too much time in St Malachy's!!!! But yes, sometimes we are called into to schools to sort our problem. Sometimes I just get invited to visit and talk to the children.”

- **“Should all children be encouraged to stick by their school motto?” From Daniel at St Joseph's PS, Carryduff)**

“That would depend on the school motto, of course. But generally, a motto that is about sharing is a good one.”

- **How does it feel to be able to make a difference in children's lives? From Katie at St. Mary's P.S., Portglenone**

“A-maz-ing. It is such a privilege and honour to have the job to try and improve laws and services for children.”

The UNCRC:

- **“What is the importance of children's rights?” From Anjali at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast**
- **“How did they come up with children's rights?” From Adam at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast**

“It's quite a long story and when I visit I can tell you more but after WW2 the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was agreed and it became clear that because children need adults for so many things that it was important to they have special rights and that governments had a responsibility to make those rights happen.”

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[Click here for further information on the history of the UNCRC.](#)

See also webinar response to “What’s the link between rights and responsibilities?” (@ 6mins)

[Click here for further information on ‘Myths and Misconceptions’ about children’s rights.](#)

- **“Do you think that the UNCRC is doing enough for children's rights?”** From Zenan at Longtower PS, Derry.

“I think the UNCRC is a very good document but it is our government that has to make sure that it makes a difference in the lives of children everywhere. I do not think that our government is doing enough for children’s rights.”

See also webinar response to “What is the UNCRC?” (@ 3.45mins)

[Click here for more information on the UNCRC.](#)

See also webinar response to **“What made you realise the rights of children weren’t being met?”** From Ben at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast, (@ 15.45 mins)

- **“Do you think many people outside of education know about children's rights?”** From Camphill Primary School, Ballymena

“Yes, many people know about children’s rights, particularly in areas such as health and justice. But they need to know more.”

See webinar response @12.20 mins.

- **“How do we spread the word about the UNCRC?”** From St Joseph’s PS, Carryduff

“We keep doing what we are doing and keep talking about it but also showing how it makes a difference to our everyday lives. For example, just by going to school you are enjoying your Article 28 right.

“An advertise campaign would be a good idea.”

- **“Do you think people know about children’s rights?”** St Joseph’s PS, Carryduff

“I think some people think they know about rights but we need to make sure that everyone has accurate information about children’s rights.”

- **“Should parents be made more aware of children rights and how to support them?”** From Dylan at Longtower PS, Derry.
- **“Should all adults know about the rights of children?”** St Joseph’s PS, Carryduff

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- **“How can we educate adults in Northern Ireland on children's rights?”** St. Columba's PS, Kilrea
- **“How do you spread the word about the importance of Children's Rights to the wider community?”** From Joshua at Florencecourt PS, Fermanagh

“Yes, I think they (parents / guardians and adults in general) should because if they do it will help them know that they can ask for help for different things.”

“Article 42 of the UNCRC says that the government must make sure that the all the promises made within the Convention should be made known to adults and children alike.”

“In the meantime we can all help spread the word about children’s rights by sharing our knowledge about how important children’s rights are to our family, friends and community. You can also make sure that people who make decisions on your behalf – local Councillors, MLAs, MPs, teachers and youth workers – are also aware of children’s rights and the UNCRC.”

- **“Shouldn't everyone have rights?”** From Reece at Florencecourt PS, Fermanagh

“Everyone does have rights and it doesn’t matter who they are or what age they are. We have the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the European Convention on HR (see above) which outlines rights for everyone. But there are some groups that needs extra rights like children or people with a disability.”

- **“Do all countries have rights for children?”** St Joseph's PS, Carryduff
- **“How many countries haven't signed the UNCRC and why?”** St. Paul's PS, Belfast

“Only one country - 196 out of 197 – have committed to abide by it. The one country is the United States of America. USA signed it in 1995 but never ratified it (by signing a treaty a country endorses its principles; ratification means committing to be legally bound by it).”

“Most American laws are already consistent with the UNCRC, but not all. A notable exception is that in America under-18s can be jailed for life without parole (until 2005, they could be sentenced to death). The treaty prohibits cruel and degrading punishment, so ratification might curb smacking. Although America has laws against abusing children, a third of states allow corporal punishment in schools and none bans it at home.”

See also webinar response to **“Do all counties have rights for children?”** From St Joseph's PS, Dunloy (@ 22.35 mins)

- **“We enjoy GLP lessons which help to look at the rights of children.”** Hart Memorial PS, Craigavon

“I am really pleased to hear that because it is really important that all children know about their rights and then you can defend them if you need to. You can defend your rights by speaking to adults and children or by asking for some extra help from people like me.”

[Click here for further information on children rights.](#)

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- **“What are adults’ rights?”** From Blathnaid and Year 6 at Ballyoran PS, Portadown.

“Adults have rights which are listed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). In 1998, the UK government passed a law called the ‘Human Rights Act’. The Human Rights Act makes sure that public organisations, including the Government, police and local Councils, treat everyone equally with fairness and respect.”

- **“What are the differences between adults’ rights and children’s rights?”** From Patrick at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast

“That’s a very good question, thank you Patrick. There many rights that adults have that children also have, for example, right to life, right to freedom of expression and right not to be discriminated against. However, there are different rights that come in to effect at different ages for example, as children you can’t vote or drink alcohol or do certain jobs or get married. As you get older, more of these restrictions are removed, some at 16, some at 17 and then once you get to 18 you have all the adults’ rights as found in the ECHR as mention above.

“In the meantime, as children and young people, you do have all the rights identified in the UNCRF which includes Article 3 that states that adults must think about the best interests of children and young people when making choices that affect them.”

Making children’s rights real:

- **“What made you realise that the rights of children were not being met?”** From Ben at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast.

“There is a lot of research and other evidence that tells us that children are not getting their rights met but most importantly I am hearing from children themselves as well as their parents and teachers.”

See also webinar response to **“What can children and young people do if there voice isn’t listened to?”** From Longtower PS, Derry, (@ 20.35 mins)

- **“If a child feels that their needs are not being met e.g. at home, what should they do?”** St. Mary’s PS, Portglenone.

*“Always tell someone like a teacher or another trusted adult. If you can’t find one, ring **Childline 0800 1111**”*

- **“What types of things are you doing to support children in the Antrim area?”** St Joseph’s Primary, Crumlin.

“I do lots of things to support children in Antrim and all over NI and have visited a lot of schools in County Antrim. Parents and carers from the Antrim area also ring our legal team for advice and support.”

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- **“Do you think all teachers should know about children’s rights?”** St Joseph’s PS, Crumlin

“Yes I do, I think that everyone who works with children (e.g. doctors, nurses and teachers) should know about children’s rights.”

- **“What do you think is the best way our teachers can make sure we know about our rights?”** Florencecourt P.S, Fermanagh.

“Firstly they can teach you about it and then make sure you get your rights, for example a school council where children can make a real difference with what happens in schools. Also it is important that children know that rights is about every part of your life.”

“In 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended that the UK Government make child rights education mandatory in our school and I would support this.”

For further information on children’s rights and the curriculum visit the [NICCY/CCEA UNCRC Resource Hub](#).

[Click here for further information on the UN Committee’s recommendations to the UK Government.](#)

- **“Do you think each school should have a designated children’s rights teacher?”** St Joseph’s PS, Carryduff.
- **“Do you think schools should have a designated children’s rights teacher?”** From Ciaran at St Joseph’s PS, Carryduff.

“Yes I do. I think that every teacher should know about children’s rights but it is also really important that there is one “designated” for children who has bit more expertise so that they can support their colleagues.”

- **“Do you think you are succeeding in making sure children are getting their rights in NI?”** From Andrew at Rasharkin PS.

“I’m not sure; sometimes it’s very hard to know especially when we do not have a government to get some of the laws changed. I promise you that everyone at NICCY is doing our very best.”

- **“How do you think having Children’s Rights can change children’s futures?”** From Leah at Florencecourt PS, Fermanagh.
- **“Do you think having Children’s Rights will help when children are having a difficult time?”** From Megan at Florencecourt PS, Fermanagh.

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“I think that if people in power try to make children’s rights a reality than it will lead to all children leading the best life possible and therefore having a better future. This will only happen when we make sure that our most important consideration is children.”

[Click here for further information on NICCY’s ‘Statement of Children’s Rights in NI’ report and important call on Government to support children and young people.](#)

- **“Who prevents children from receiving their rights?”** From Thomas at St Joseph’s PS, Carryduff.

“It is generally adults who very often are trying to do their very best but because they don’t understand rights or do not have enough money or imagination they stop children receiving rights. Sometimes people think children’s rights are against parents but they are not because parents want their children to have their rights.”

Bullying:

- **“What plans has the Commissioner got to further deal with bullying?”** From John at St Joseph’s PS, Dunloy
- **“What type of bullying do you most often come across? Can you suggest effective strategies to deal with it?”** From Georgie at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast

“Bullying is always wrong and must always be addressed by adults. A child who has bullied another child must always know that what they have done is wrong and given as much support as possible to make sure that they never do it again. Of course, if a child has been bullied they must get all the help they can to recover.

“A new law to better protect children from bullying in schools is going to be introduced which should help schools deal with bullying better. As a result of this new law, there will be new Guidance for all schools about how to record and deal with bullying which should mean that children in all schools across Northern Ireland are better protected from bullying. NICCY was involved in the development of the new law and we hope that it will make an important difference to children’s lives.”

See also webinar responses:

“Could there be better provision made for anti-bullying in Northern Ireland?”) From Knockmore Special School, Strabane, @ 10.35mins.

“What can we do to stop cyber bullying?” From Kaesi at St. Paul’s PS, Belfast @ 31.20 mins.

[Click here for link to the NI Anti-Bullying Forum.](#)

[Click here for information on the ‘Digital 5 a Day’ for an easy to follow practical steps to achieve a healthy and balanced digital diet.](#)

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Academic Selection:

- **“How do you feel about 10 & 11 year olds having to sit AQE and GL tests for grammar selection?”** From Katy at St Malachy's PS, Bangor
- **“Do you think the transfer test is fair?”** From Kyle at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast.
- **“Do you think the AQE/ GL will be improved in the future?”** From Ben at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast.

“I would like to see the education system in Northern Ireland moving away from the use of the transfer test. Children have told us that it puts too much pressure on them and we know that it can result in big differences in how well some children do in education, as they get older.”

“I am also worried about the fact that you may have to pay to sit the exams and the use of tutors which parents may choose to pay for as this does mean that parents who don't have the money to pay may be at a big disadvantage. I would like to see the education system in Northern Ireland being one where all schools can give all children an excellent quality education. If this were the case, there would be no need for the transfer test as every school would be able to meet the needs of all children. I am working on this.”

“In 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended that the UK Government should abolish the practice of unregulated admission tests to post-primary education in Northern Ireland”

See also webinar responses:

“Transfer test – do children have a right to prepare for both AQE and GL tests?” @ 7 mins.

“If parents pay for transfer test tuition, is it discriminating against those parents that don't have the means to pay for it?” From Sarah at St Malachy's PS, Bangor, @18 mins.

[Click here for further information on the UN Committee's recommendations about the transfer test to the UK Government.](#)

Special Educational Needs:

- **“We feel that Makaton, PECS and Sign Language could be delivered in all mainstream schools to allow young people with learning difficulties an opportunity to communicate with peers in mainstream sectors.”** Knockavoe School, Strabane.

“I think that this is an excellent idea because it is really important that children live, learn and play together.”

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Learning about Life Experiences:

- **“We think primary school children should learn about our money and saving our money, how can we start this?”** St Joseph's PS, Crumlin.

“Maybe talk to your PDMU co-ordinator and check out the CCEA website where KS1 looks at exploring how money can be used to buy goods and services and how it is earned through work.”

Pupils' Voices:

- **“We have a school council and I think my voice is listened to. But what would a child do if they felt their voice was not being listened to?”** From Longtower PS, Derry.
- **“Should all schools have a school council?”** From Harvey at Longtower PS, Derry
- **“We have a School Council and Eco Warriors in our school. What other things could we do?”** From Eabha at Longtower PS, Derry
- **“If you think changes need to be made to improve the quality of life for children, how do you go about doing something about it?”** From Mia at St Malachy's PS, Bangor
- **“I feel my rights are protected and my voice is listened to in my class council.”** From Hayden at Longtower PS, Derry.

“Well done to all the schools that have a school council and regularly listen to their pupils. Of course, you know that Article 12 of the UNCRC says that children and young people should have a say in decisions that affect their lives. A school council can provide a meaningful way in which pupils can voice their opinions and have their views taken into account in decisions which impact upon them.”

See also webinar response to **“Why don't students get a bigger voice in getting taught about rights?”** @4.45 mins.

For further information see Pupils' Voice page on www.niccy.org.

For more information on school councils, visit the **CBBC Newsround** website.

Integrated / Shared Education:

- **“Our school is involved in shared education, how important do you think this?”** St Joseph's PS, Crumlin.
- See also webinar responses:
 - **“We think Integrated Education is very important in Northern Ireland – what are your views on Integrated Education?”** From Forge Integrated PS, Belfast, @ 29 mins.
 - **“Our school is involved in Shared Education – How important is Shared Education?”** From St. Joseph's PS, Crumlin, @ 30.35 mins.

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“The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has consistently reminded the Northern Ireland government of the need to accelerate integration of education. This was re-iterated in the latest Concluding Observations following its examination of the UK government’s compliance with its obligations under the UNCRC last year. The Committee recommended that government in Northern Ireland ‘actively promote a fully integrated education system and carefully monitor the provision of shared education, with the participation of children, in order to ensure that it facilitates social integration.’”

“In an interview with The Belfast Telegraph on Monday (31st July, 2017) the actor Adrian Dunbar said:

“We pay millions of pounds to separate Catholic and Protestant children, and even more millions on attempting to bring them together as adults.”

“I couldn’t agree with him more. Northern Ireland’s education system should be integrated, not only on the basis of religion, but also academic ability, gender, race and disability.”

Meeting with Children and Young People:

- **“Do you have meetings with children to speak directly to them about issues that affect them?”** From Clodagh and Year 6 at Ballyoran PS, Portadown

“Yes, I meet with children and young people almost every day to hear about their lives and what issues are affecting them.”

See also webinar responses:

- **“How do you get children’s views? (@ 17.05 mins)**
- **“Do you have meetings with children or how do you speak directly to them?”** From Clodagh, Ballyoran PS. (@ 26.45 mins)
- **“How often do you deal with issues directly from children?”** from Ciara at St. Mary’s PS, Portglenone (@35.31 mins)
- **“The Commissioner’s Cape – what’s the story?” (@8.40 mins)** [Click here for further information about the Commissioner’s Cape](#)

Mental Health:

- **“What is available in education to support children’s mental health?”** From St James’ PS, Whiteabby.
- **“Do you have influence to push through the proposed framework for Children and Young people’s mental health framework? Where does this go with no government?”** Ballyoran PS, Portadown.
- **“We at Longtower are a School of Sanctuary. We think it is very important.”** Longtower PS, Derry.

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- **“Should we have more than one PE lesson a week if we are hoping to improve physical and mental health?”** From Alfie at St Malachy's PS, Bangor.
- **“We are doing the 'Daily Mile' in our school. What is your opinion of this?”** From Shea at St Malachy's PS, Bangor

“Schools and teachers play a big part in young people’s lives - it is really important that young people feel happy and safe in school and that they helped to learn all the skills they need, this includes helping to learn numbers and letters as well as understanding their feelings and emotions. It is great to hear about the things that schools are doing to support your health and well-being, like yoga, mindfulness, the Daily Mile and being a school of sanctuary. I want all schools to be like this and we will talk to people about how this can happen.”

See also webinar response to **“We promote pupil wellbeing as a shared education project – what do you think about this?”** From Knocknavoe School and St. Mary’s PS, Castlefin, @ 37.30 mins.

Poverty:

- **“Is anything being done to help children who are living in poverty in NI?”** From Peri at Rasharkin PS.

“It’s not fair that some children are more likely to experience poverty because of circumstances outside their control, for example, children living with just one parent, children living in a household where no one is employed or children living in families where someone is disabled.

“Children living in poverty do get some help from government, for example free school meals. However, poverty can have a longer-term impact on children’s education, health and risk of homelessness. Children have a right for their parents or guardians to get financial help if they need it to have a decent standard of living.”

“I think that we need to make sure children and families have enough money to have a decent standard of living - including through decent paid jobs. We also need to make sure that the social security system is a safety net that prevents families falling into poverty. We need to develop an action plan to eradicate child poverty, including addressing affordable childcare, education inequalities and homelessness.”

[Click here for more information on Child Poverty.](#)

See also webinar response to **“What’s being done to help children who live in poverty in Northern Ireland?”** From Peri at Rasharkin PS, @33.40 mins.

Voting at 16:

- **“Do you think children under 18 should have the Right to Vote?”** From St Joseph's PS, Crumlin.

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“Yes. I meet children and young people every day who are generally concerned about the same things as you and they are keen to have their issues heard and to engage with key decision makers whenever possible. During elections their voices are rarely heard because they do not have a vote and also because the issues that matter to them do not seem to be discussed.”

“The UN Committee encourages the UK Government (and the NI Assembly) to conduct consultations with children on the voting age. Should the voting age be lowered, it is recommended that the Government ensure that it is supported by active citizenship and human rights education in order to ensure early awareness of children that rights are to be exercised as part of citizenship.”

Play and things to do:

- **“Lots of us love to be creative, how can we find places to go?”** From St Joseph's PS, Crumlin

“Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, physical and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them.”

Playing isn't just fun, it's also the best way for young children to learn. By playing, children can practice all the skills they'll need as they grow up.”

See also webinar response to **“How important is it that children should have green spaces to play in?”** From St. Joseph's PS, Crumlin, @ 36.25 mins.

Safety:

- **“We are a bit frightened of older children around our streets, how can we try to get help for this?”** St Joseph's PS, Crumlin

“You should always feel safe where you live. If you don't, please talk to your parents or other trusted adults and ask them to help make your streets safer. You could also start a campaign and contact your local representatives – Councillors or MLAs – and ask them to help you.”

Digital safety / Mobile Phones:

- **“Should children be prevented from having too much access to mobile technology until they are 18 to prevent cyber bullying?”** From Finn at St. Joseph's PS, Dunloy
- **“Do you think children have the right to have a mobile phone?”** From Alfie at Rasharkin PS

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- **“Do you think it is OK for children aged 10/11 to be online?”** From Louis at Forge Integrated PS, Belfast.

“There actually is no right to have a mobile phone. However many young people are active online, sharing information with friends, posting updates, exchanging photos, listening to music, Tweeting, Facebooking, checking email, browsing, creating videos – in short ‘online’ is where many young people ‘live’ for a significant amount of time.

“But, with the digital world changing all the time, we need to make sure children and young people stay safe online. Parents and guardians want to be able to keep in touch with their children and know they are safe, whilst on the other they might have concerns about what type of content they could be trying to access, or inadvertently accessing.

“I think that it is vital that children and young people’s use of mobile phones and being online are explored and agreed boundaries are set and agree what’s appropriate.”

[Click here for information on the ‘Digital 5 a Day’ for an easy to follow practical steps to achieve a healthy and balanced digital diet.](#)

[Click here for information on young people living in a digital world.](#)

Newcomer Children:

- **“When children who come from other countries come to our school, they should be treated like all other children in our school.”** From Evie at Longtower PS, Derry.

“Yes – I agree with you! I am working hard to make sure that this is the case and the treatment of children who come to live in Northern Ireland is an area we take very seriously.”