Messages Application (Chat)

Overview

The Messages application has been enhanced to include Chat, enabling staff to hold individual or group conversations with students, parents, and other staff members. Similar to WhatsApp, Chat keeps all data securely within the school's control, either hosted in the UK (if managed by Frog) or on your local Frog server.

The Chat feature offers functionality similar to announcements, including:

- Two-Way Communication – Staff/Admin users can create a chat for individual(s) or a group, with all replies visible to all recipients.
- Embedding the Messages Application – The Messages application can be embedded on a dashboard or site via the Frog App widget, making it easy for students, parents, and staff to quickly view their chats.
- Multiple Attachments – Users can add multiple files to a chat.
- Notification Indicators – New chats are highlighted to users via a notification indicator displayed on the Inbox (Frog Bar) or the "My Chats" area within the Messages application when embedded on a dashboard.
- Inline Image Display – PNG and JPG image files are displayed inline within chats and replies for better visibility. If a single image is attached, it will display at full size.
- Multi-Line Text Support – Chats support multi-line text for enhanced readability.
- Admin Management – Admin users can monitor and manage chats, including deleting individual replies or entire chat threads if necessary.
- School-Wide Automatic Message – A configurable, automatic message can be displayed to users when they send a reply to an announcement or chat. This feature helps manage expectations by allowing schools to provide guidance on staff response times, reducing the burden on staff.

How-to

This document focuses on chats within the Messages application.

Given the view / access is different for users when using the chat feature, the release notes have been divided into the following sections.
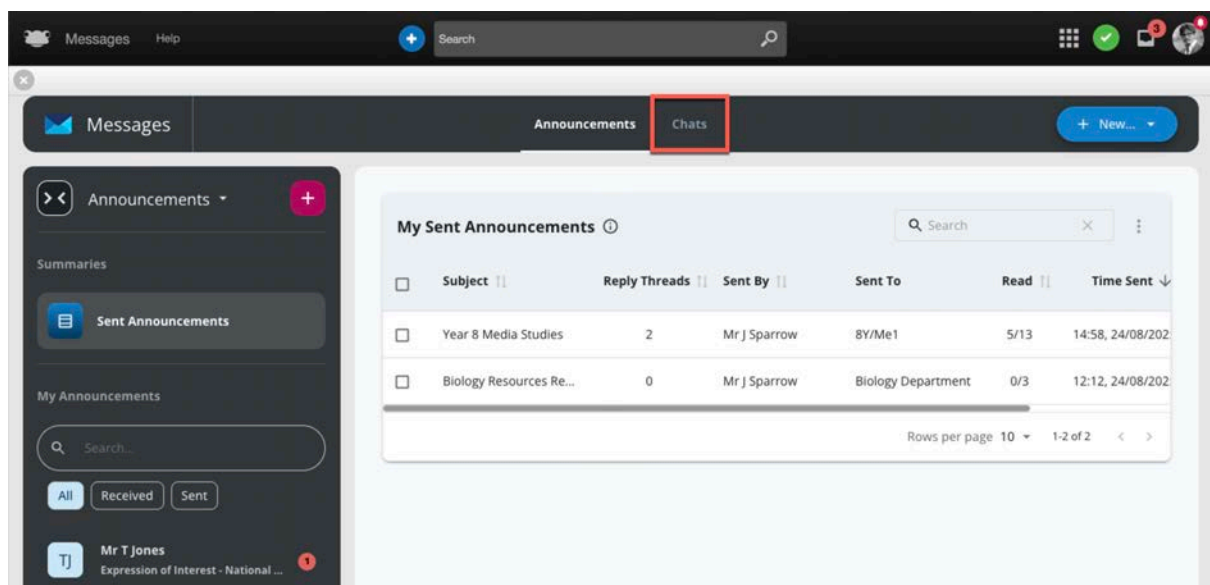
Staff – Chats overview

Staff and admin users can create chats for individuals or groups. To create or view your chats, go to the Frog Bar > Quick Launch > Messages.
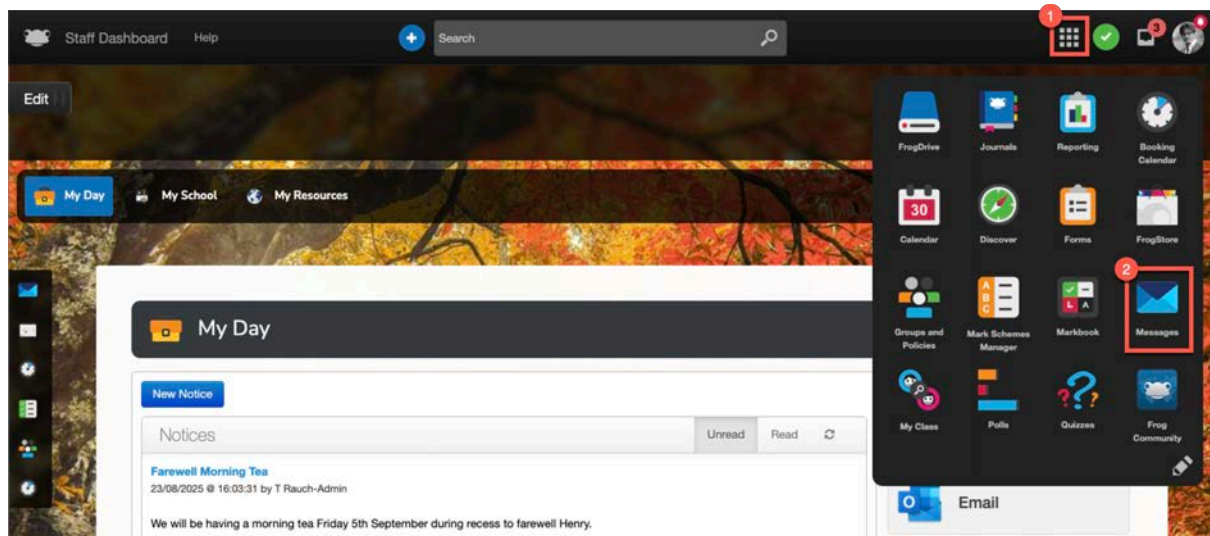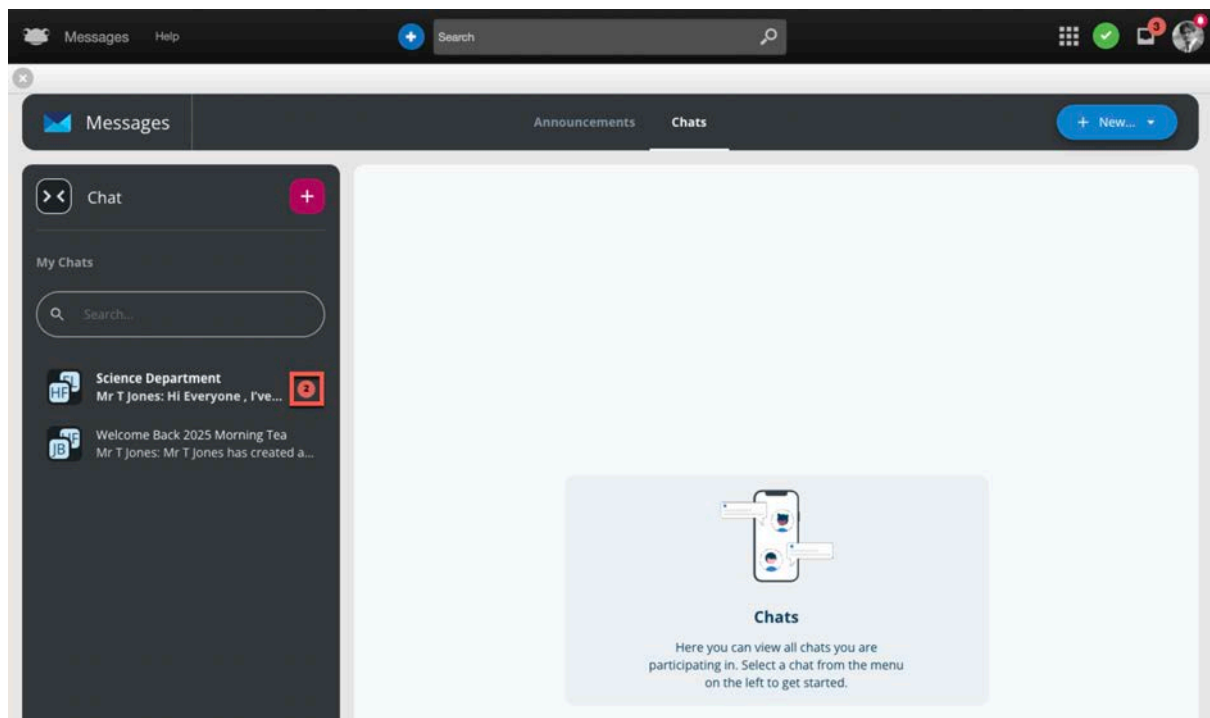

When the Messages application opens, it will default to the Announcements view. To access your chats, select Chats from the Messages header bar.

The Chats view displays a list of all chats you are participating in, with those featuring recent activity listed at the top.
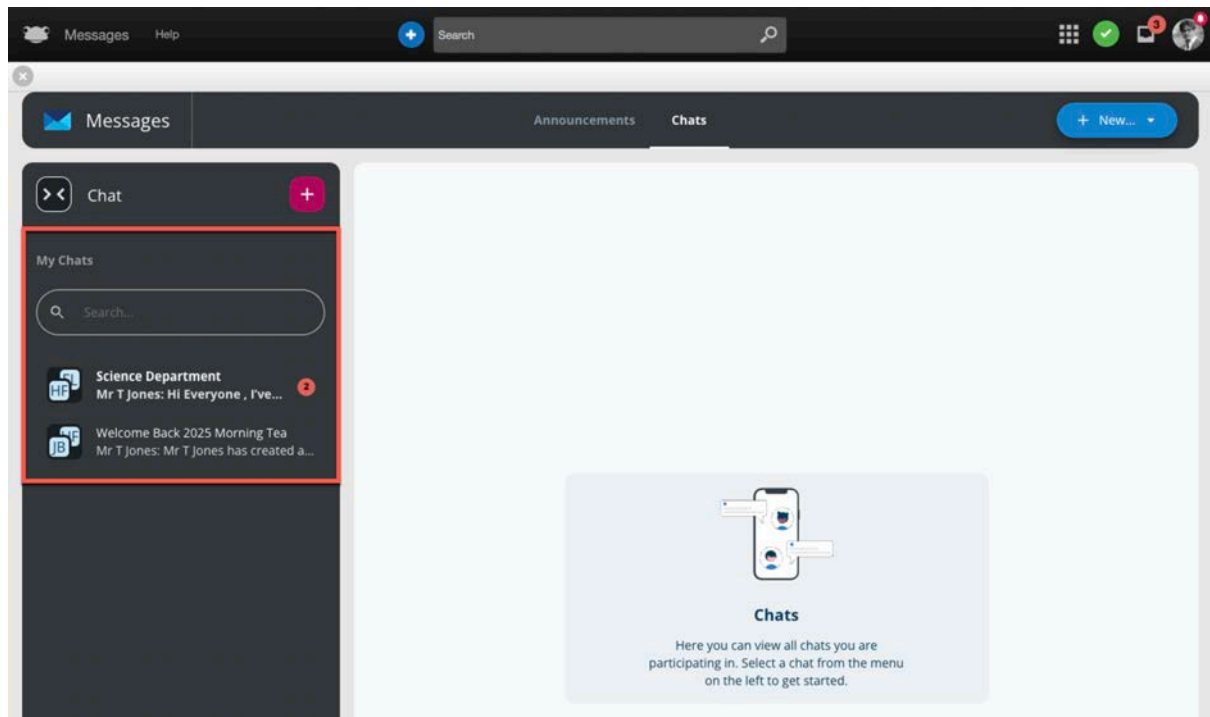

New chats or chats with unread replies are indicated by a small red badge displaying the number of unread messages.

Within the My Chats section, you'll find a search field. Enter a search term to have any matching results displayed.

In this example, the search term collab has been entered, with only a single chat matching the criteria is displayed.

NOTE – The search term is applied to the chat name (if applicable), the chat content and participant name to find matching results.
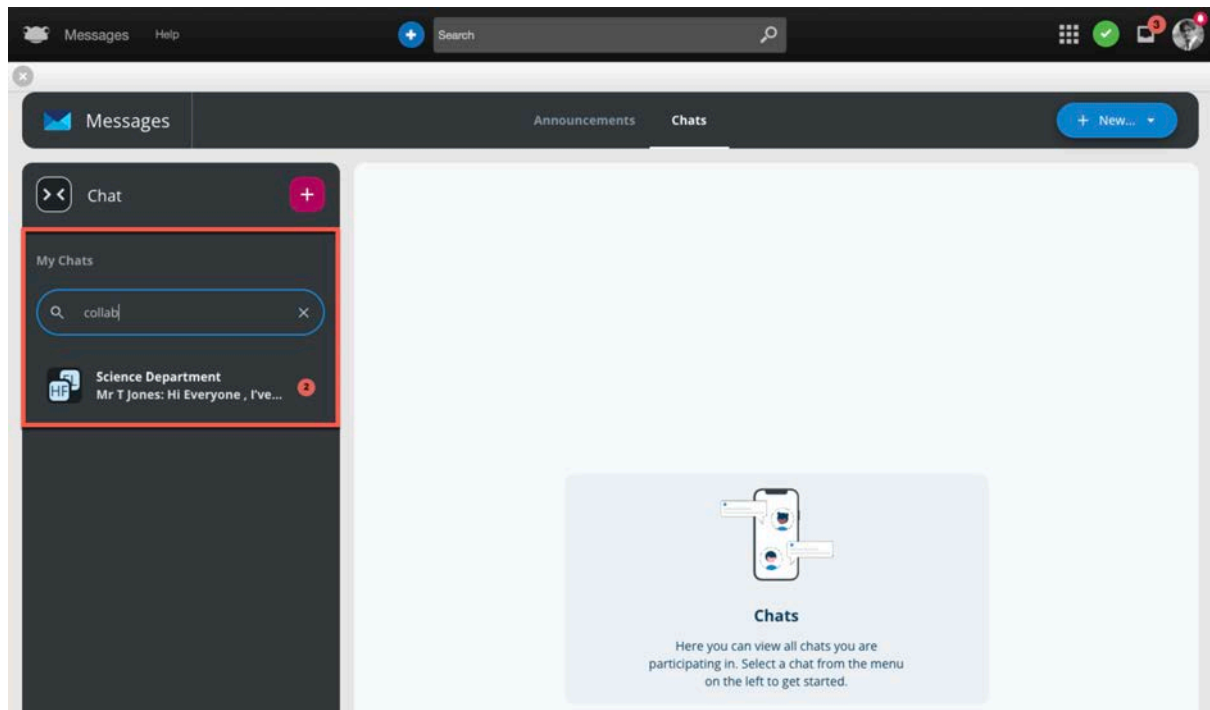
Clicking the >< button next to Chat (top left) collapses the chat sidebar, maximizing the My Chats area.
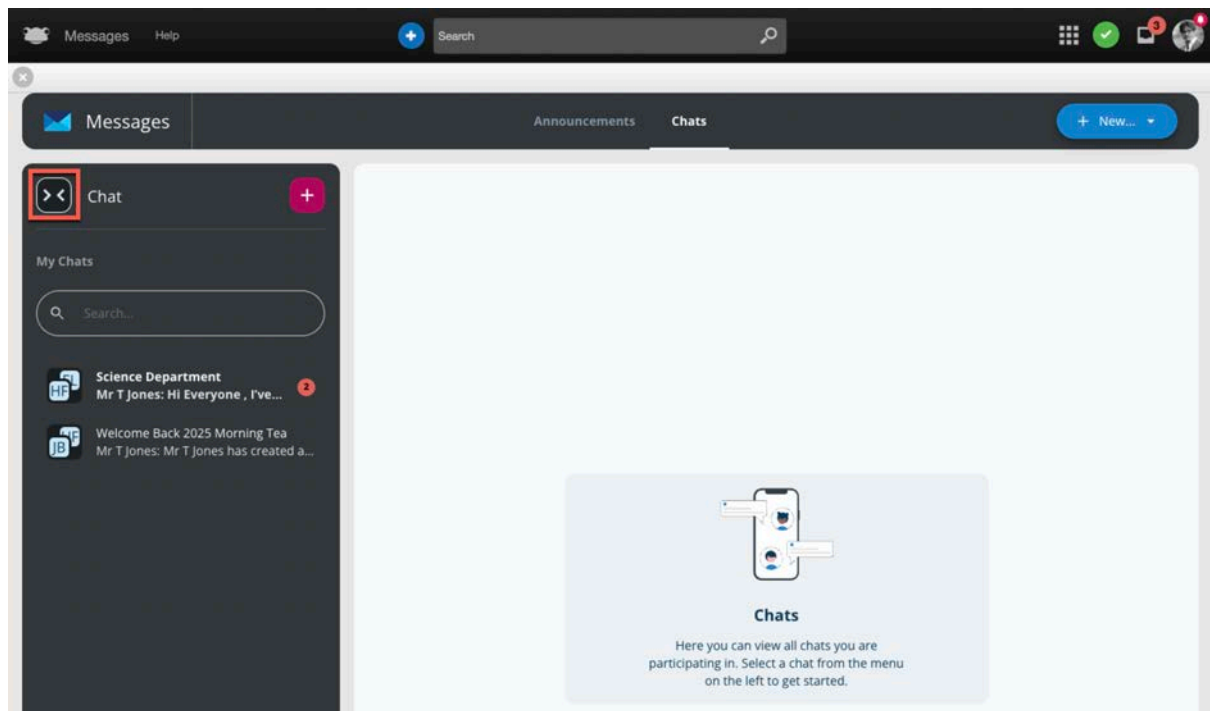
The view below shows the layout after clicking the >< button.
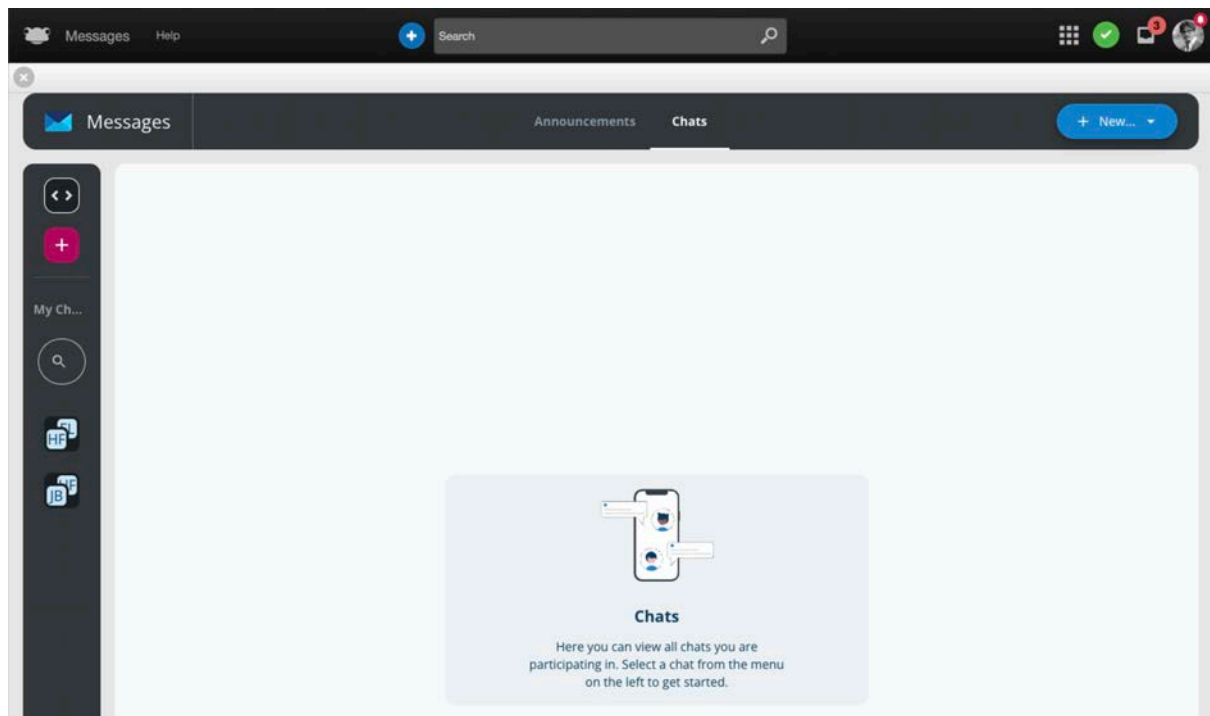
Clicking the + button next to Chat (top left) allows staff to create a chat. In the next section we will show you how new chats are created.
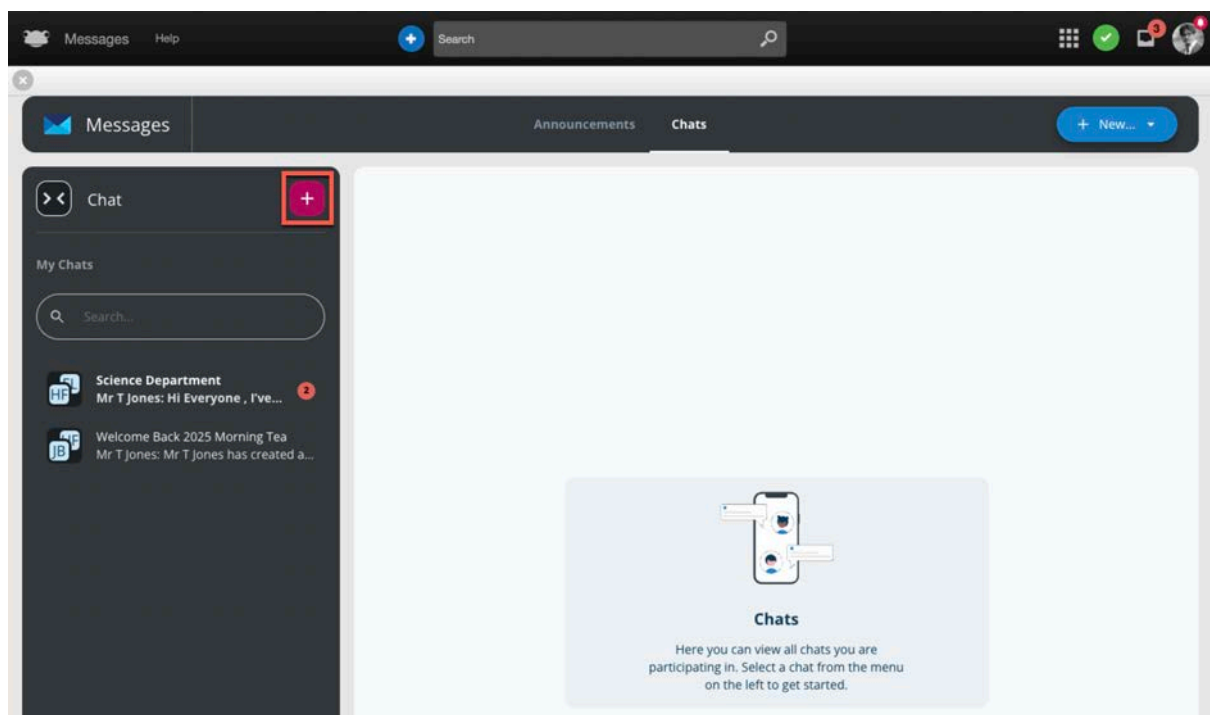
In the Messages header bar, you'll find options for Announcements and Chats. This menu allows users to easily switch between the two views. In the current view, the Chats menu is selected.
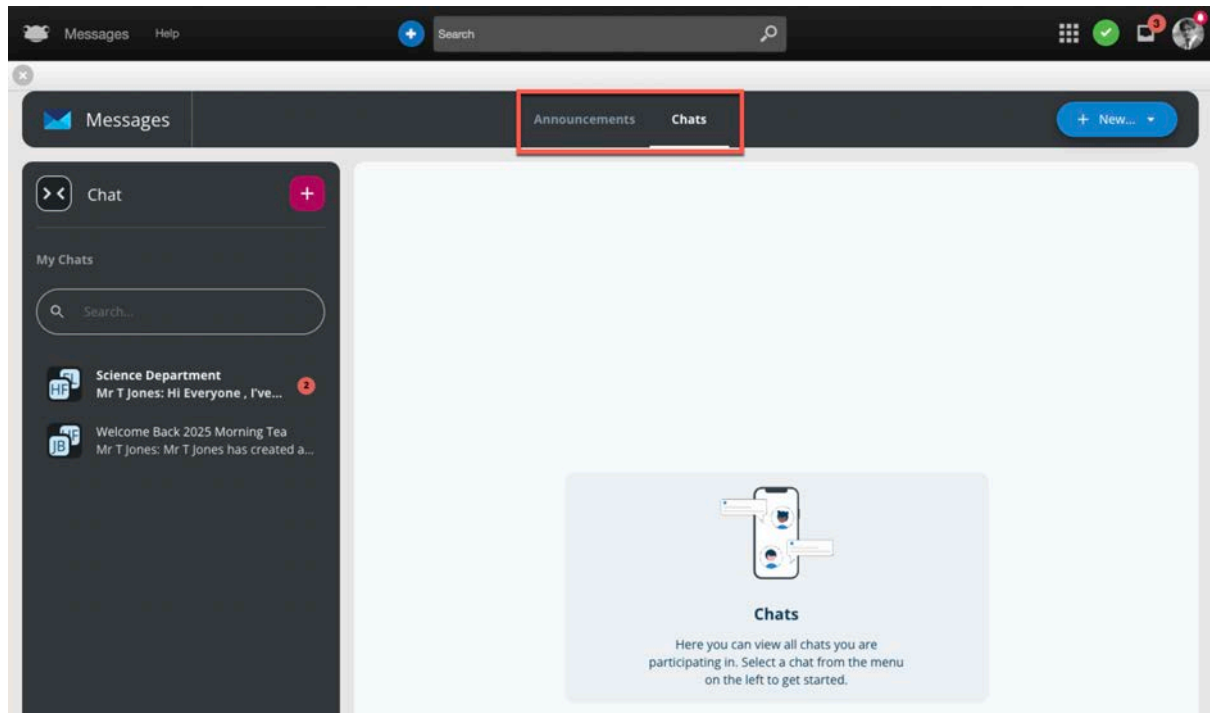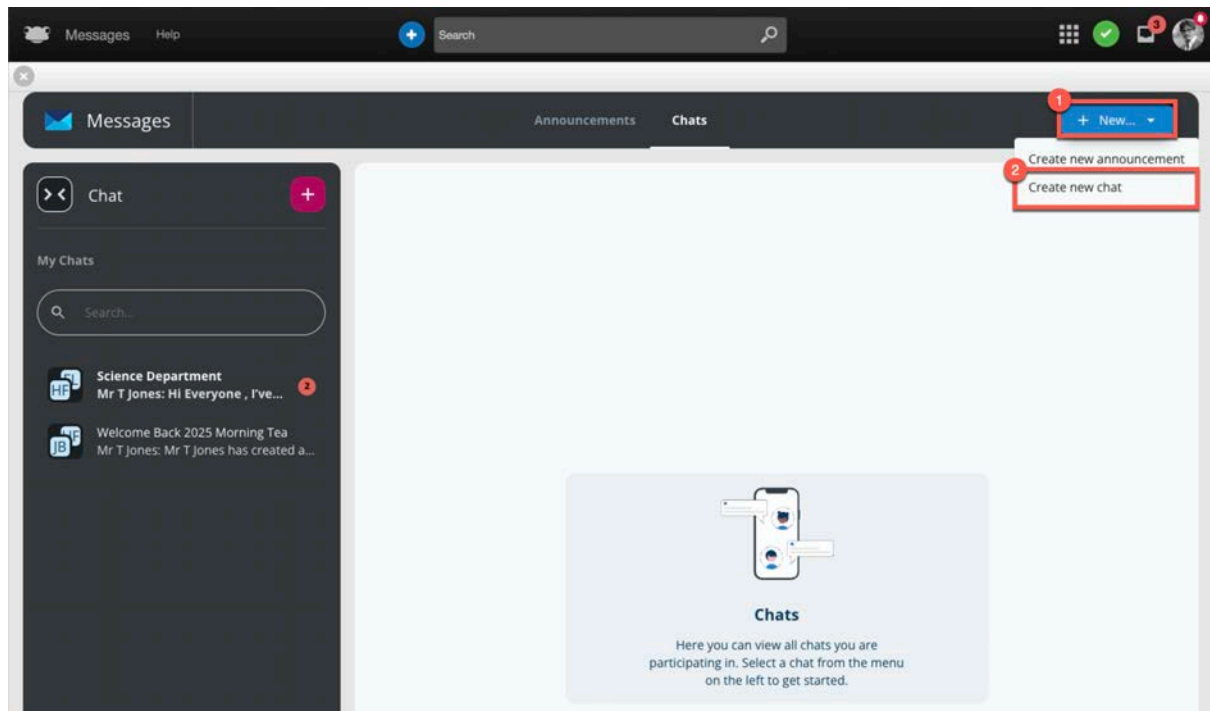

Lastly, on the far right of the Messages header bar is the + New button, which allows staff to create an announcement or chat. In the next section, we'll demonstrate how to create new chats.

The Announcements feature will be covered in a separate document.
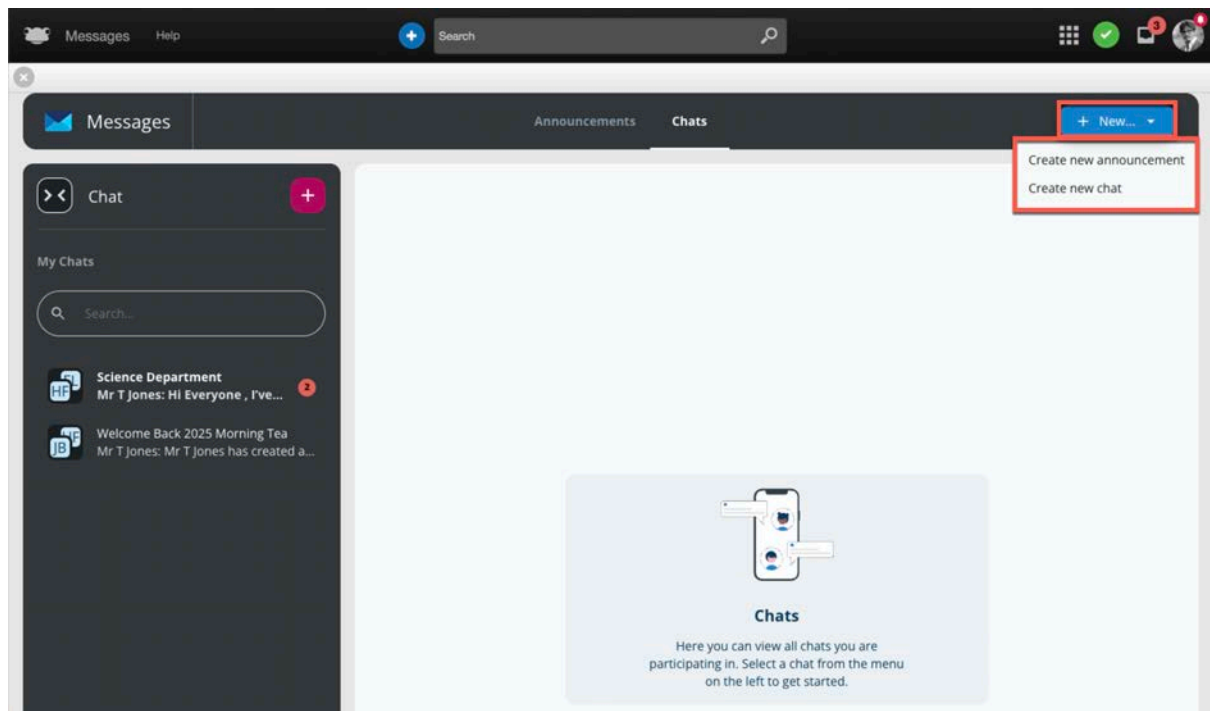
Staff and admin users can create chats for individuals or groups. To create a chat, click +
New > Create new chat.

The New Chat pop up window will display.

The first step is to specify the recipients for the chat. This can be either an individual or a group.

To create a chat with an individual, type a few letters of their first or last name into the search field. The system will display users matching your search criteria. In this example, we searched for wil, and a list of matching users is displayed for selection.
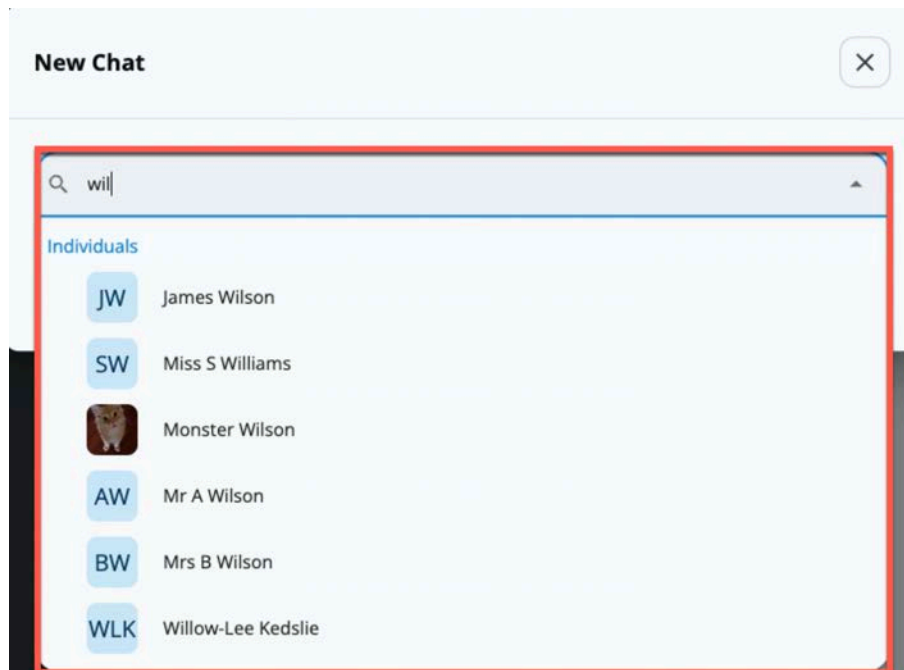

The student Monster Wilson has been selected and added as a recipient for the chat. By default, the Send to option is set to This User Only. However, additional options are available, depending on whether an individual user or a group has been selected.
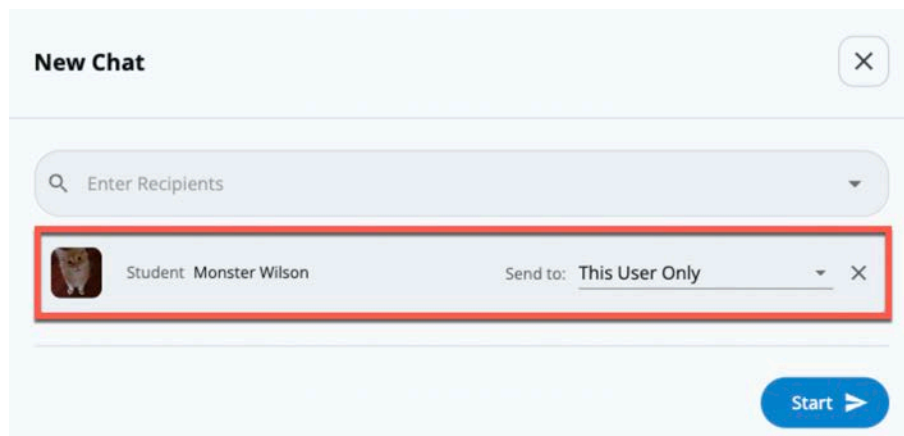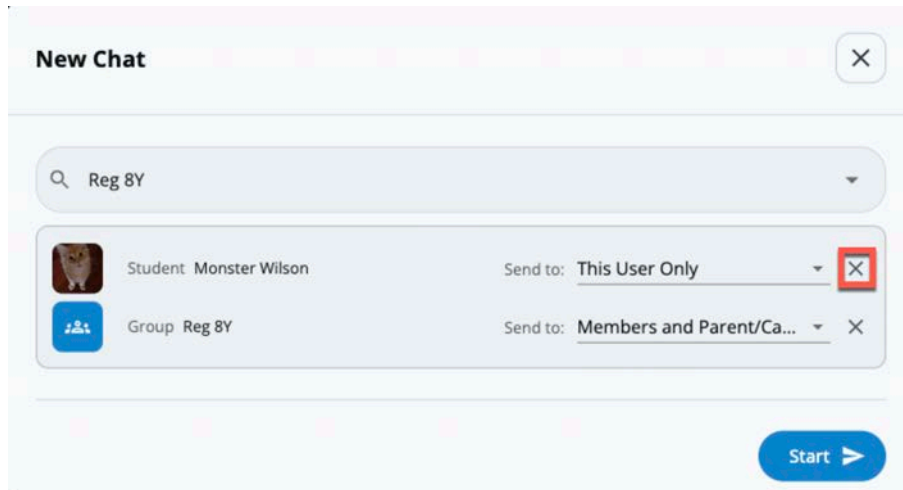
If you click the arrow next to This User Only, the following options are available for an individual:

- This User Only – The chat will only be sent to the selected individual.
- User and Parent/Carer – The chat will be sent to the selected individual and their associated parent/carer.
- Parent/Carer Only – The chat will only be sent to the selected individual's parent/carer.
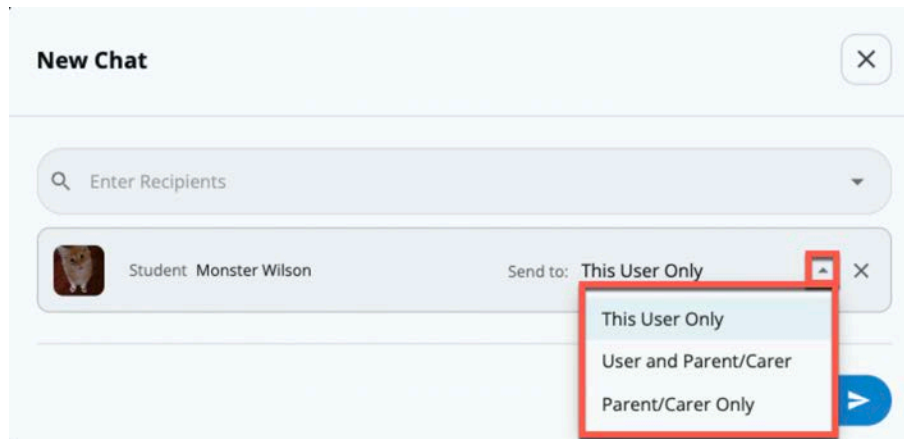
As mentioned earlier, a chat can be sent to individuals or groups. Let's take a look at how to add a group to a chat and explore the available Send to options.

In the recipient field, type a few letters of the group name. The system will display any groups matching your search criteria. In this example, we searched for 8y, and a list of matching groups is displayed for selection.

The group Reg 8Y has been selected and added as a recipient for the chat. By default, the Send to option is set to Group Members Only. However, additional options are available depending on whether an individual user or a group has been selected.
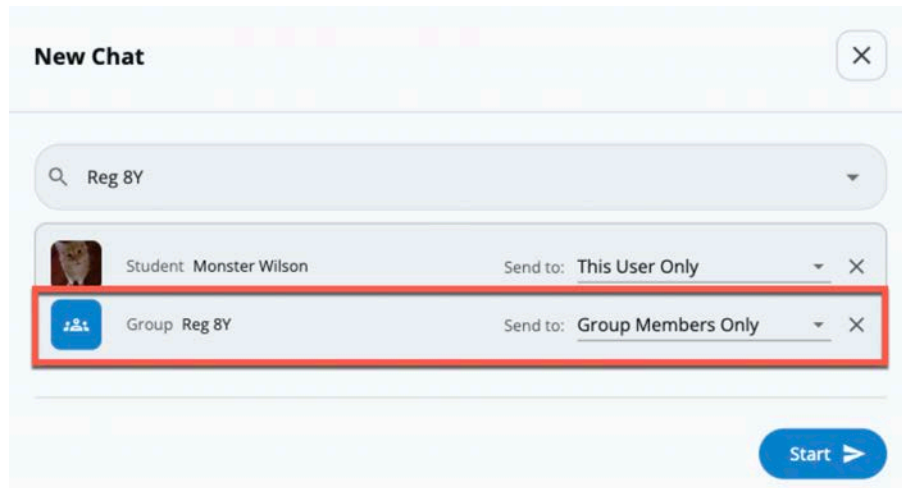
If you click the arrow next to Group Members Only, the following options are available for a group:

- Group Members Only – The chat will only be sent to individuals associated with the selected group.
- Members and Parent/Carer – The chat will be sent to individuals in the group as well as their associated parents/carers.
- Parent/Carer Only – The chat will only be sent to the parents/carers of individuals in the selected group.
- Parent/Carer and Staff – The chat will be sent to:
  - Staff associated with the selected group.
  - Parents/carers of individuals in the selected group.
- Staff Only – The chat will only be sent to staff associated with the selected group.
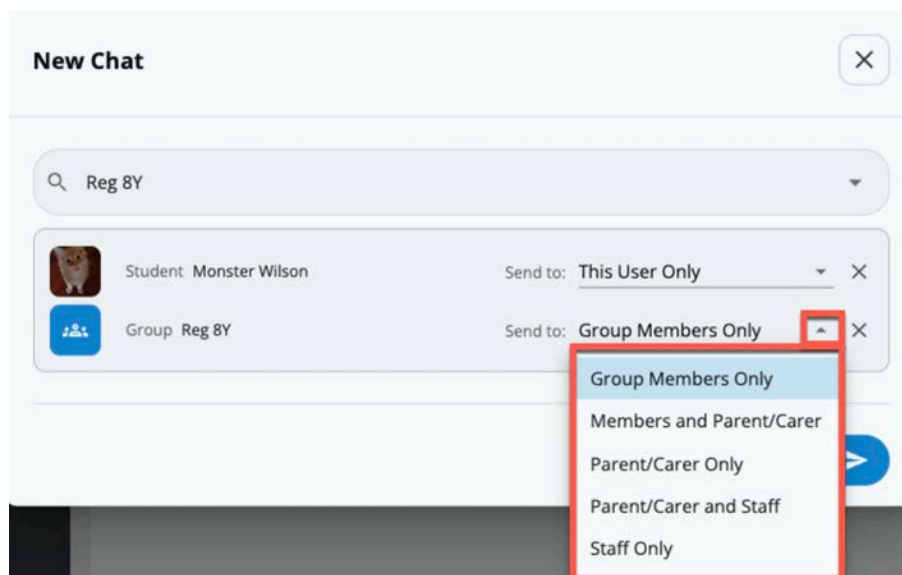
In this example, we will send the chat to the group Reg 8Y with the Send to option set to Members and Parent/Carer. To remove a recipient from a chat, click the x icon next to the individual or group you wish to remove.
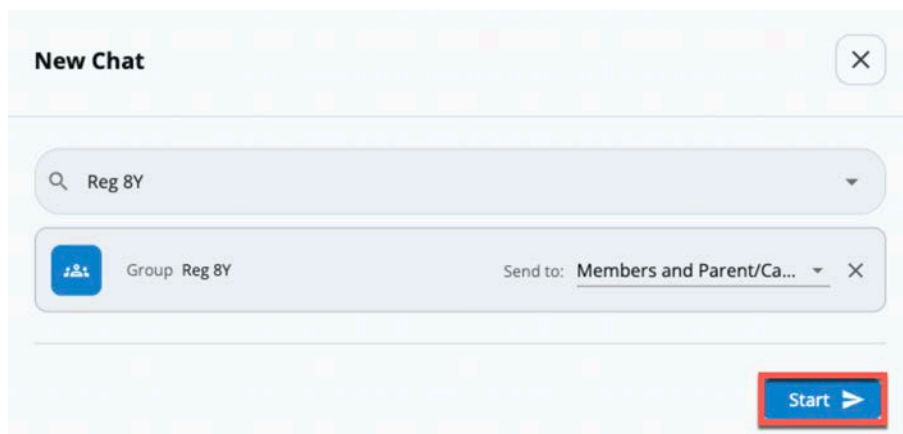
When you're happy with the recipients for the chat, click the Start button. The chat will then be initiated for all selected recipients.
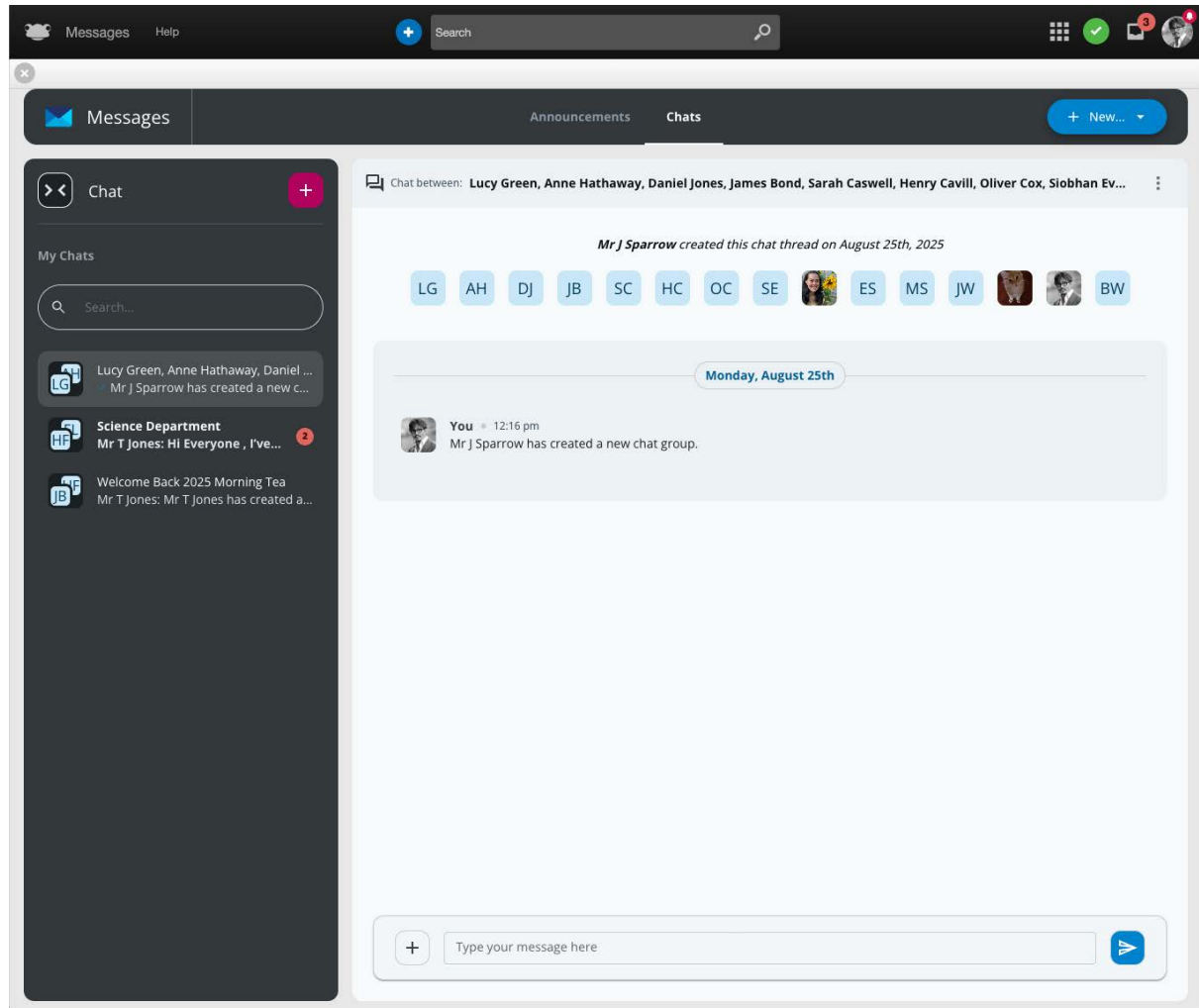
Your newly created chat will display immediately, ready for you and your recipients to add content or reply.

NOTE – Although a group with specific Send to options were selected during the creation stage, the chat will display as individual users once created. Chats are designed to be distinguished by their recipients. Therefore, if you attempt to create another chat with the same set of recipients, a new chat will not be created. Instead, you will be directed to the existing chat.

We will guide you through the key settings displayed in a newly created chat. Most of these settings are consistent for all recipients, whether they are staff, students, or parents:

1. My Chats Area – Your newly created chat will be highlighted and displayed in the left-hand side menu.
2. Chat Between – Displays the full list of recipients and their names in the chat.
3. Creator – Shows the name of the user who created the chat and the date it was created.
4. Recipient List – Displays either the recipients' initials or their profile picture (if one is associated) for each member in the chat.
5. Actions/Replies – Displays actions or replies within the chat, including who performed them and the date/time they occurred.
6. Reply Field – Allows you to send a reply to all recipients in the chat.
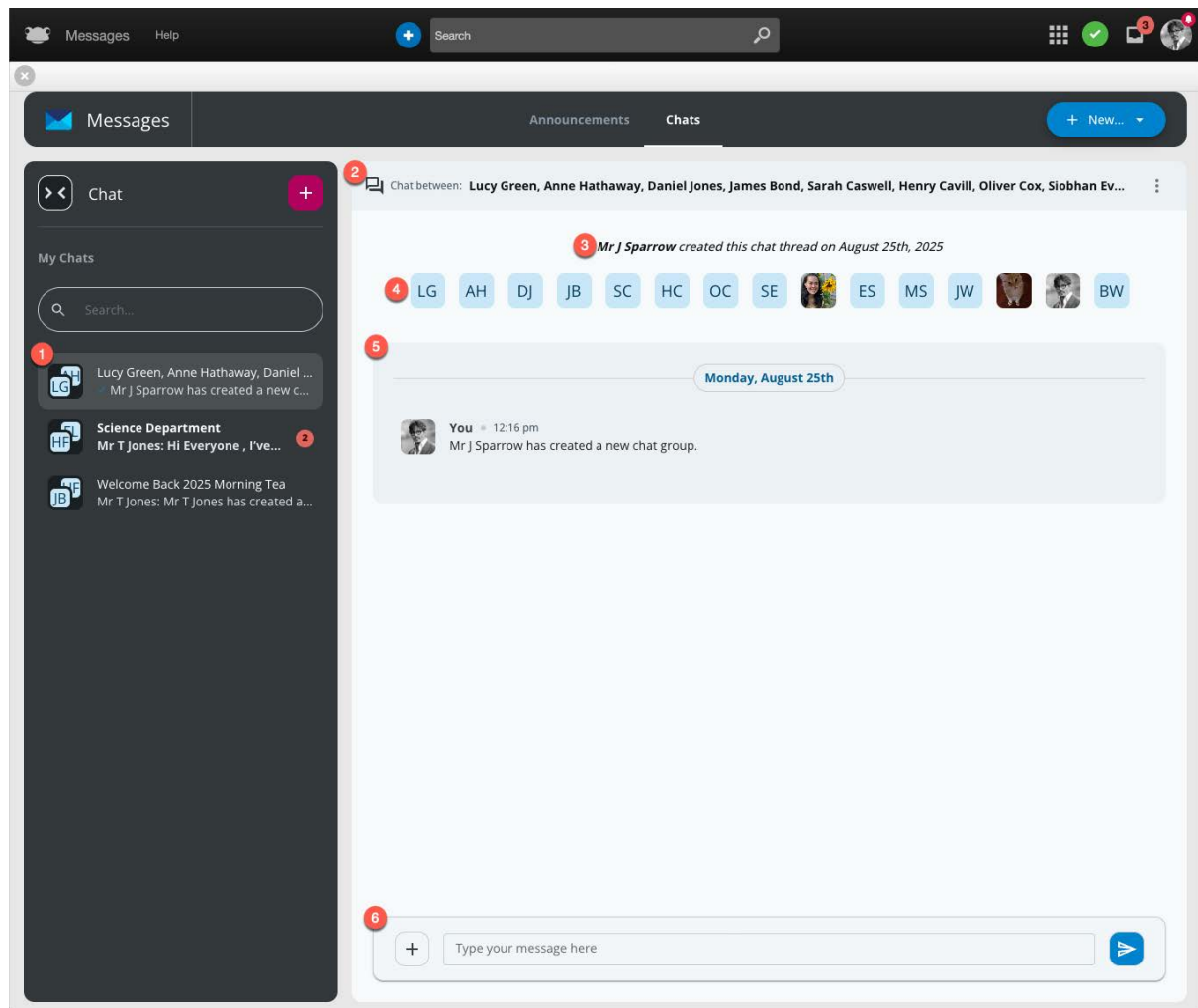
Next, add a message to your newly created chat. Pressing the Enter key on your keyboard will create a new line within the content area. Additionally, the content area will automatically expand as you type.
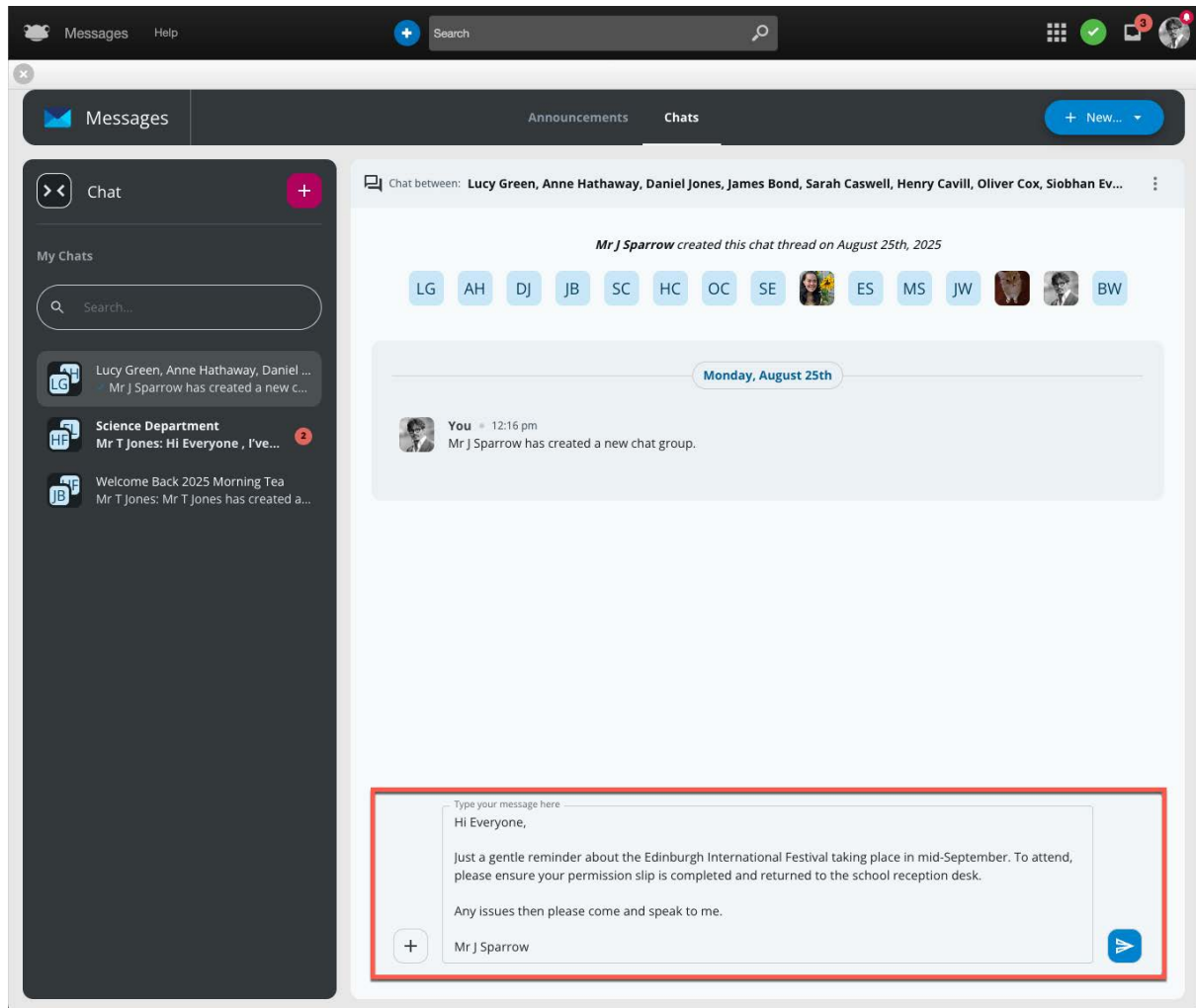
You may wish to include a resource with your chat reply. Click the + button to choose from the following options:

- Upload file
- Attach FrogDrive file
- Add URL / Web Link
- Add Frog Site link

Similar to announcements, chat allows you to add multiple items to a reply.

The Upload file option launches a File Uploader pop-up window. Drag and drop a file from your local device to attach it to your chat reply.

When a file is added from your local device, the name of the resource will appear just above your chat reply.

The Attach FrogDrive file option launches a pop-up window displaying FrogDrive > Documents. Choose a resource from your FrogDrive area, or if the file is on your local device, navigate to New > File to upload the required resource.

Once you've selected your resource, click the Use button to link the file to the chat reply.

In this example, we have selected a PDF file to link to the chat reply.

When a resource is added from FrogDrive, the name of the resource will appear just above your chat reply.

The Add URL / Web Link option launches a Add URL pop-up window. Enter a name and the corresponding website URL.

When a URL is added, its name and website URL will appear just above your chat reply.

In the example below, the following details were entered:

- Link Name – Edinburgh Festival
- Link URL - https://www.edinburghfestivalcity.com
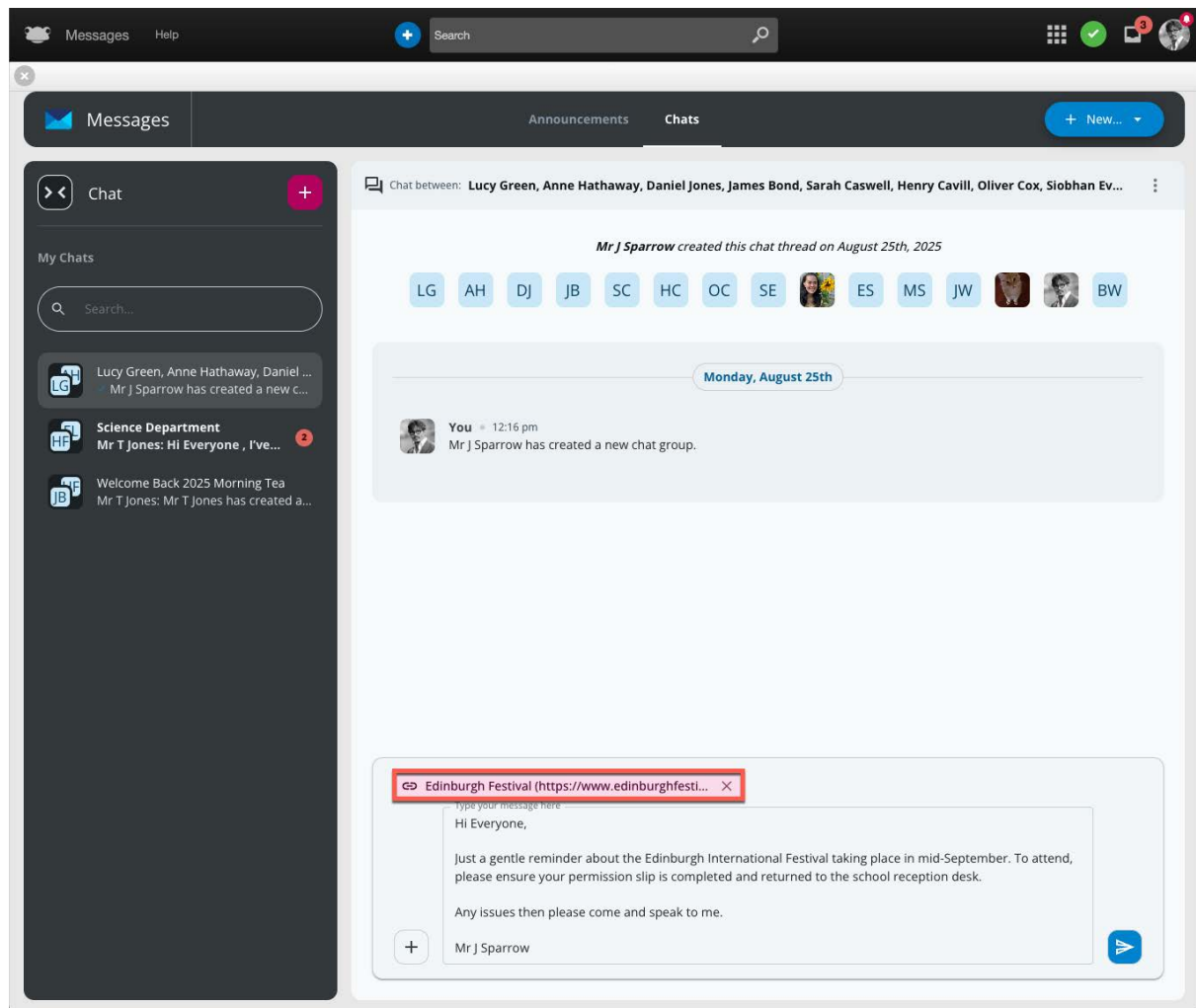
The Add Frog Site link option opens a pop-up window displaying FrogDrive > Sites. Select your site, then click the Use button to link the site to the chat reply.

In this example, we have selected the site School Trip - Policy to link to the chat reply.
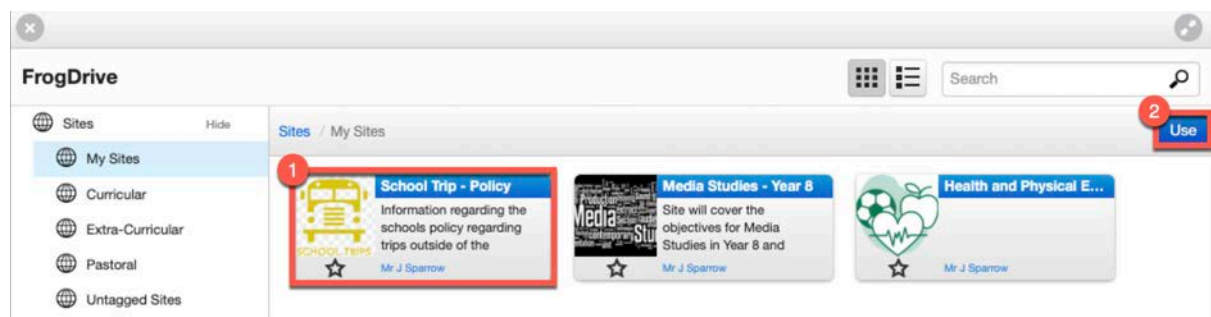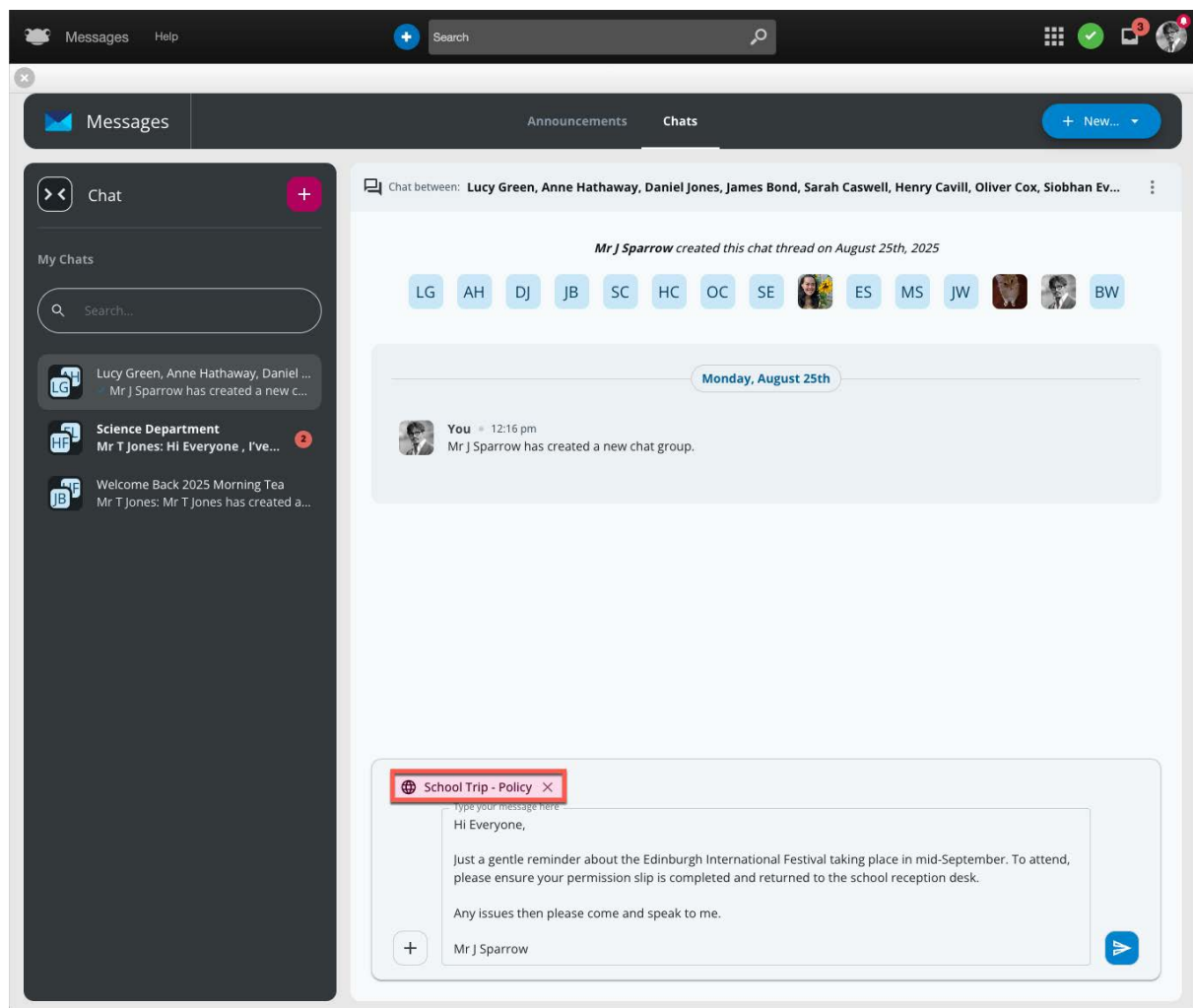
When a site is added, it will appear just above your chat reply.

When you're happy with the content of your reply, click the arrow button. The reply will be sent to all recipients of the chat.
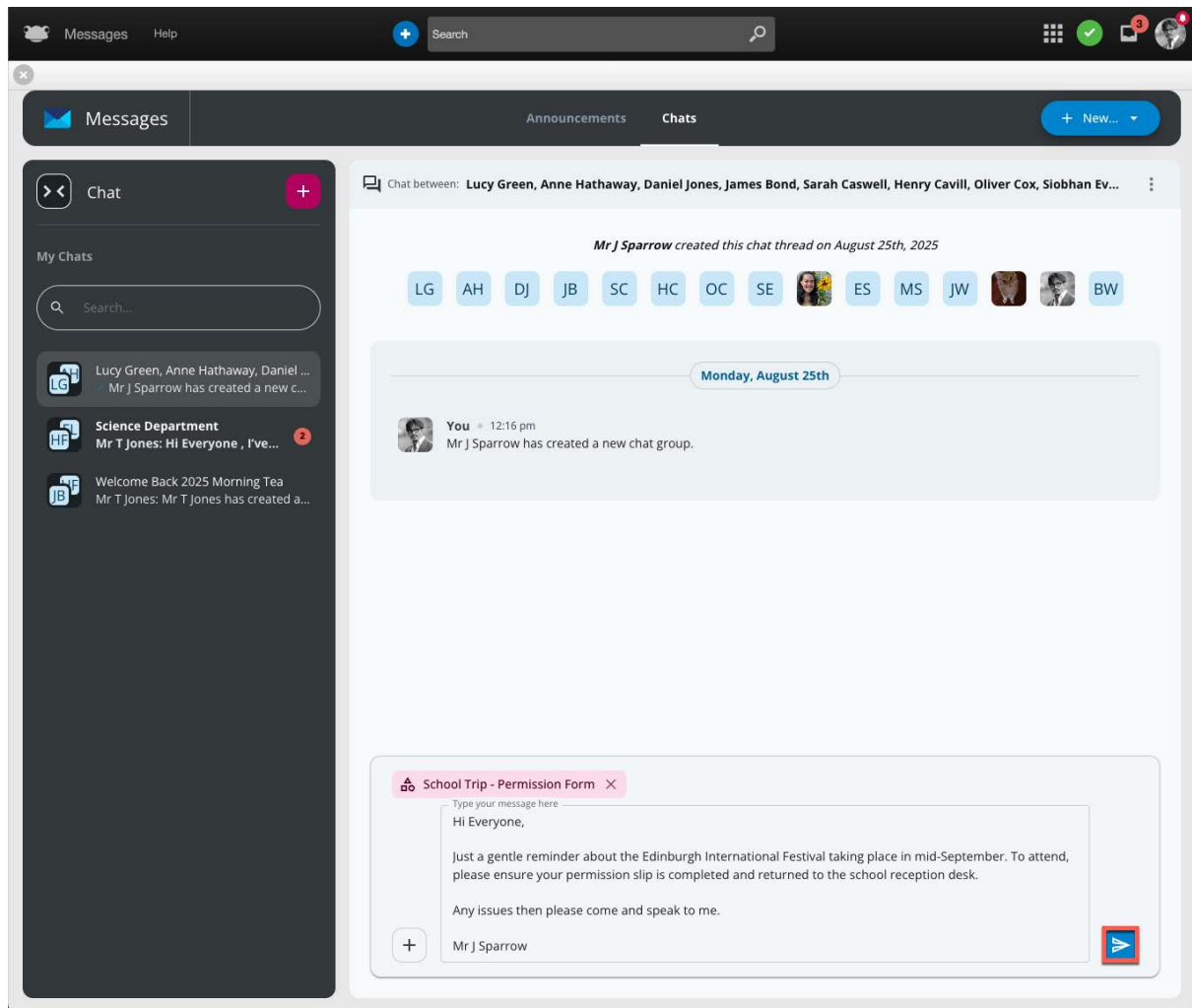
As part of the chat feature, individuals can delete their own replies. To delete a reply, hover over it to reveal an ellipsis (three vertical dots). Click the ellipsis to access the Delete Message option.

When the Delete Message option is selected for an individual chat reply, a Confirm Delete pop-up window will appear.

If you are certain that deleting the chat reply is appropriate, click the Delete Message button to proceed.
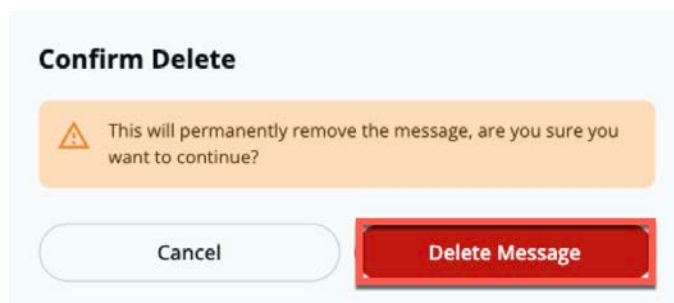
The action is processed immediately, and the chat reply will be replaced with the message:

A message has been deleted.

This update will be visible to all recipients of the chat thread.
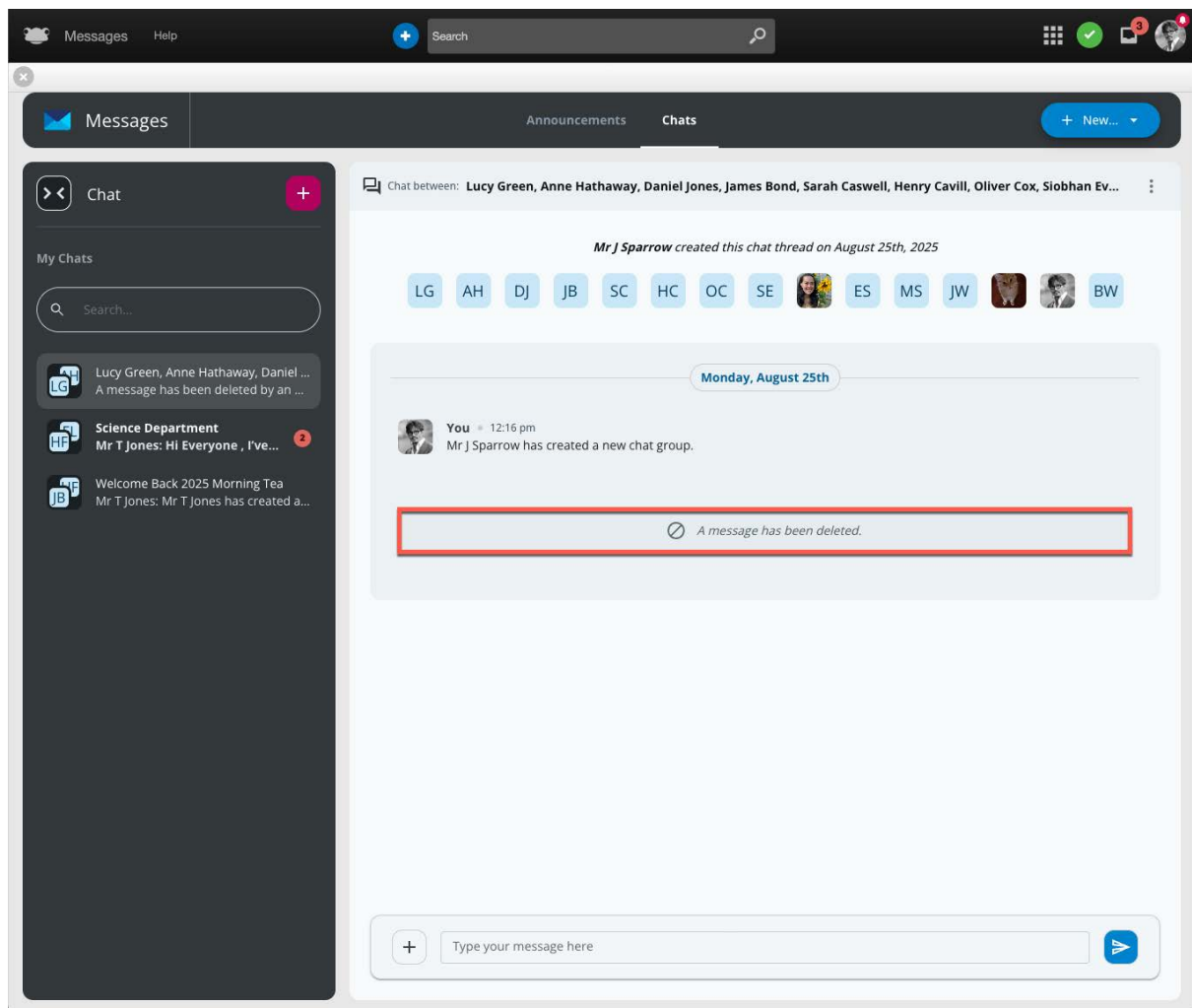
One final option available to staff is the ability to rename a chat thread. By default, the thread displays the recipient list, but you can choose to give it a more meaningful name.

To rename a chat thread, navigate to the ellipsis (three vertical dots) and select Rename chat thread.
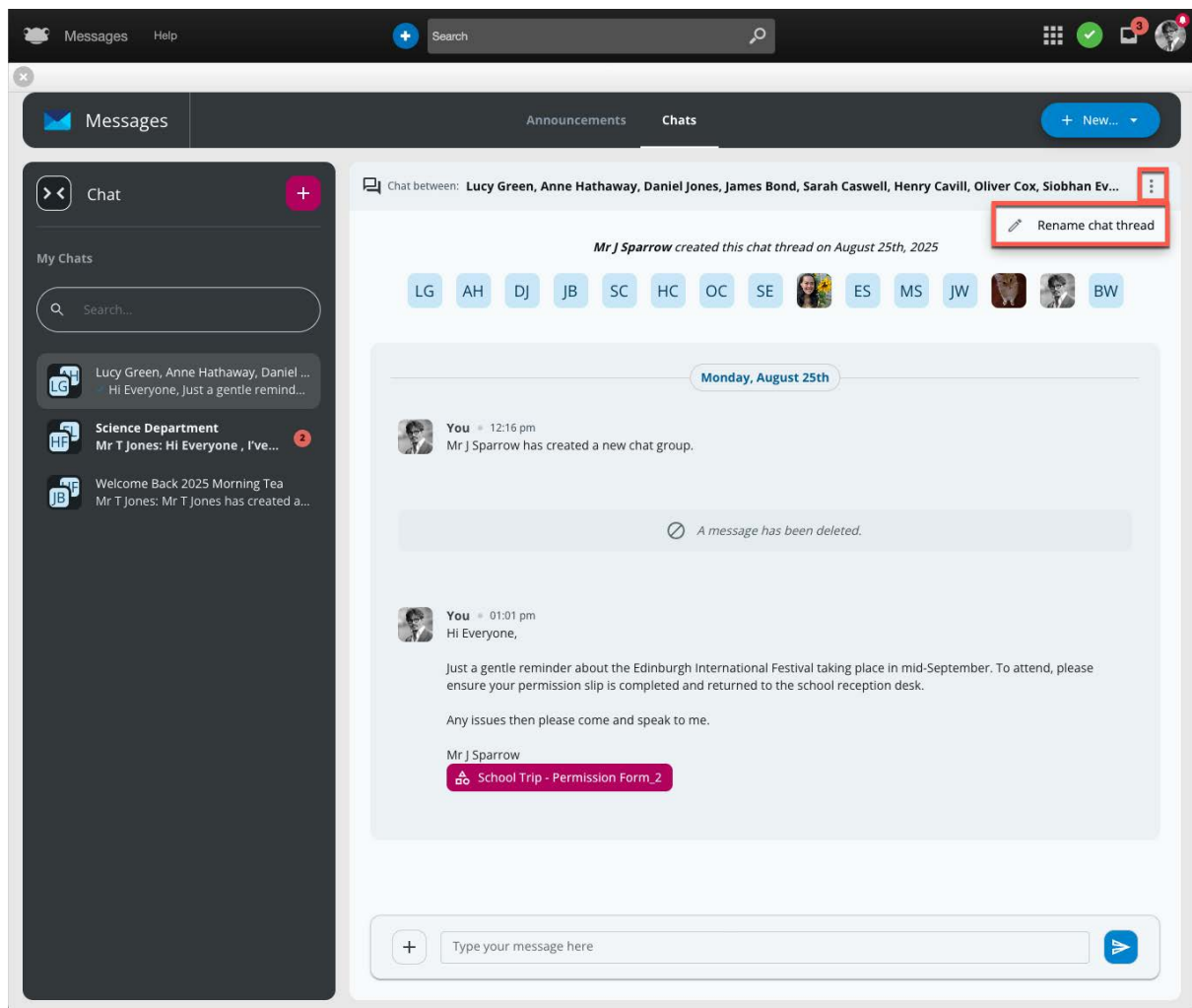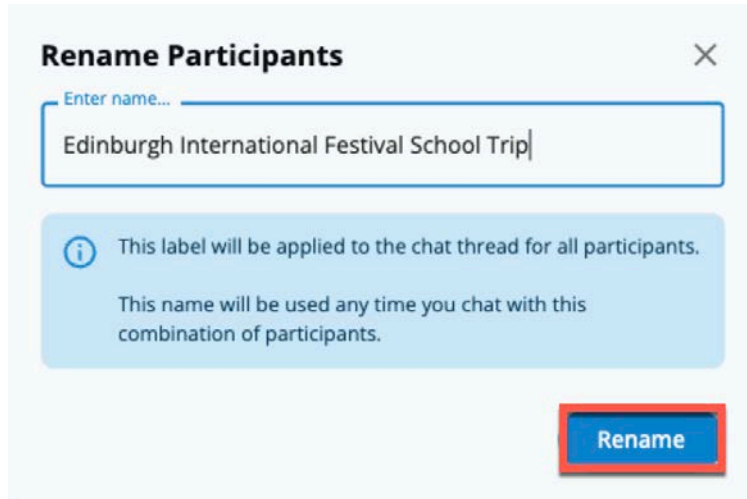
The Rename Participants pop-up window will appear. Enter a new name for your chat thread to apply it for all recipients.

NOTE – The name you assign to the chat thread will appear any time you initiate a chat with the same list of recipients.

In this example, the chat thread has been renamed to Edinburgh International Festival School Trip.
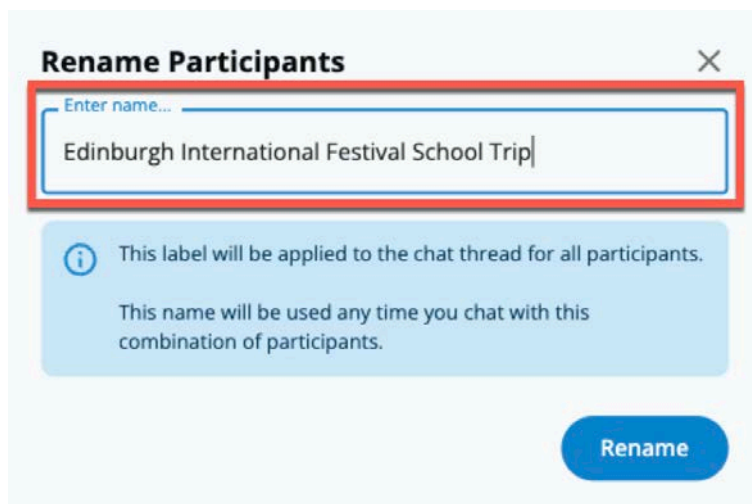
When you're happy with the new chat thread name, click the Rename button to apply it for all chat recipients.
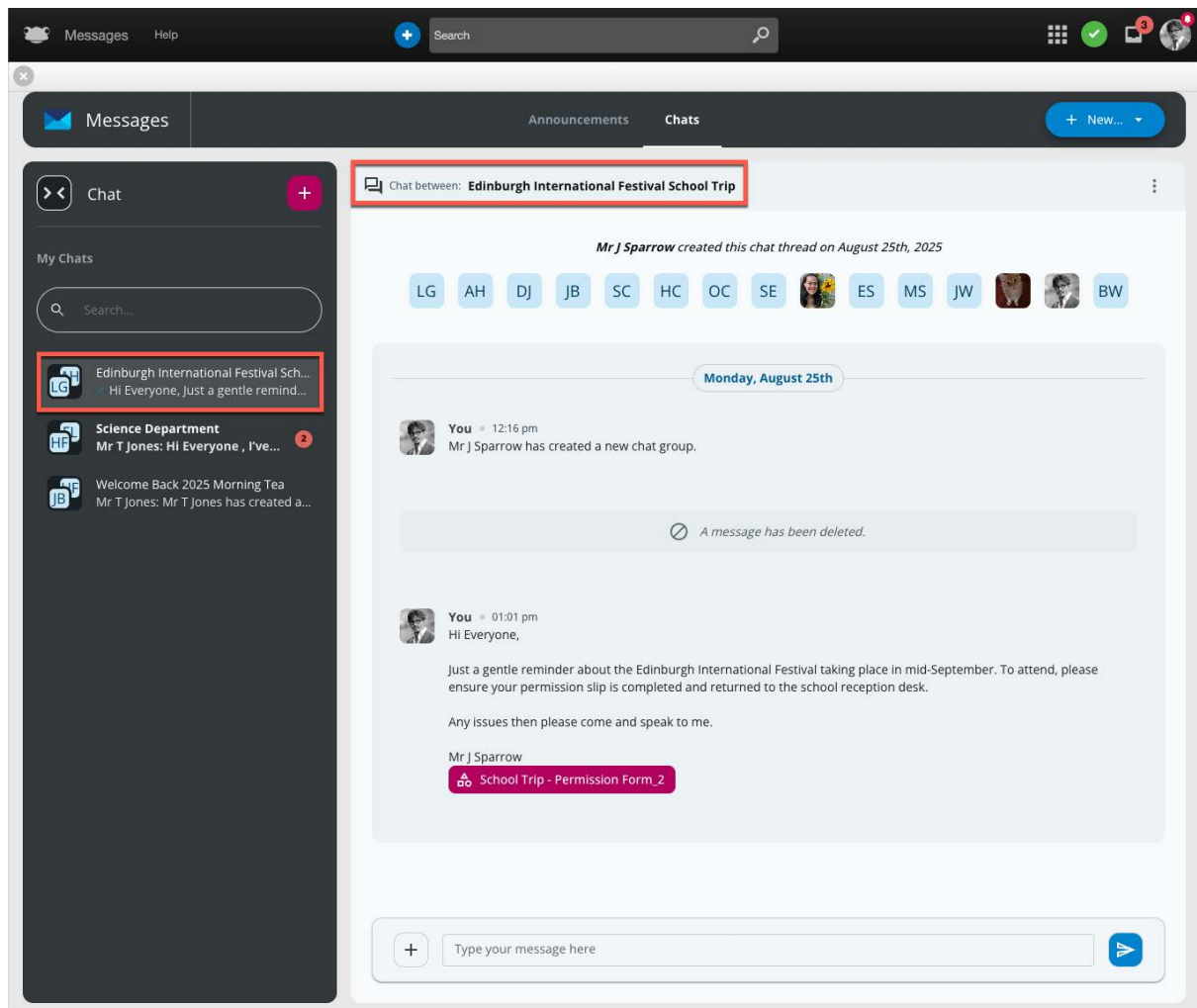
The updated chat thread name will immediately appear in the My Chats area and in the Chat between field at the top of the chat thread.

In the next section, we'll demonstrate how a recipient (student or parent) views a chat sent to them.

Student / Parent – Viewing and replying to a chat

Now, let's explore how a student or parent views a chat. When a new chat is received, a red badge appears on the Inbox icon in the Frog Bar. By default, selecting the Inbox displays your announcements. However, navigating to the Chats header will display a list of all your received chats, with a red dot indicating new or unread chats.

In the example below, we are logged in as a student. The Inbox icon shows a red badge with the number 4. Upon selecting Inbox > Chats, a summary of the chats is displayed, including the chat thread name, the beginning of the chat details, and the time it was received.
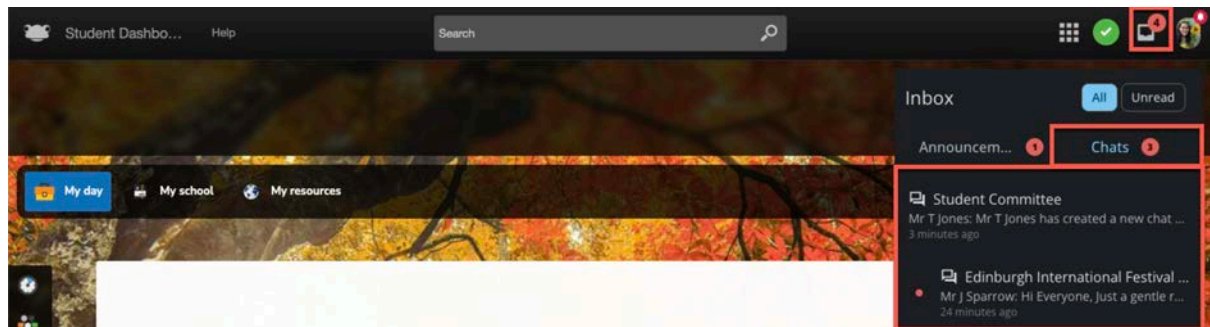
Students and parents can also access the Messages application through Quick Launch, where they can view their chats.
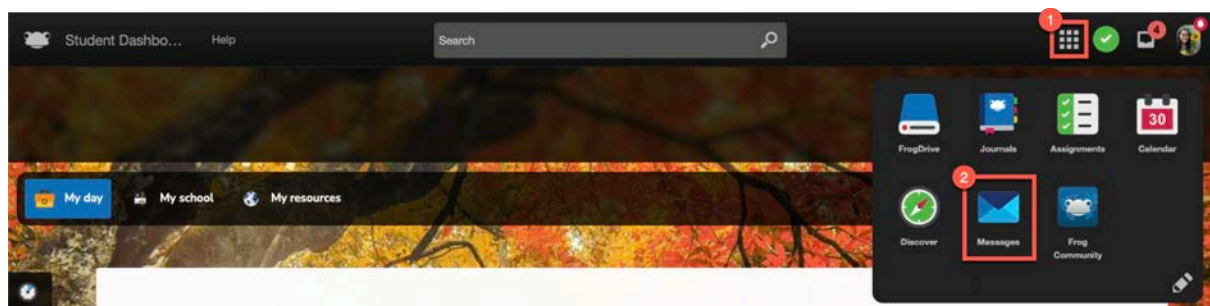
When the Messages application opens, it will default to the Announcements view. To access your chats, select Chats from the Messages header bar.

The Chats view displays a list of all chats you are participating in, with those featuring recent activity listed at the top.
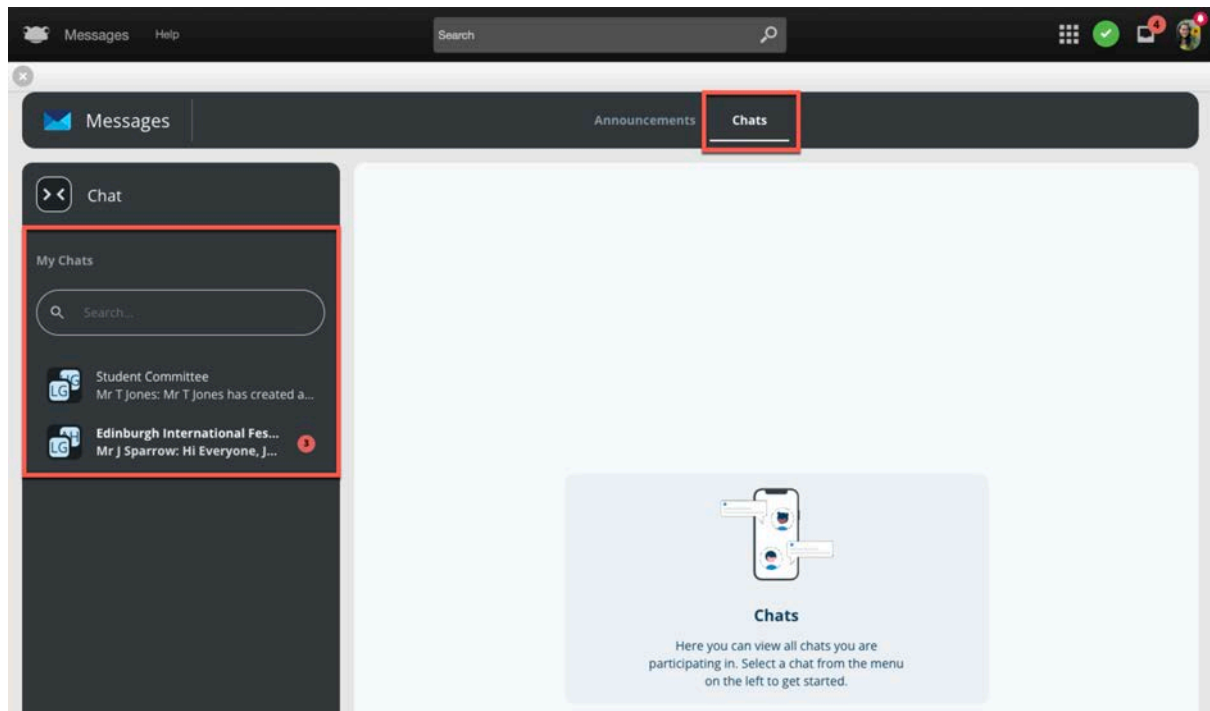
New chats or chats with unread replies are indicated by a small red badge displaying the number of unread messages.

Within the My Chats section, you'll find a search field. Enter a search term to have any matching results displayed.

In this example, the search term permission has been entered, with only a single chat matching the criteria displayed.

NOTE – The search term is applied to the chat name (if applicable), the chat content and participant name to find matching results.
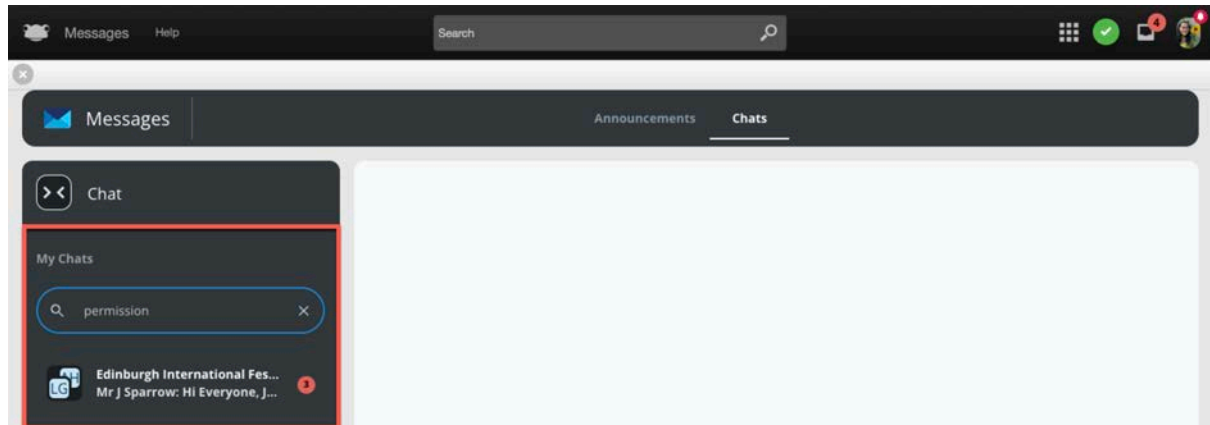
Clicking the >< button next to Chat (top left) collapses the chat sidebar, maximizing the My Chats area.
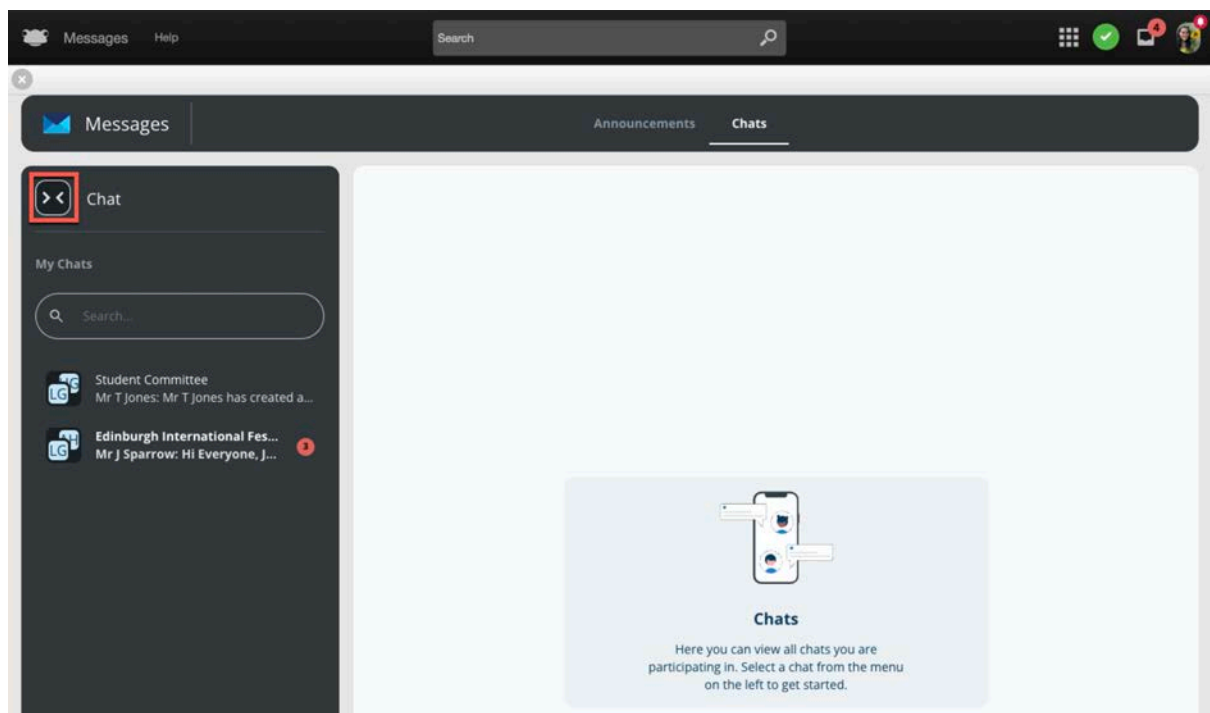
The view below shows the layout after clicking the >< button.
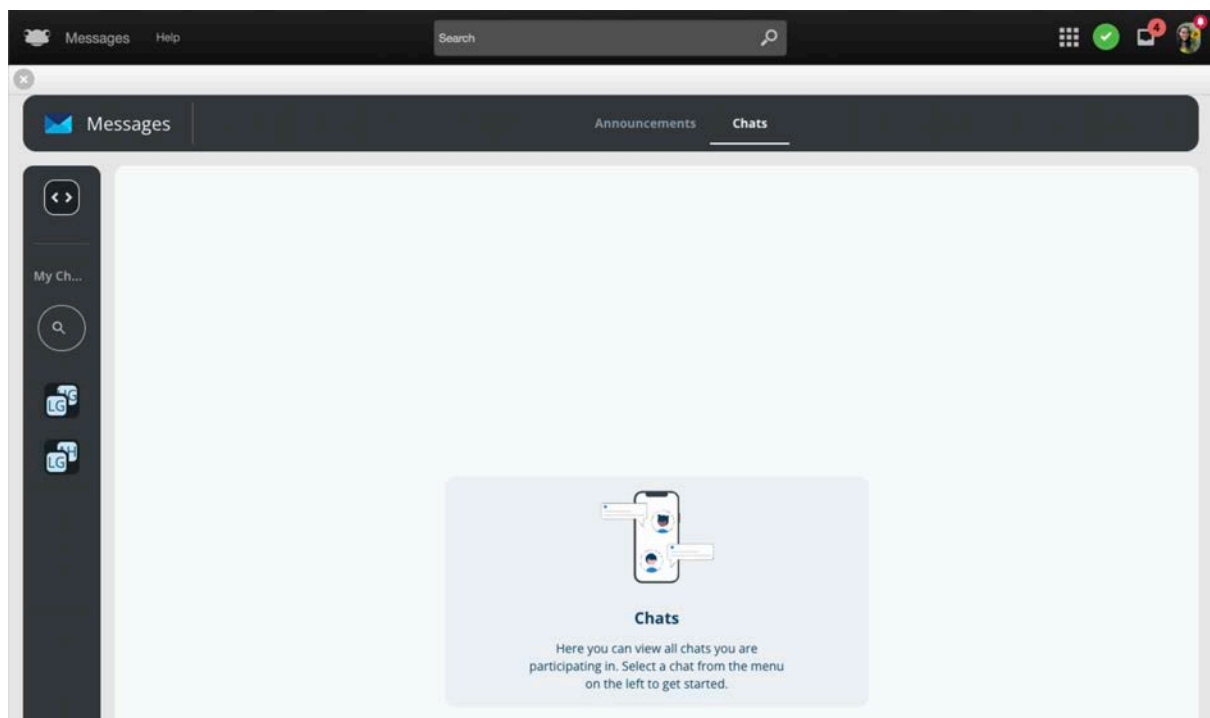
To view a chat you've been added to, simply select it from the My Chats area. The details of the chat will then be displayed on the right-hand side.

In this example, we have selected the chat thread named Edinburgh International Festival School Trip.
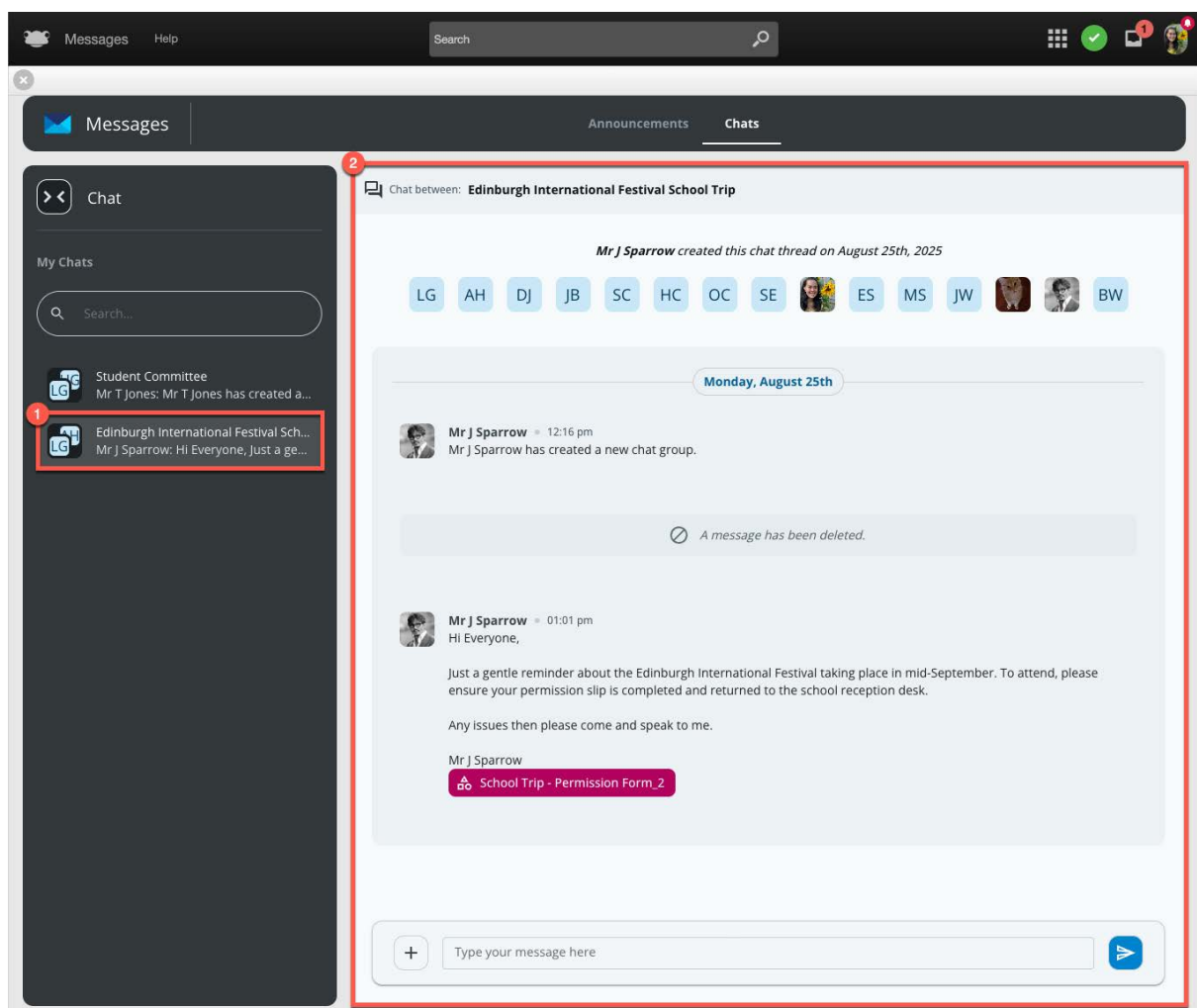
We will guide you through the key settings displayed within a chat.

1. **My Chats Area** – Your selected chat will be highlighted and displayed in the left-hand side menu.
2. **Chat Between** – Displays the full list of recipients and their names in the chat or the chat thread name if updated by the creator of the initial chat.
3. **Creator** – Shows the name of the user who created the chat and the date it was created.
4. **Recipient List** – Displays either the recipients' initials or their profile picture (if one is associated) for each member in the chat.
5. **Actions/Replies** – Displays actions or replies within the chat, including who performed them and the date/time they occurred.
6. **Reply Field** – Allows you to send a reply to all recipients in the chat.
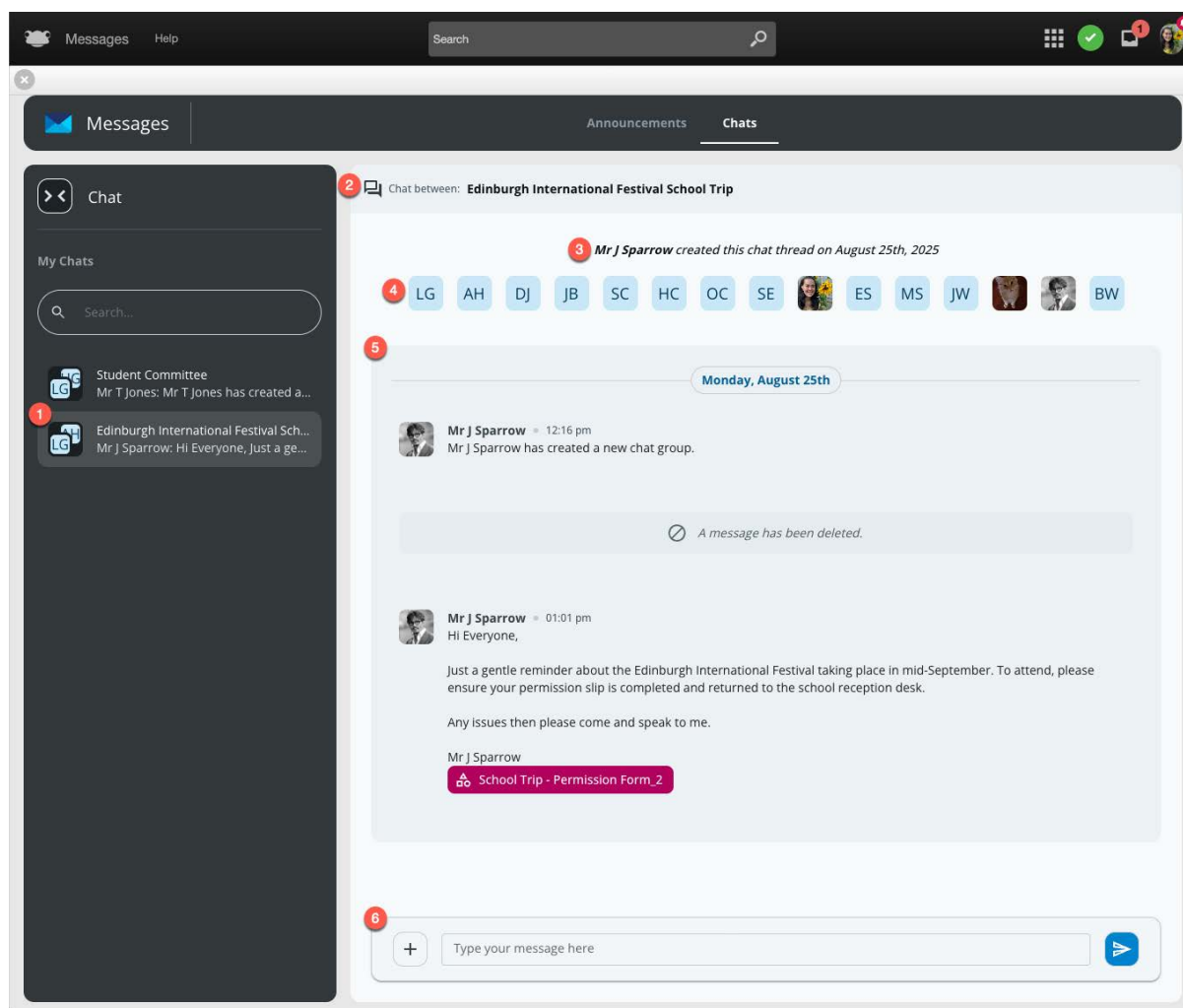
Next, let's explore how to add a message to the chat thread. This process for students and parents is similar to adding messages to announcements. Pressing the Enter key on your keyboard creates a new line within the content area, which will automatically expand as you type.
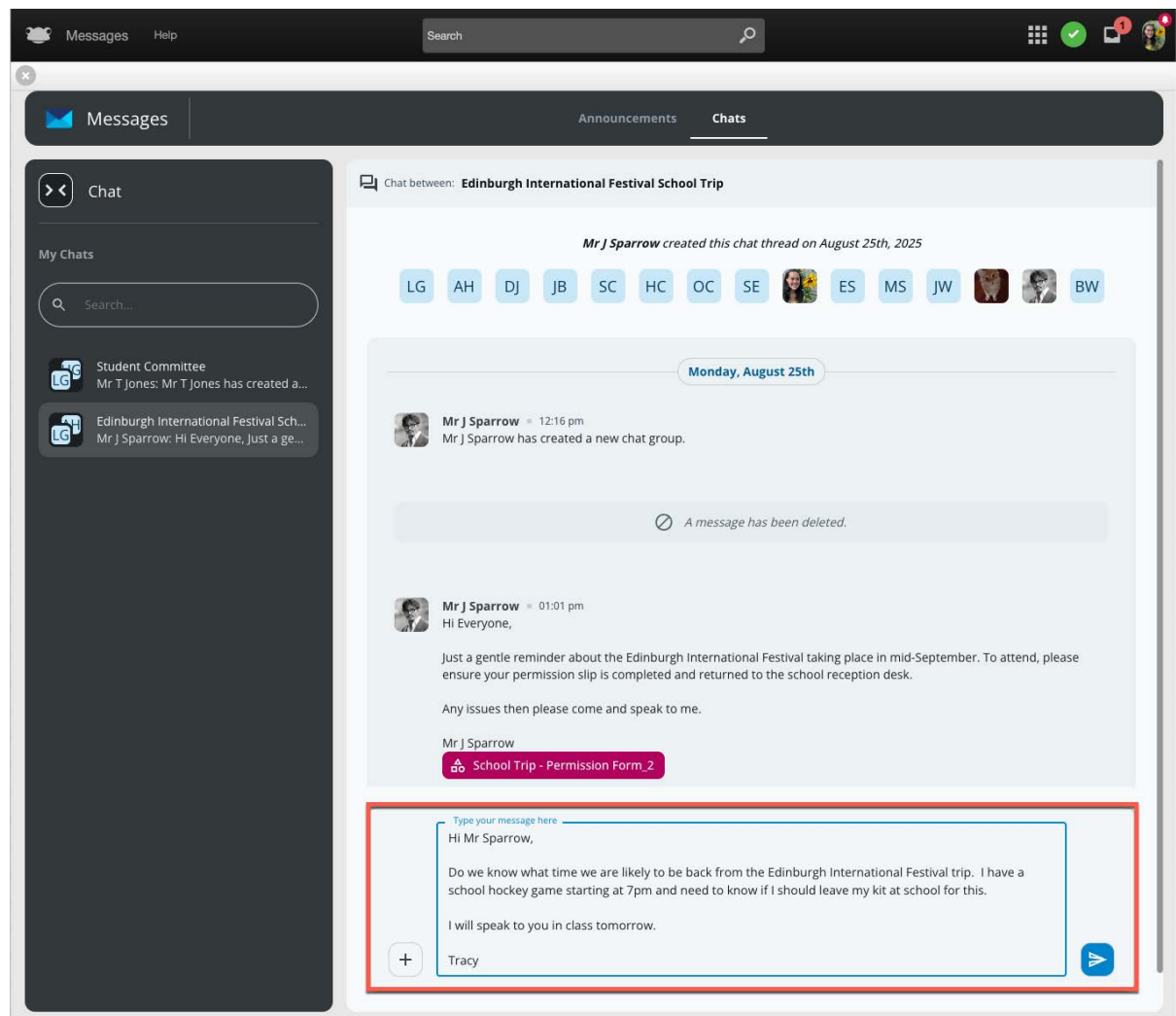
You may wish to include a resource with your chat reply. Click the + button to choose from the following options:

- Upload file
- Attach FrogDrive file (NOTE - This option is only available to students)
- Add URL / Web Link
- Add Frog Site link

Similar to announcements, chat allows you to add multiple items to a reply.

The Upload file option launches a File Uploader pop-up window. Drag and drop a file from your local device to attach it to your chat reply.

When a file is added from your local device, the name of the resource will appear just above your chat reply.

The Attach FrogDrive file option launches a pop-up window displaying FrogDrive > Documents. Choose a resource from your FrogDrive area, or if the file is on your local device, navigate to New > File to upload the required resource.

Once you've selected your resource, click the Use button to link the file to the chat reply.

In this example, we have selected a PDF file to link to the chat reply.

When a resource is added from FrogDrive, the name of the resource will appear just above your chat reply.

The Add URL / Web Link option launches a Add URL pop-up window. Enter a name and the corresponding website URL.

When a URL is added, its name and website URL will appear just above the reply.

In the example below, the following details were entered:

- Link Name – School Hockey Information
- Link URL - https://kes.org.uk/sports_and_activitie/hockey/
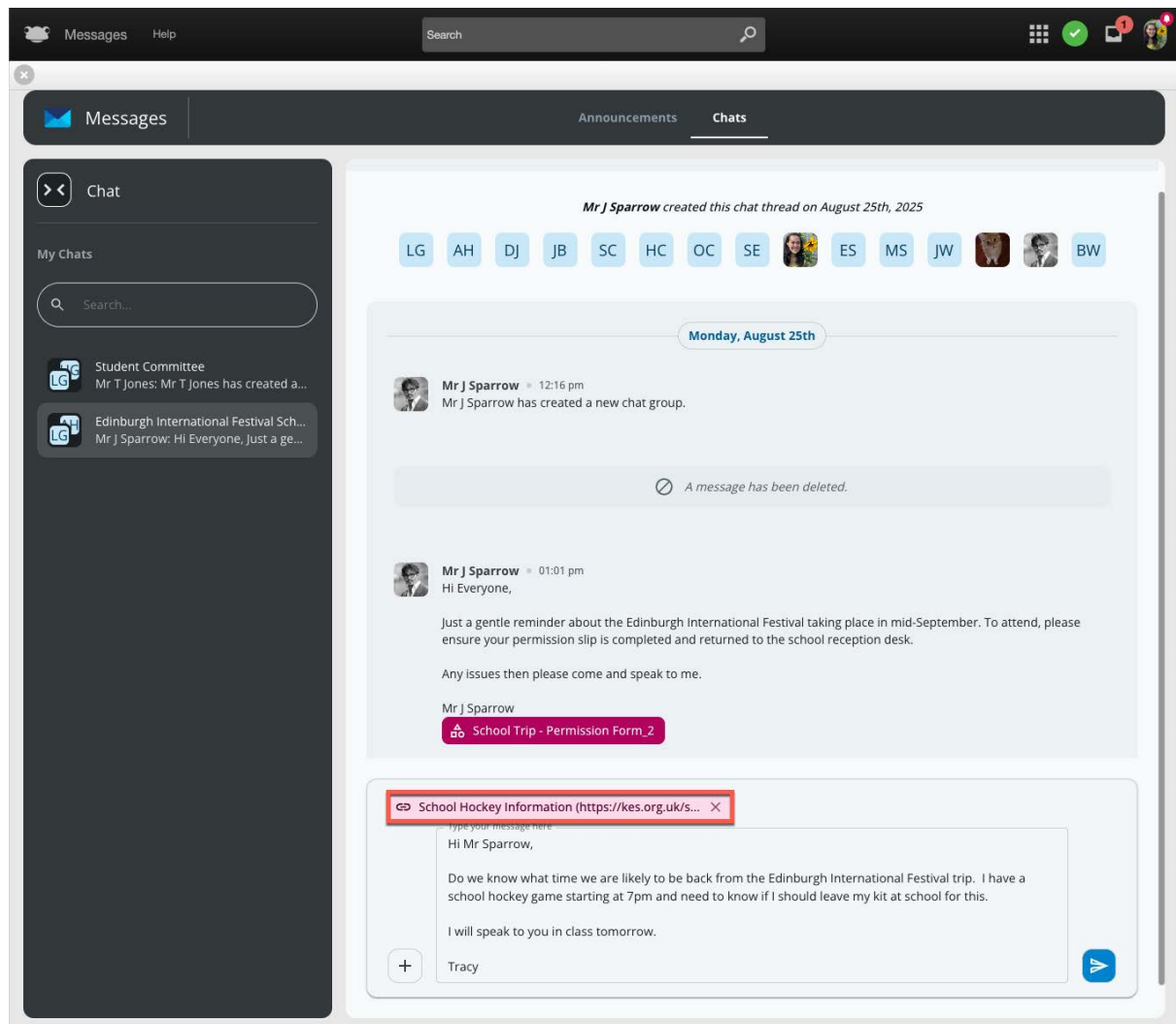
The Add Frog Site link option opens a pop-up window displaying FrogDrive > Sites. Select your site, then click the Use button to link the site to the chat reply.

In this example, we have selected the site Sport - Hockey to link to the chat reply.

When a site is added, it will appear just above your chat reply.

When you're happy with the content of your reply, click the arrow button. The reply will be sent to all recipients of the chat.

The chat thread will refresh to display your newly added message, along with any attached resources, and include the date and time the message was sent. This information is visible to all recipients in the chat thread.

As part of the chat feature, individuals, including students and parents, can delete their own replies. To delete a reply, hover over it to reveal an ellipsis (three vertical dots). Click the ellipsis to access the Delete Message option.

When the Delete Message option is selected for an individual chat reply, a Confirm Delete pop-up window will appear.

If you are certain that deleting the chat reply is appropriate, click the Delete Message button to proceed.
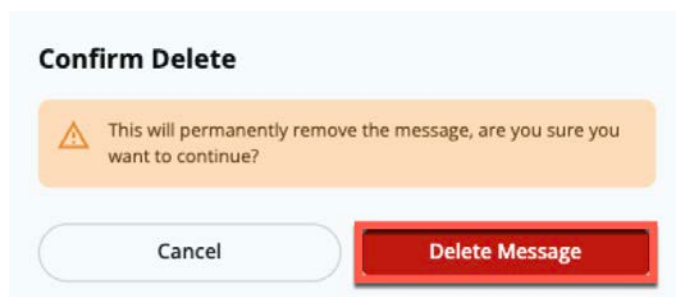
The action is processed immediately, and the chat reply will be replaced with the message:

A message has been deleted.

This update will be visible to all recipients of the chat thread.
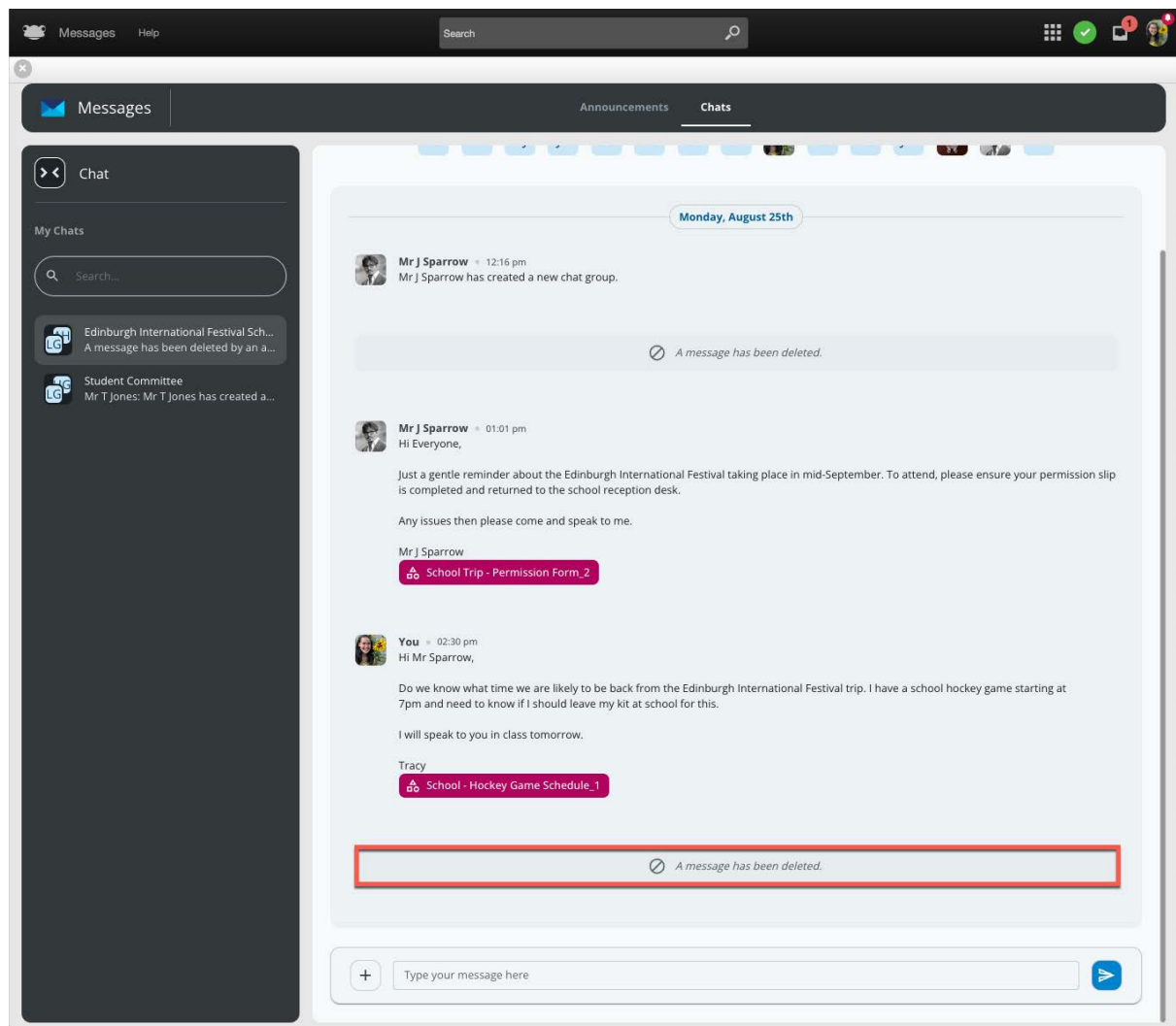
In the next section, we'll demonstrate how recipients view chat replies. Since all participants in a chat can see replies, the behaviour is consistent across staff, students, and parents.

Now, let's explore chat replies. As previously mentioned, all participants in a chat can see replies, and the behaviour is consistent across staff, students, and parents.

For this showcase, we'll view the chat from the perspective of the staff member who initiated the chat thread.

When a new announcement, chat, or reply is received, a red badge appears on the Inbox icon in the Frog Bar.

By default, selecting the Inbox displays your announcements. However, navigating to the Chats header will display a list of all your received chats, with a red dot indicating new or unread chats.

In the example below, we are logged in as a teacher. The Inbox icon shows a red badge with the number 5, which is broken down as follows:

- Announcements – 1 new notification
- Chats – 4 new notifications

Upon selecting Inbox > Chats, a summary of the chats is displayed, including the chat thread name, the start of the chat details, and the time it was received.
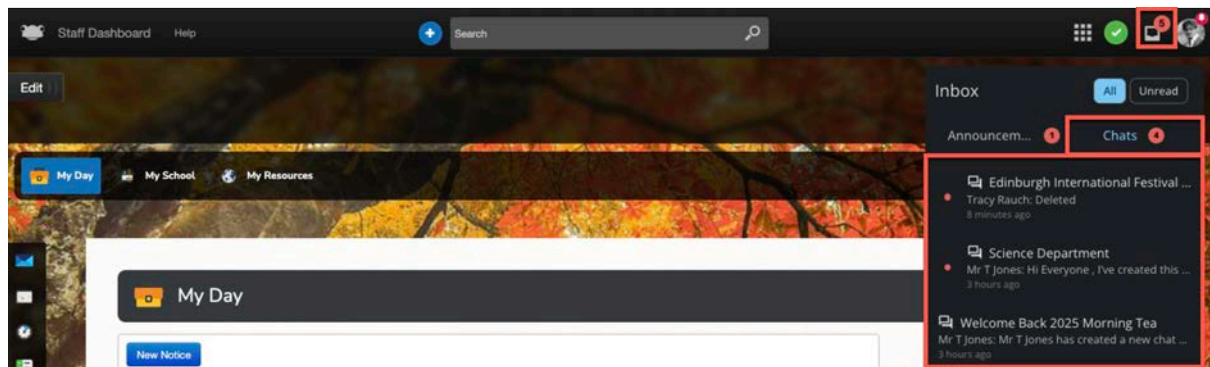
If you select a chat from the Inbox, the Messages application will launch automatically, taking you directly into the selected chat thread, where you will see the details and all replies for the selected chat thread.

In this example, the chat thread Edinburgh International Festival School Trip was selected.
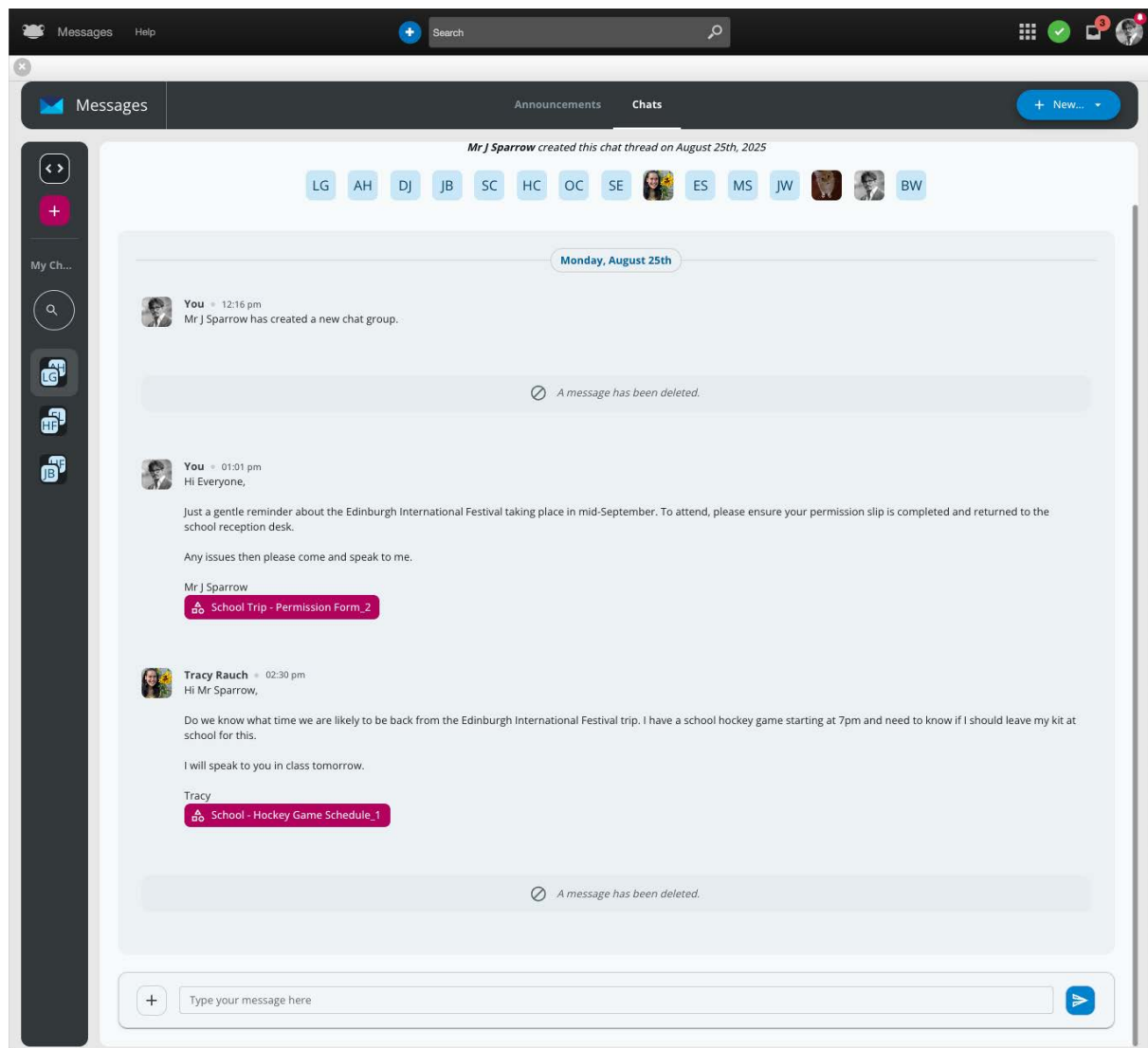
If the staff user wishes to reply to the chat thread, the process is straightforward. Simply type your message, attach any resources if needed, and click the arrow button to send the reply to all recipients of the chat thread.

Any chat reply containing a single PNG or JPG image will display the image in full size within the reply.

Now, let's explore the Messages application from an admin perspective, focusing on Chats and the additional features available, including:

- Monitoring and viewing all chat threads.
- Deleting individual chat replies.
- Deleting all messages within a chat thread.
- Exporting chat threads to a CSV file.

To get started, navigate to the Messages application via Quick Launch. By default, the application opens in the Announcements view. To access chats, select Chats from the Messages header bar.
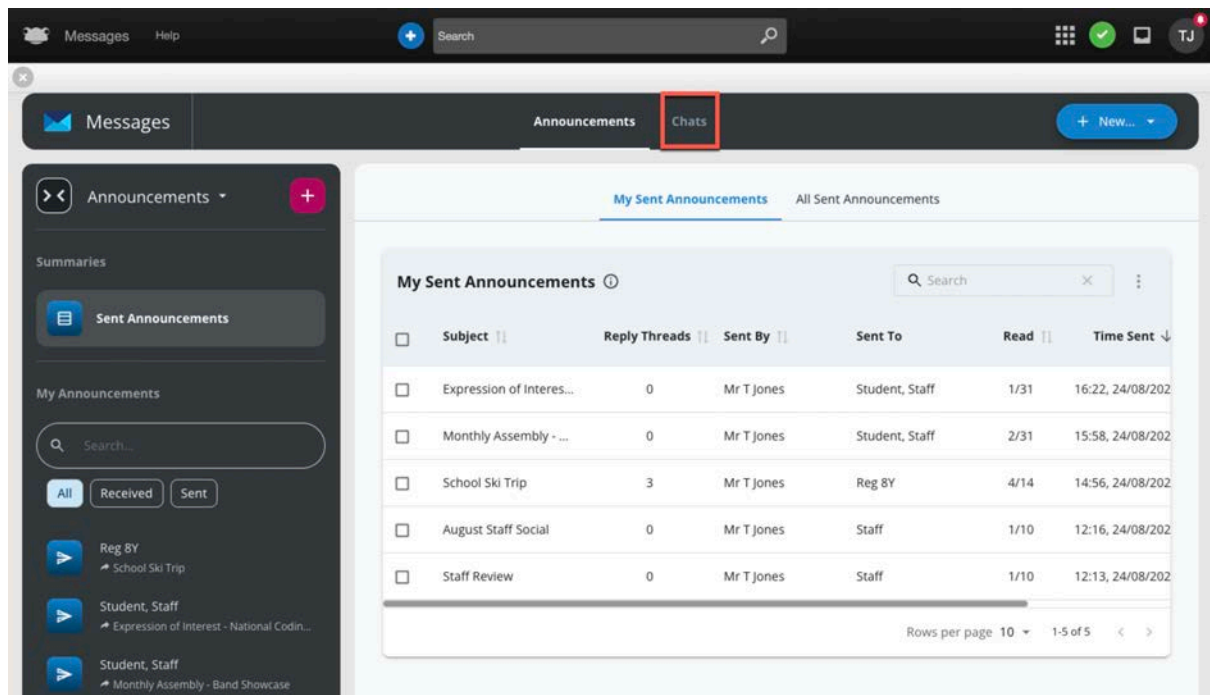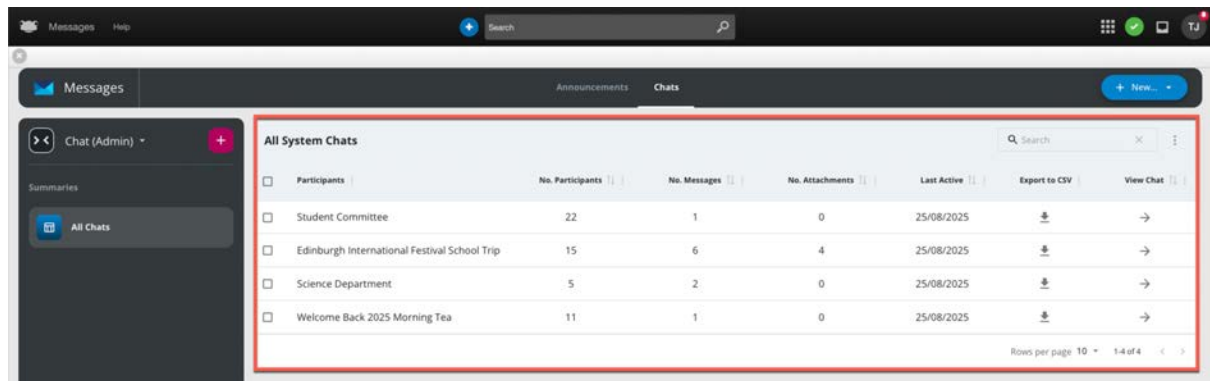

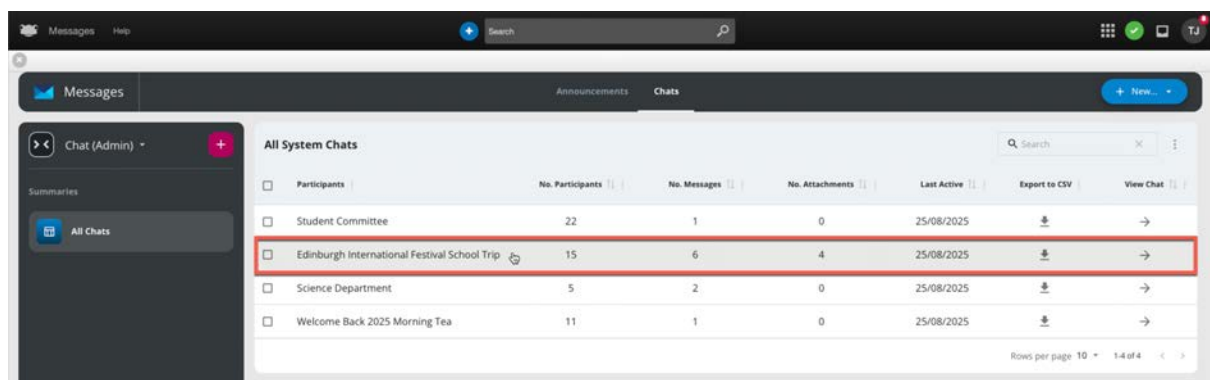Navigate to Chat > Chat (Admin) to access the chat administration interface.
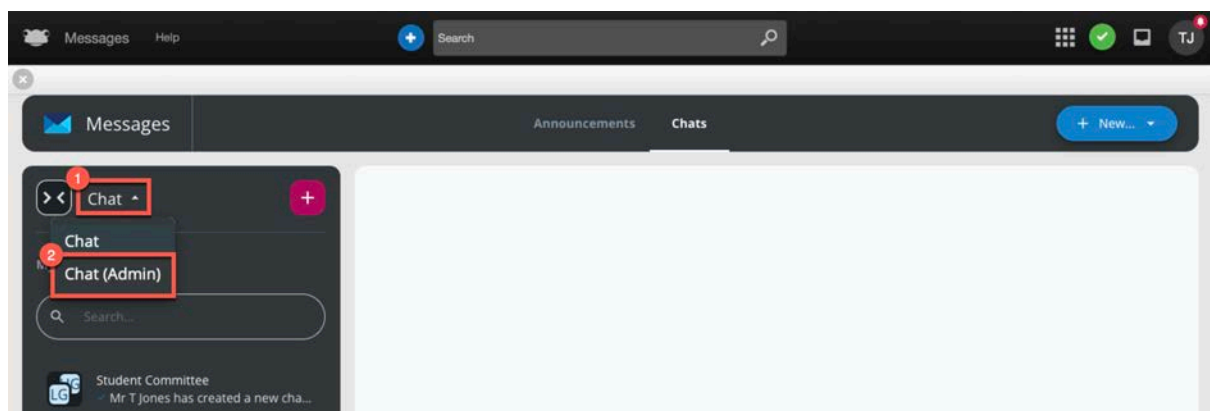
The All System Chats view provides a comprehensive summary of all chat threads initiated within your school. The following details are included:

- Participants – Displays the name of the chat thread or, if unnamed, the participant list. Hovering over a thread name will display a list of participants.
- No. Participants – Displays the total number of recipients in the chat thread.
- No. Messages – Displays the number of messages sent in the chat thread.
- No. Attachments – Displays the number of resources attached in the chat thread.
- Last Active – The date the chat thread was last active.
- Export Chat to CSV - Exports a CSV containing summary information for the selected chat thread. The exported details mirror those displayed in the All System Chats view.


To view detailed information about a chat thread, either click anywhere on the chat (it will be highlighted in grey, and a hand icon will appear) or select the arrow in the View Chat column on the far right.

When the chat thread Edinburgh International Festival School Trip is selected, the admin can view all replies and resources added to the thread, along with the date and time each was contributed, just like the participants of the chat.
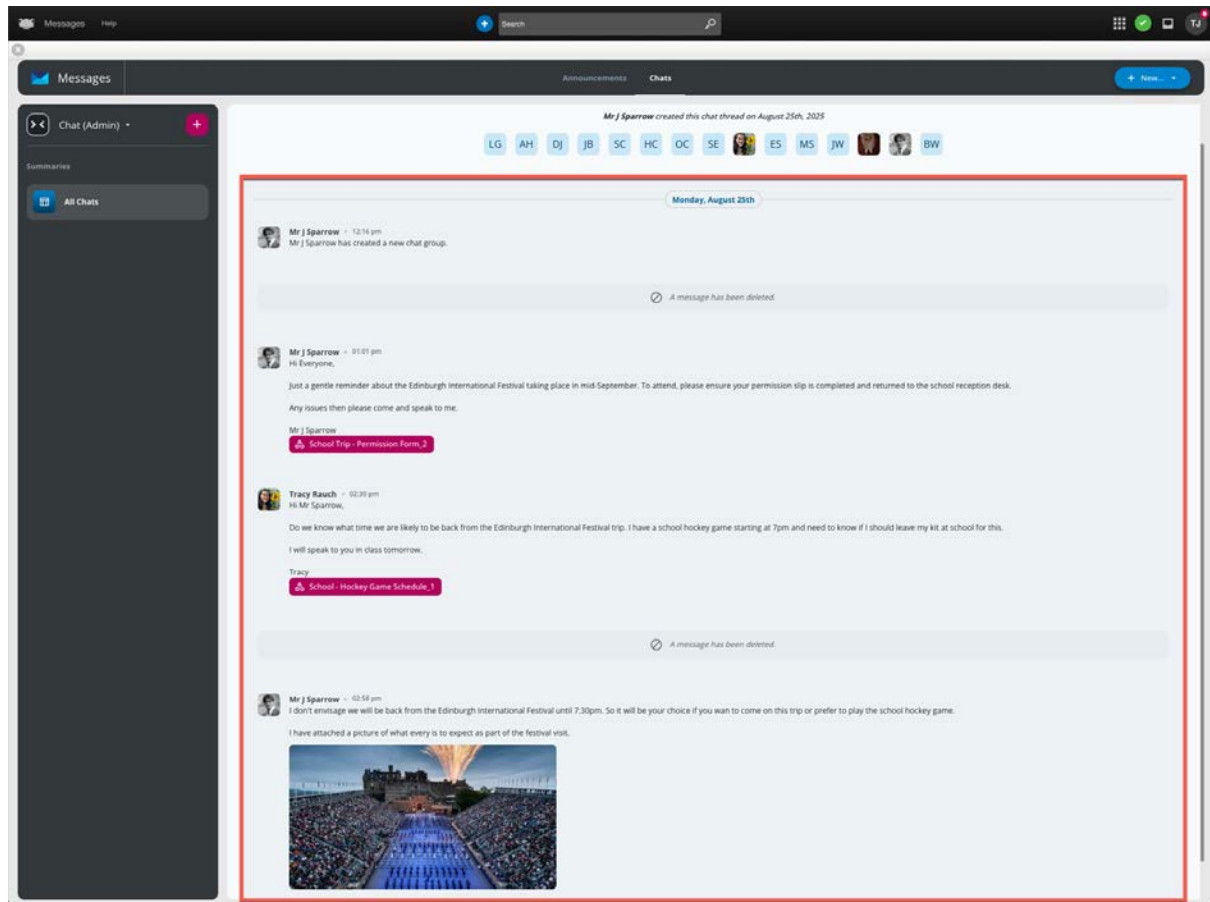

When viewing a chat thread as an admin, a message at the top of the page reads Viewing as Admin. To return to the All System Chats summary table, you can either click on All Chats in the left-hand side menu or select the back arrow next to Viewing as Admin.
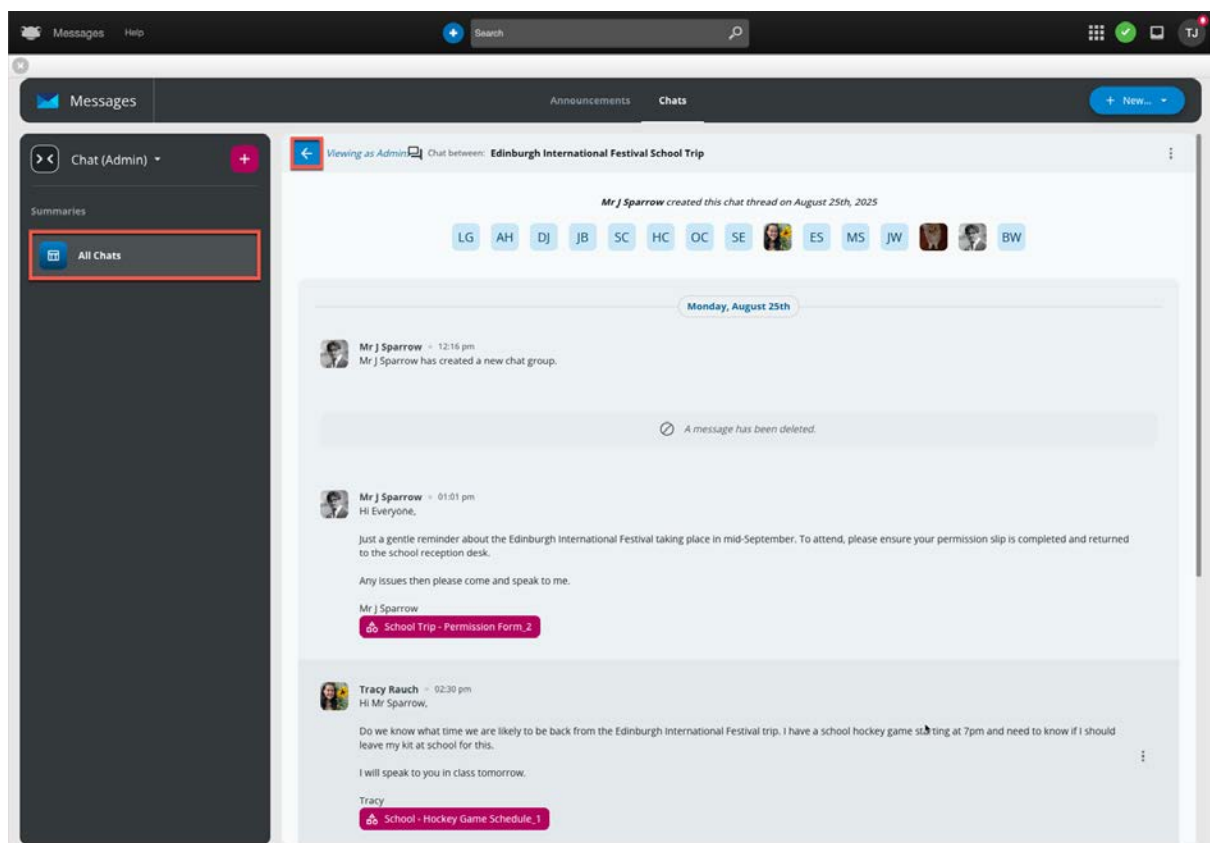
Next, we will look at how an admin can delete an individual chat reply. For this example, the chat thread Student Committee has been selected.

To delete an individual chat reply, hover over the reply, and an ellipsis (three vertical dots) will appear. Click on the ellipsis to reveal the Delete Message option.
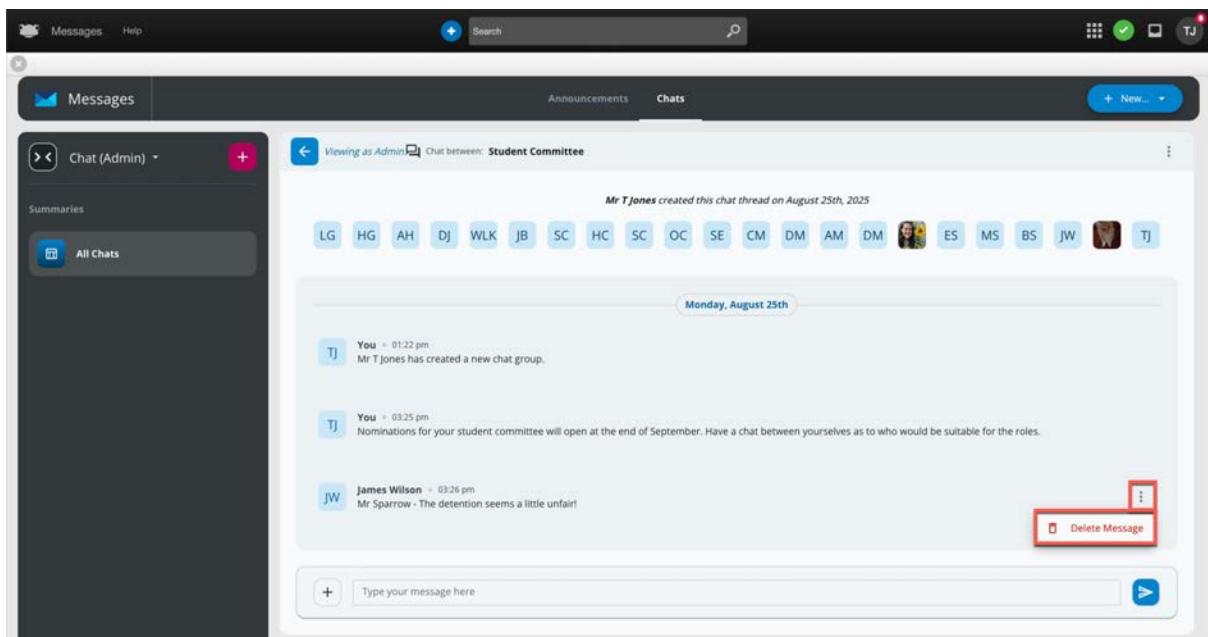
When the Delete Message option is selected for an individual chat reply, a Confirm Delete pop-up window will appear.
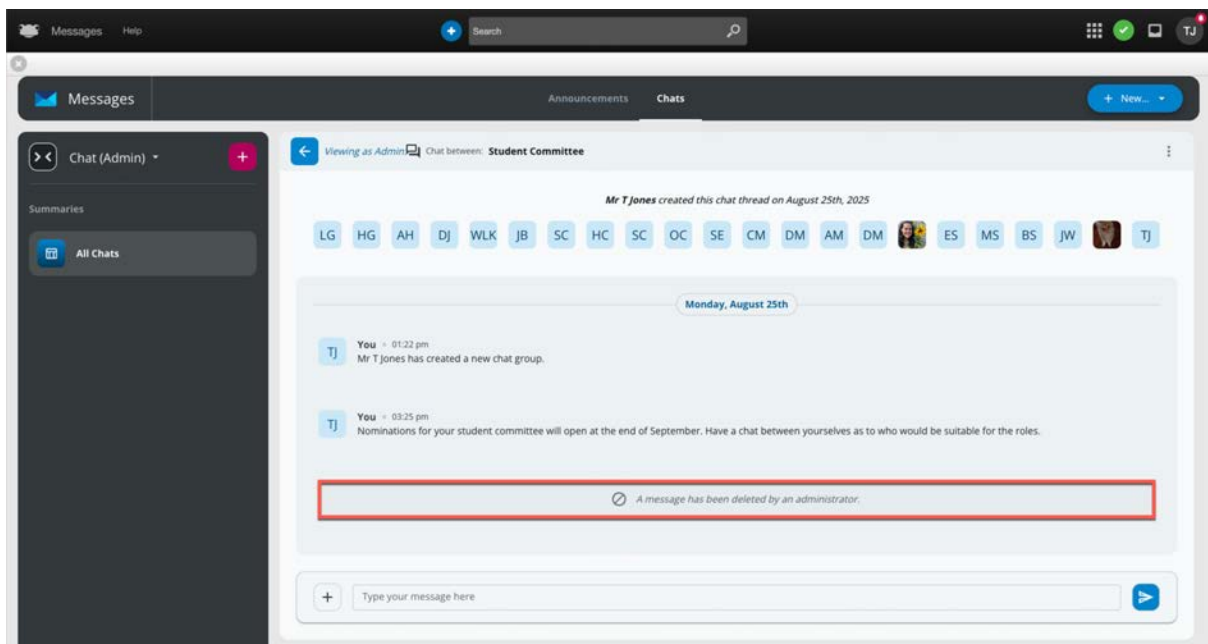
If you are certain that deleting the chat reply is appropriate, click the Delete Message button to proceed.
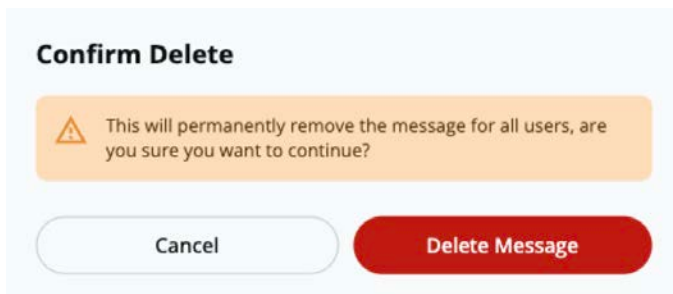
The action is processed immediately, and the chat reply will be replaced with the message:
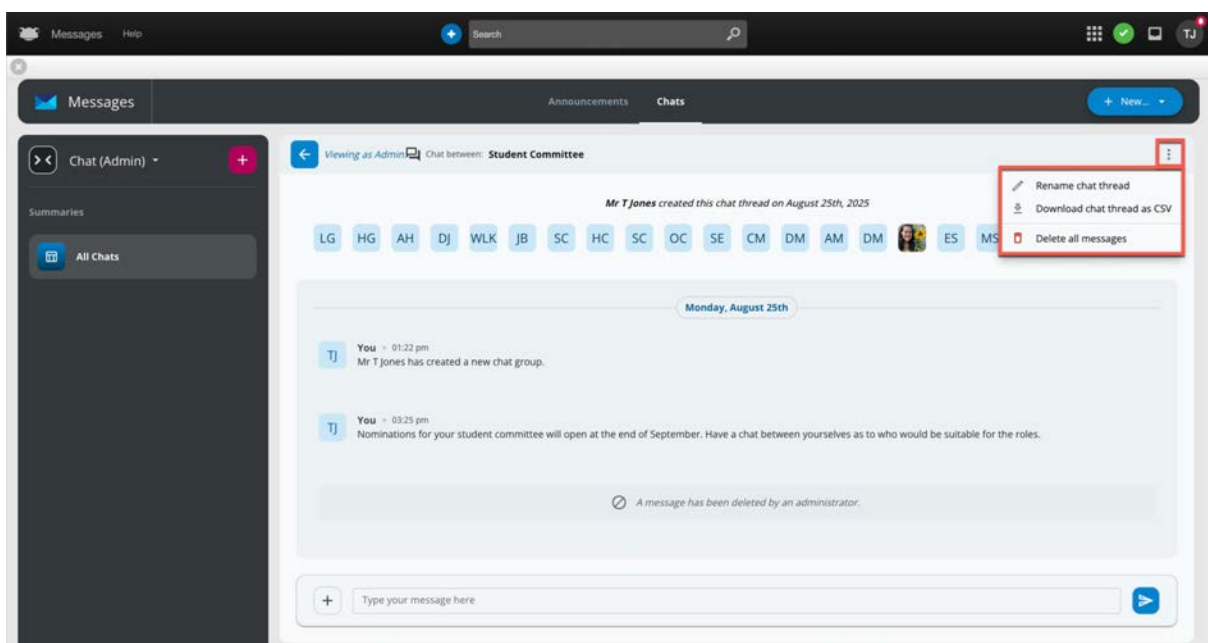
A message has been deleted by an administrator.

This update will be visible to all recipients of the chat thread.

Within a chat thread, if the admin navigates to the ellipsis (three vertical dots) located at the top of the chat, the following options are available:

- Rename chat thread
- Download chat thread as CSV
- Delete all messages

The first option under the ellipsis is Rename chat thread. By default, the thread displays the recipient list, but you can rename it to something more meaningful by selecting this option.
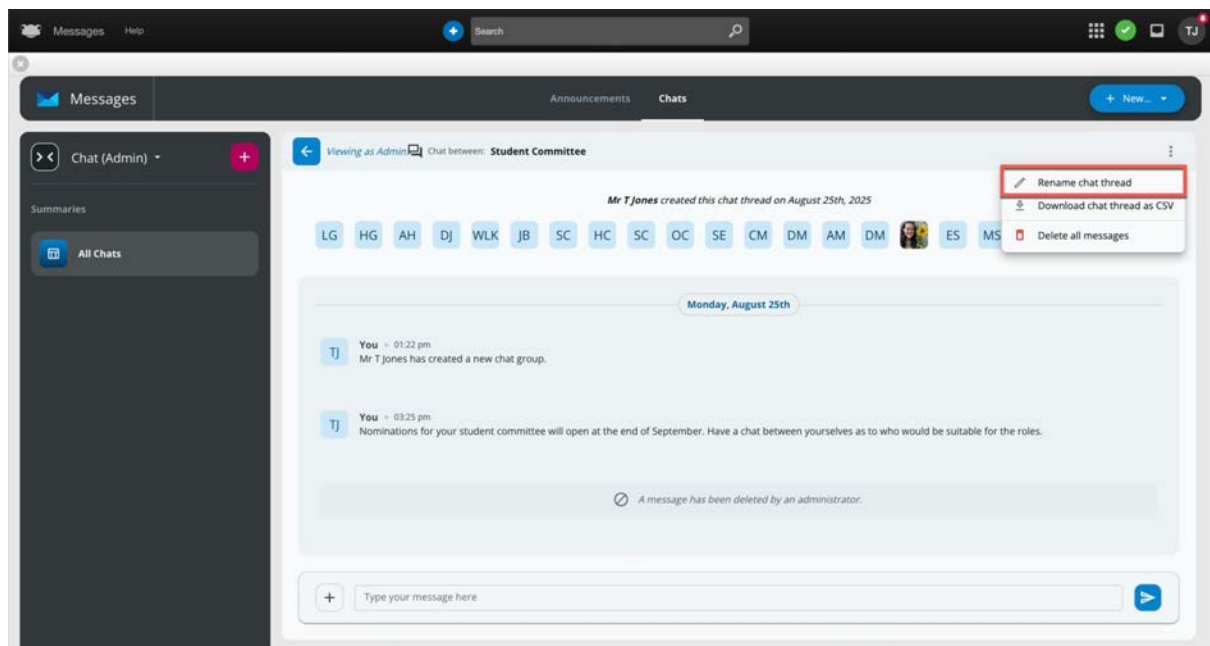

The second option under the ellipsis is Download chat thread as CSV. Selecting this option generates a CSV file containing a detailed overview of the chat thread, including:

- UUID of the individual chat reply.
- Date and time the individual chat reply was sent.
- Name of the user who sent the chat reply.
- Content of the chat reply.
- Name of the resource that was attached to the chat reply.
- Name of the user that deleted the chat reply if applicable.
- Date and time that the chat reply was deleted if applicable.
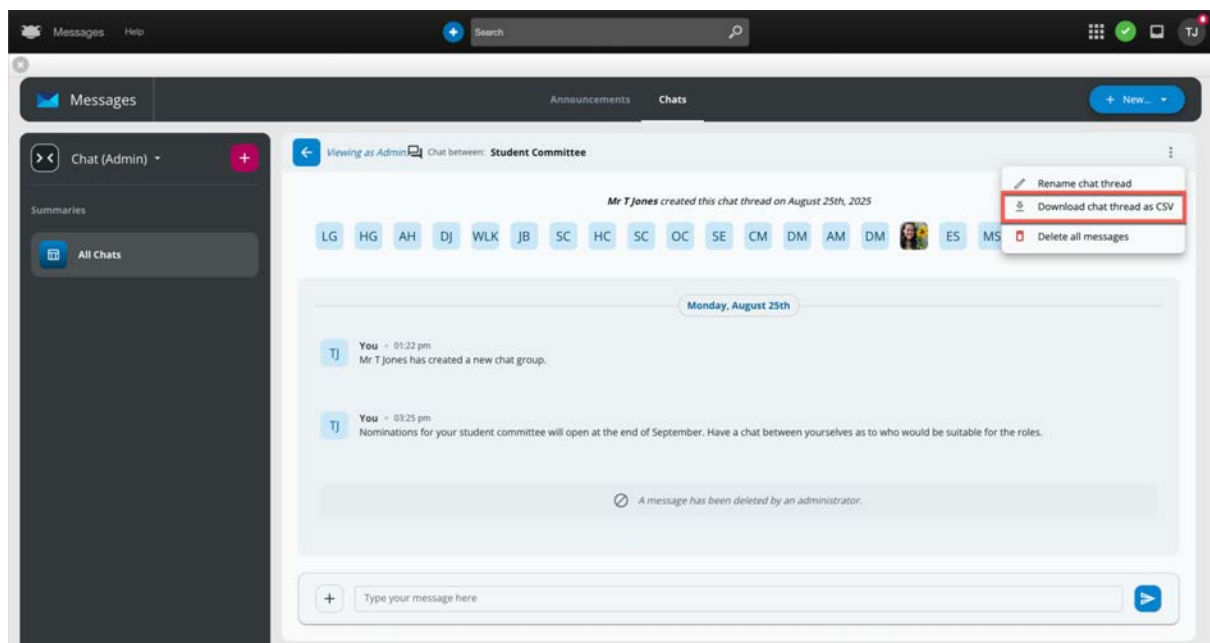
Lastly, admins have the ability to delete all messages within a chat thread by selecting the Delete all messages option.

NOTE – Admins should carefully consider using the Delete all messages function, as the action is permanent. Once deleted, all messages within the chat thread will no longer be visible on your Frog platform.
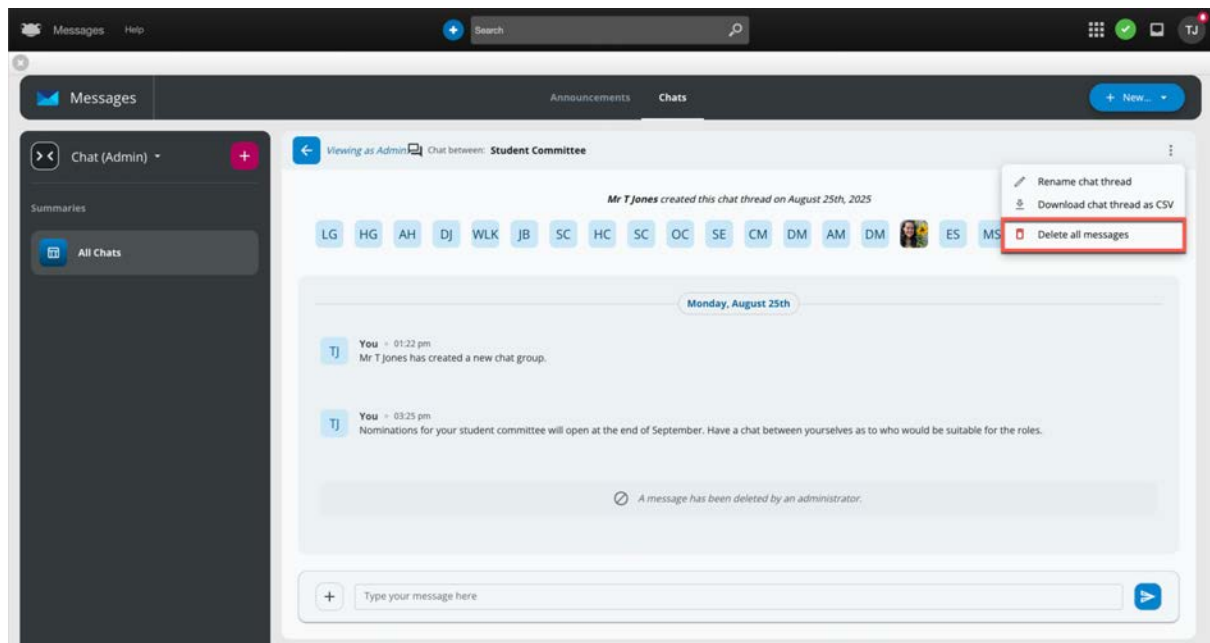
When the Delete all messages option is selected within a chat thread, a Confirm Delete pop-up window will appear.

If you are certain that deleting all messages within the chat thread is appropriate, click the Delete All Messages button to proceed.
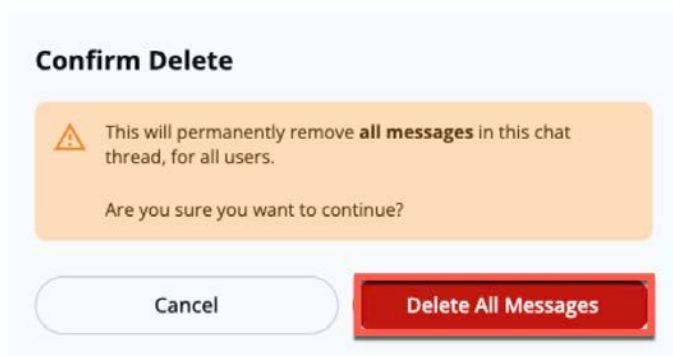
The action is processed immediately, and each chat reply will be replaced with the message:

A message has been deleted by an administrator.

This update will be visible to all recipients of the chat thread.
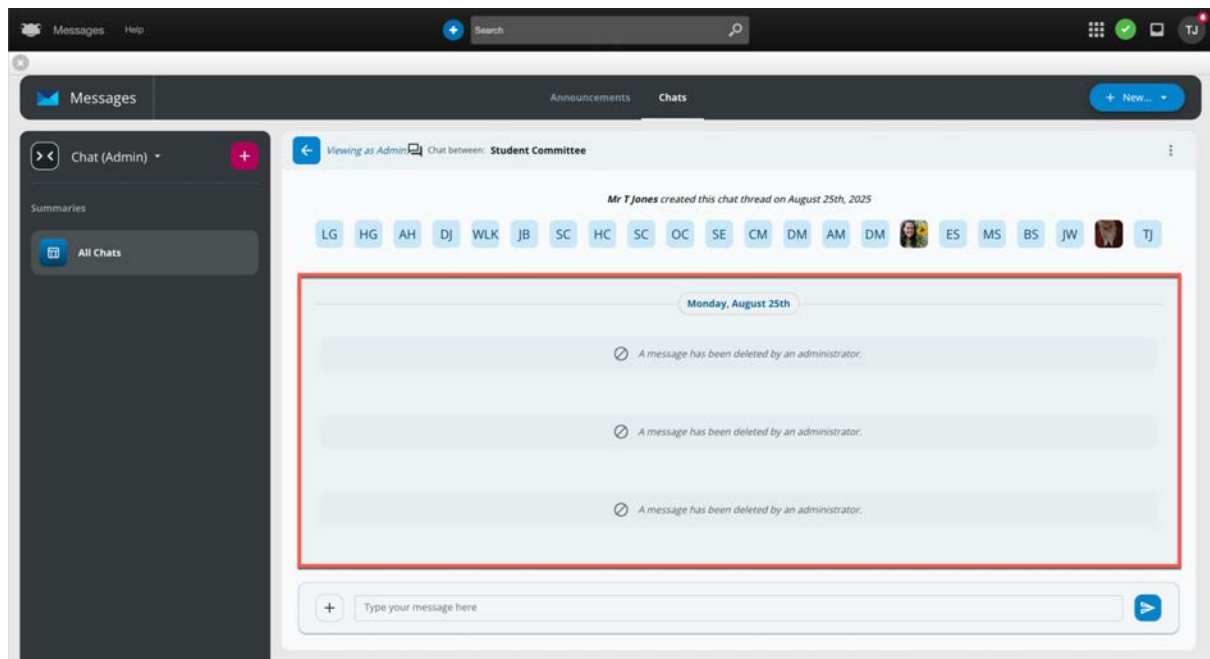
Admin – Frog App and embedding of Messages application

As part of the enhancements, the Messages application can now be embedded on a dashboard or site using the Frog App widget, allowing students, parents, and staff to quickly view their announcements and chats

The Messages application is responsive and will adjust its view based on the selected page layout and the placement of the Frog App widget.

Messages application within a full width box layout – Chats View
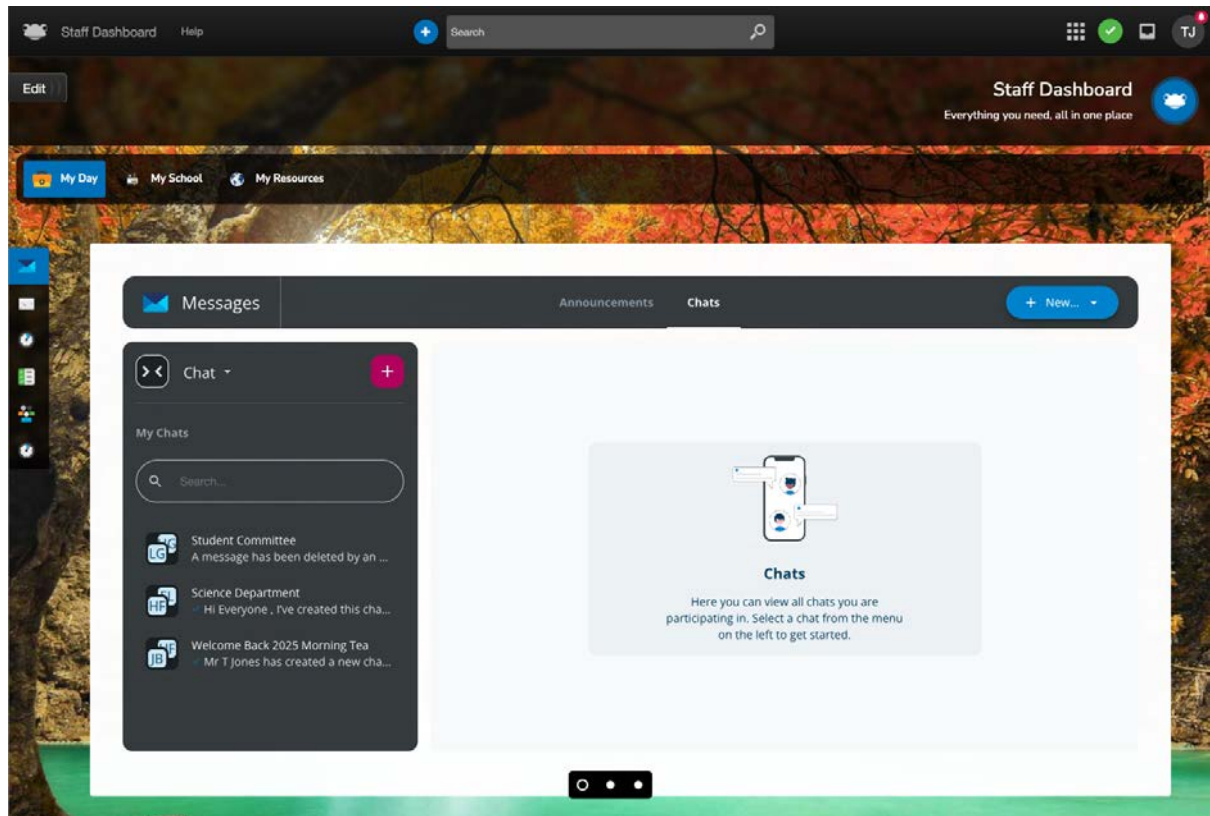
Messages application within a 1/2 width box layout – Chats View
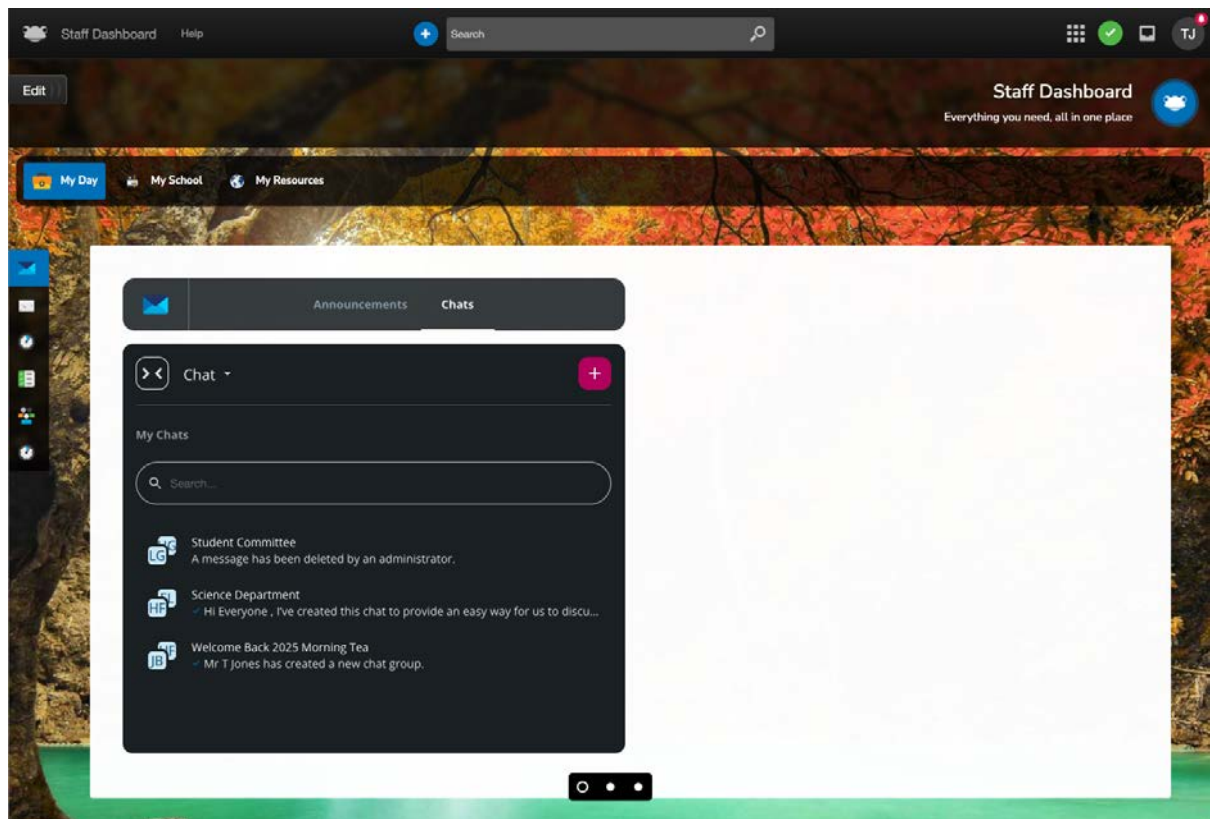
Messages application within a 1/4 width box layout – Chats View
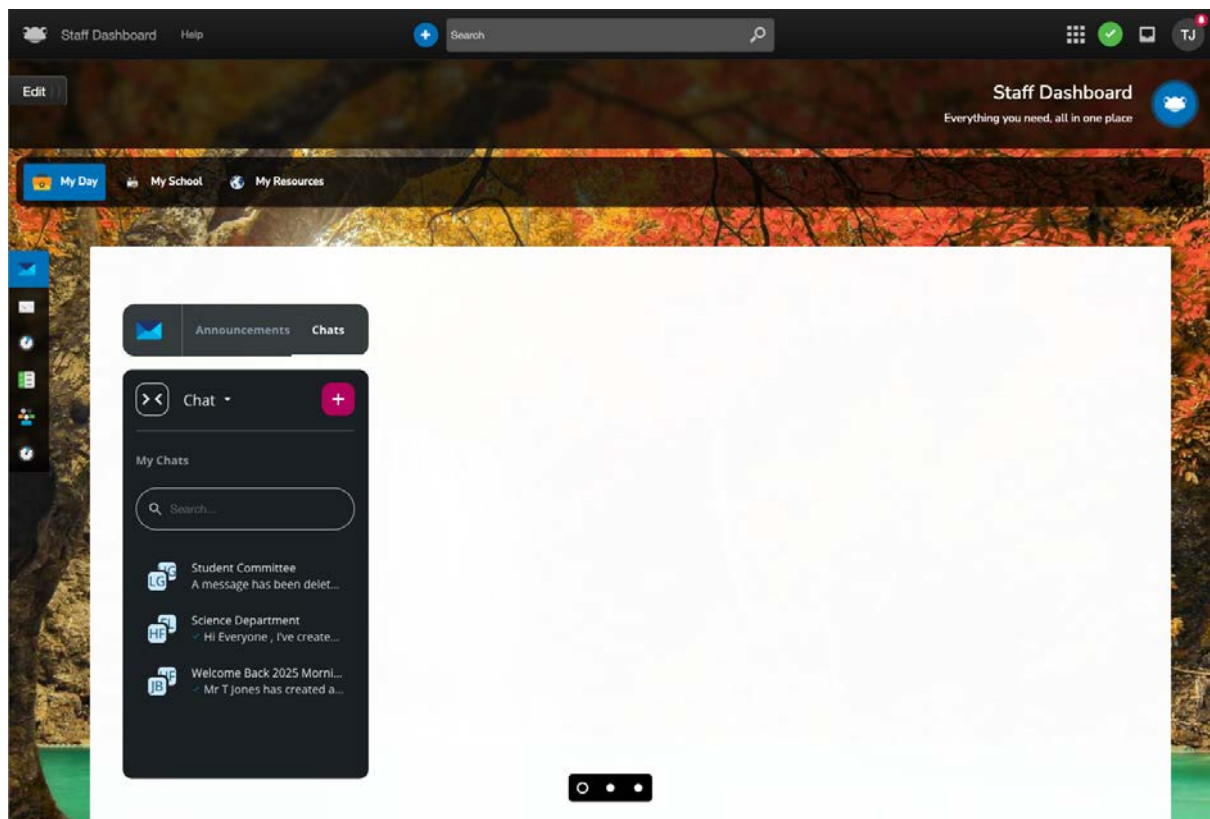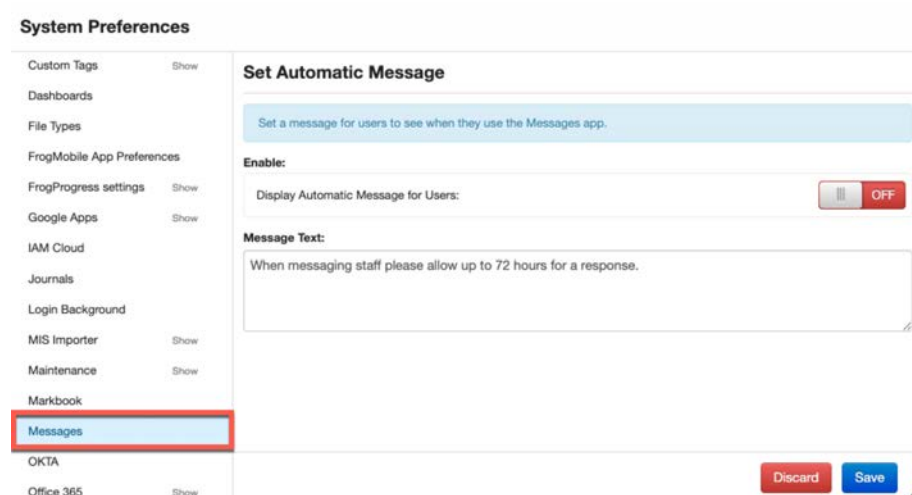
Admin – System Preference – School-Wide Automatic Message

As part of this release, Frog has introduced the ability for admins to configure an automatic message for announcements and chats. The purpose of this automatic message is to help schools manage expectations for students and parents regarding staff response times.
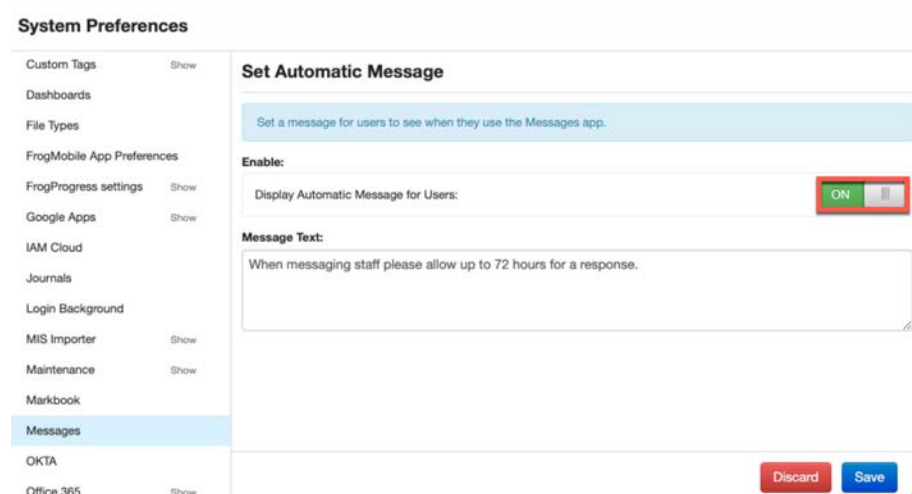
By default, the automatic message is turned off.

To setup the automatic message, admins need to navigate to the Profile Menu > System Preferences > Messages.

To enable the automatic message for announcements and chats, toggle Display Automatic Message for Users to ON.

Next, in the Message Text field, you can customise the message you want displayed to users in announcements and chats. A default message is provided:

When messaging staff, please allow up to 72 hours for a response.

In this example, we have customised the message with the following text:

As per school policy, please allow up to 72 hours for a response when messaging staff.

When happy with the details, click the Save button to apply the changes.

The newly applied automatic message will display at the top of a chat thread.

In the example below, the student Tracy Rauch is a recipient of the chat thread Edinburgh International Festival School Trip. The automatic message is displayed prominently at the top of the chat thread.
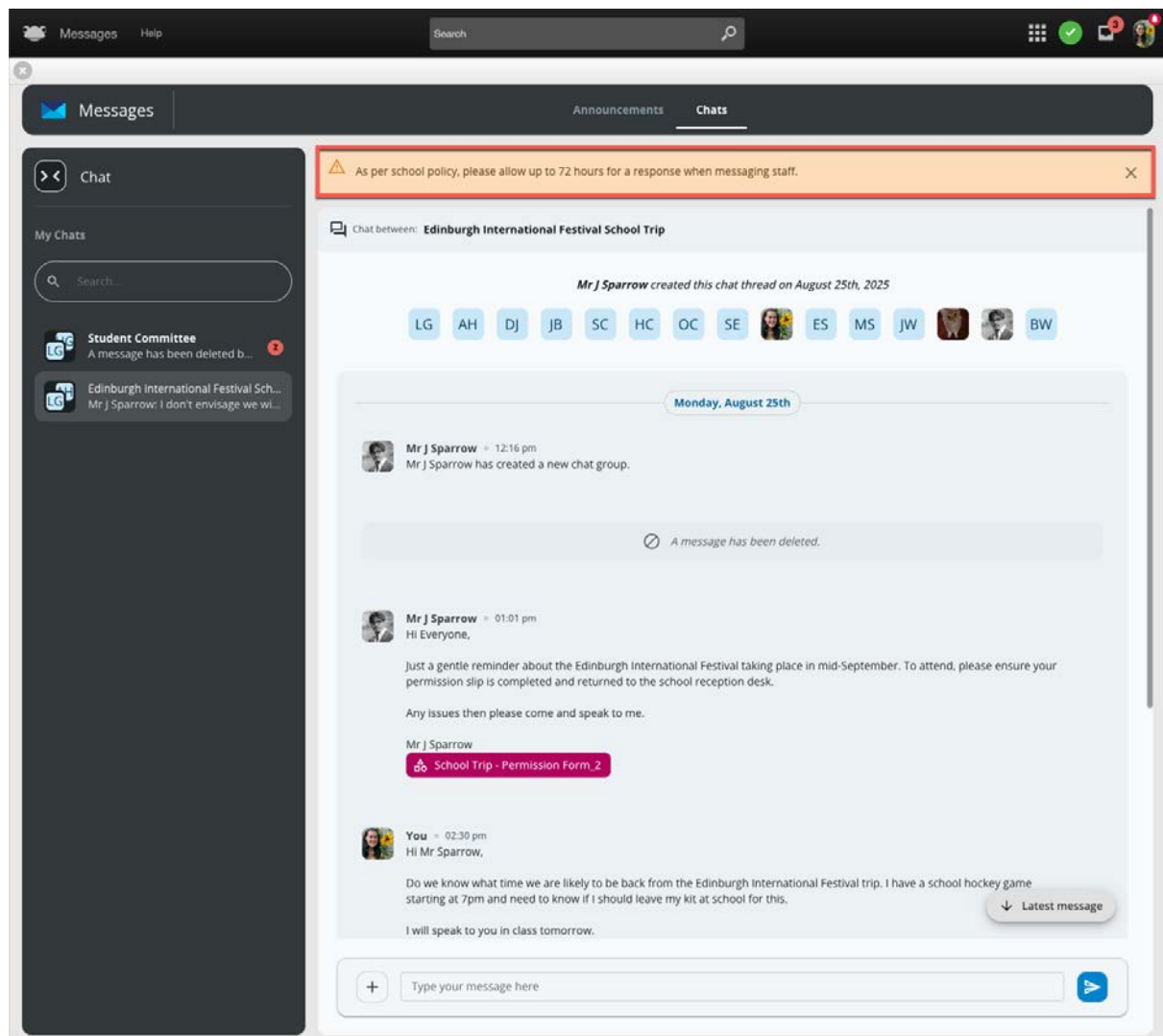
Admin – Groups and Policies – Chat Roles

Staff and admin accounts can create chat messages with any user on their Frog platform. However, additional roles have been introduced to enhance the experience for students and parents:

- Messages > Create Chat threads with Staff users
- Messages > Create Chat threads with their family members

These roles are disabled by default for student and parent profiles, leaving it up to the school to decide when to enable them. It is recommended that schools establish a clear policy outlining expectations for students and parents regarding staff response times. This can be reinforced by configuring the School-Wide Automatic Message (accessible via System Preferences > Messages) mentioned earlier in this document.

In this example, the Create Chat threads with their family members role has been enabled for the Student profile.

If we log in as a student, Tracy Rauch, and navigate to Chats, the + button will now be visible. Selecting it will display the New Chat pop-up window. However, the student will only be able to search for family members.

NOTE – Family members are automatically linked through the MIS and can be viewed in the Users application under the Relationships tab.

In this example, entering wil in the search field returns two users:

- Mrs B Wilson – Parent account for Tracy Rauch
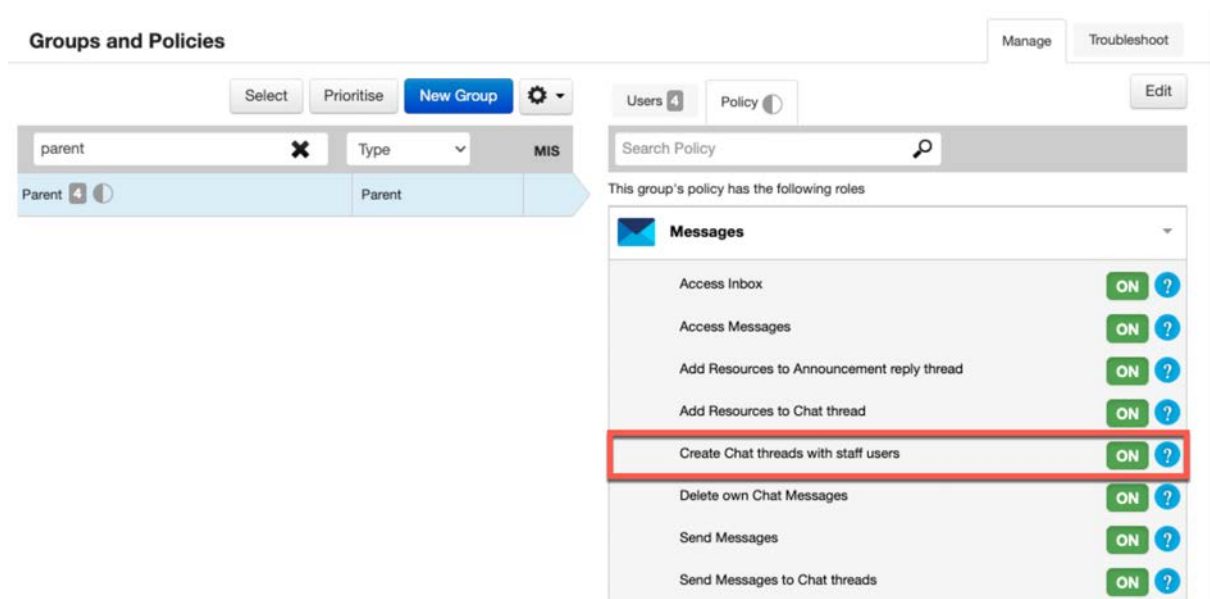- James Wilson – Sibling of Tracy Rauch linked through Mrs B Wilson
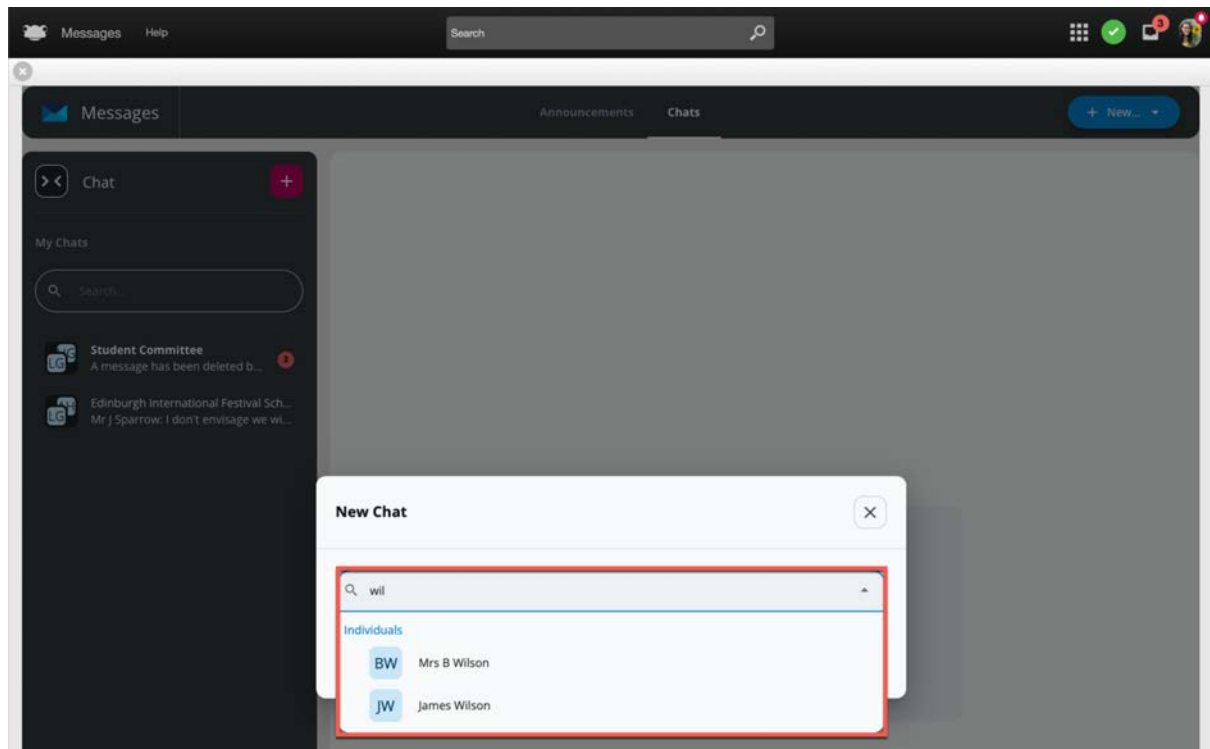
After selecting the family members to initiate a chat with, select the Start button.
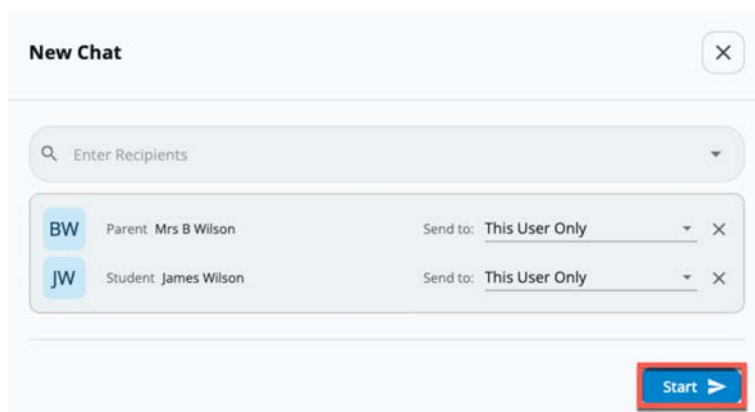
Your newly created chat will display immediately, ready for you and your family member recipients to add content or reply.
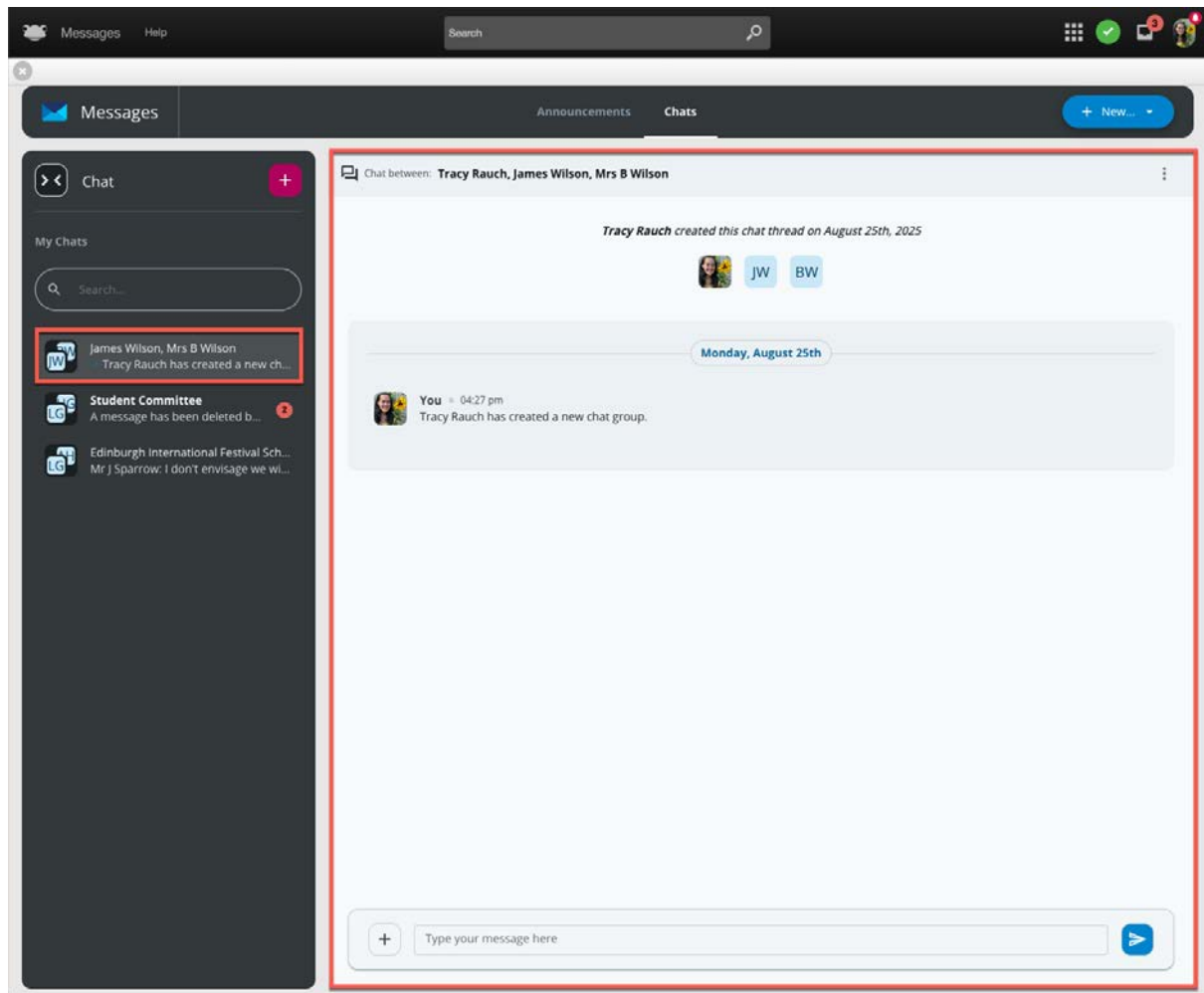

In this example, the Create Chat threads with staff users role has been enabled for the Parent profile.

If we log in as a parent, B Wilson, and navigate to Chats, the + button will now be visible. Selecting it displays the New Chat pop-up window. However, the parent will only be able to search for staff members (teachers).

In this example, entering ja in the search field returns three staff members matching the result.
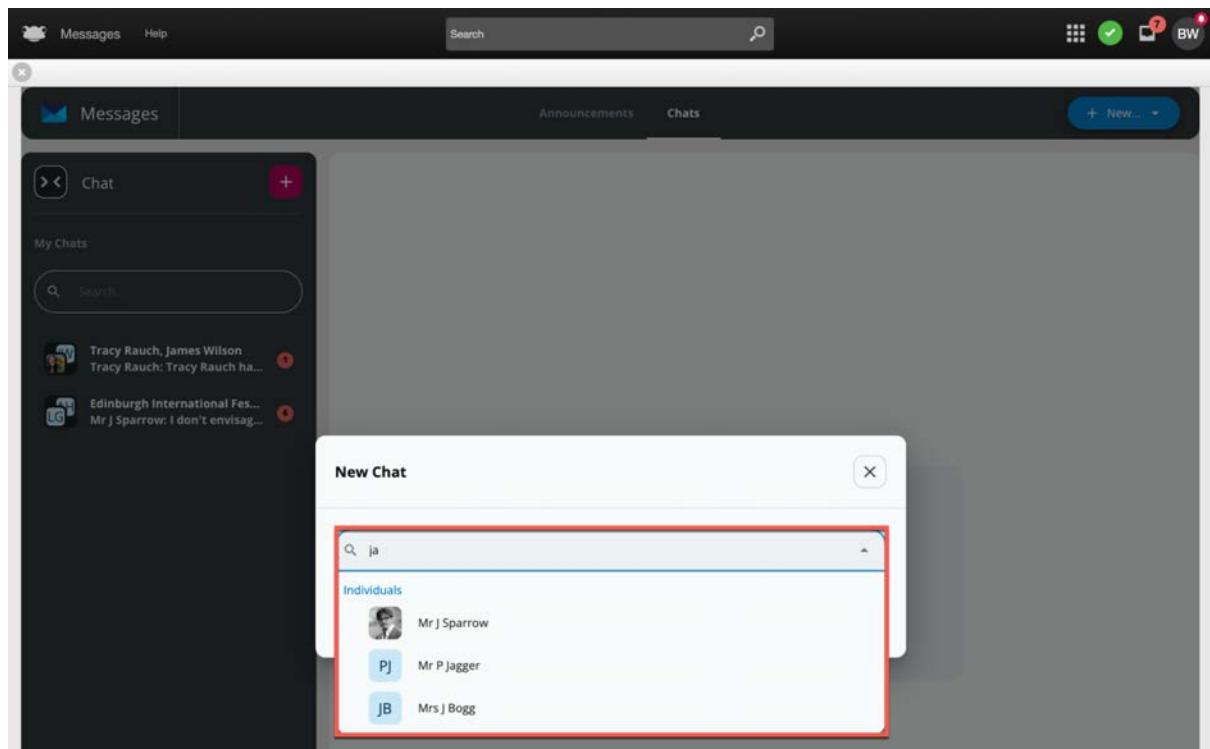
After selecting the staff member to initiate a chat with, select the Start button.
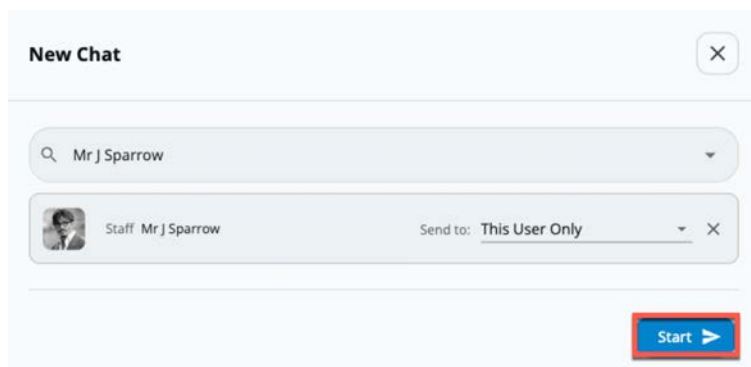
Your newly created chat will display immediately, ready for you and the staff recipient to add content or reply.