

# The girls who take two hours to put in make-up... for school

By Kieran Corcoran

GIRLS of 14 are spending up to two hours doing their hair and make-up before going to school, according to a survey that highlights a growing teenage obsession with image and appearance.

The study also found boys as young as 13 are routinely lifting weights in the gym and drinking bulk-building protein milk shakes.

Experts believe the rise in celebrity culture is putting children and young teenagers under unprecedented pressure to 'look good'.

In a snapshot survey of 14 to 15-year-olds at a large Scottish secondary school, a quarter of pupils said they look in the mirror 'so often I lose count' and 45 per cent worried about what their peers think of them 'most of the time'.

A majority of girls said they were not happy with the way they look, while boys felt under pressure to wear 'cool' brands such as Jack Wolfskin and Hollister.

Last night, campaigners and charity workers described the results of the survey as 'sinister' and warned that an obsession with looks 'distracts children from academic work'.

Natasha Devon, whose charity Body



TOP ROLE MODEL: Cheryl Cole

shakes and hitting the gym.

When the pupils were asked which celebrities they looked up to, boy band One Direction, actress Megan Fox and singer Cheryl Cole topped the list. The most popular answers when asked what they would like to change about themselves were height, weight, noses and hair. One in 13 said: 'Everything.'

Sam Matthews, 17, one of the survey organisers, said: 'Our message is about getting people to be comfortable about being themselves and not what everyone wants them to be.'

Heather Allen, 17, said: 'Young people should have role models who are confident in themselves and not afraid to make their own decisions about what they wear or look like.'

Chris McGovern of the Campaign for Real Education said: 'It is a sad reflection of our society that we see this narcissistic attitude in schools.'

'Focusing so heavily on self-image distracts children from academic work and also causes difficulty for those who don't measure up.'

Denis McGinley of the Edinburgh Physiotherapy Centre said: 'There can be risks associated with strength training when your body is still maturing. Repetitive lifting of heavy weights can lead to bone damage and back pain. A 13 to 16-year-old who wants to go to a gym should be supervised by a trained instructor.'

## 'It started as a cover up - now I can't stop'

GIGI Sosa, 14, admits to spending 45 minutes every day putting in her make-up before going to school.

As well as her schoolbag, she also carries a separate bag containing mascara, eyeliner and lipstick to allow her to re-apply her make-up between classes.

She said: 'I started wearing make-up because I didn't have good skin, but I wish I didn't have to.'

'Everybody started doing it, then it became a really big part of my life.'

Her enhanced beauty regime started in first year, when she was 12.

'I started just using foundation to cover up spots, but as you get older the amount you're expected to put on increases - it's a vicious cycle.'

'Most girls feel like they have to wear it, though there are some girls who don't.'

Despite her reliance on cosmetics, Gigi has never fallen foul of the school's unwritten rules on wearing too much make-up.

'I've never been told off for wearing make-up, but some of my friends have been told by teachers that they don't need as much.'

'But it's easy to ignore them and think you know best.'

'My mum helps by buying me good quality make-up and making sure I don't look silly, and if I left the house looking orange she'd tell me it was too much.'

It has been suggested unwholesome celebrity



LIP SERVICE: Gigi reapplies her make-up between classes

examples force girls into using cosmetics early, and the survey found that stars such as Megan Fox and Cheryl Cole are big influences on Gigi's peers. But Gigi insists the pressures she feels come not from the world of the rich and famous, but the girls around her. If girls

wear lots of make-up, I understand it's because they feel comfortable like that, but we don't need to dress up like we're at a party. She added: 'A line should be drawn - this is school and we're not coming here to impress anyone.'

## Weights and shakes to give a boy confidence

BUSTER Davidson is in the gym five nights a week and describes weights as 'a bit of an obsession'.

A keen rugby player, the 14-year-old aspires to be like British Lions and Glasgow Warriors star Stuart Hogg.

Although weights are not part of the training regime for his school team, Buster and some of his teammates believe gym work-outs will give them a competitive edge.

Buster admits that protein shakes and supplements are becoming more and more common among his peers.

'In the past year or two, I've seen a lot of adverts for protein, and you hear people talk about it a lot more now,' he said.

'I don't take anything just now, but people not much older than me do, and it seems to work for them. I'm holding off until I'm 15 or 16.'

Buster, who has been lifting weights since he was 12, started for the health benefits: 'I used to be quite chubby,



BODY CONSCIOUS: Buster Davidson, 14

## 'It is a sad reflection of our society'

Gossip runs self-esteem classes for children, said: 'This survey shows what is increasingly considered to be "normal" grooming for teenagers.

While we would never condemn exercising for fun, or using make-up to express individuality, these things can become sinister when they start to dominate your life.'

The snapshot of life in Scotland's schools was carried out by pupils at Peebles High School with the help of youth charity Fixers.

The school's 53 pupils were asked a range of questions about looks, fashion and their attitude to celebrity. The findings are being used as material for lessons on body image and self-esteem.

A Fixers spokesman said: 'The survey revealed body image concerns are more prevalent among girls, with some taking up to two hours to get ready each morning for school.'

'However, boys are not immune to the pressure to look good, with some as young as 13 drinking protein

## Rescued worker skipped breakfast and the decision saved her life



MIRACLE: Miss Begum is rescued

A WOMAN who was rescued after 17 days under the rubble of a collapsed factory in Bangladesh has told how she survived on biscuits and bottles of water.

Reshma Begum stunned the world when she was pulled out of the wreckage without any serious injuries.

Miss Begum, 19, said that on the day of the building's collapse, she had rushed to work and did not have any breakfast. Instead, she bought four small packets of biscuits on her way in. It was a decision that saved her life, as she rationed her scarce supply over the next two weeks.

Her rescue - which was shown live on national television - brought the

## breakfast and the decision saved her life

By Abul Taher

country's capital, Dhaka, to a standstill as people stopped work and gathered around television sets.

Yesterday, Miss Begum told hospital staff she lives on the biscuits and bottles of water for the first 15 days as she lay holed up inside a cavity in the wreckage of the Rana Plaza building in the Savar area of Dhaka.

It is believed the life-saving bottles of water reached her after rescue workers were told to push them down every cavity they stumbled across in the hope those trapped underneath would receive them.

Miss Begum, who lives alone in a rented room in Savar, said that when the eight-

storey building collapsed, she was on the third floor.

She managed to run down to the second floor but became trapped in a cavity, which was big enough for her to move about in and there was enough air to breathe. However, her hair had become stuck under a boulder, so she had to pull off strands to set herself free.

Recovering at the Combined Military Hospital in Savar, Miss Begum said: 'No one heard me. It was so frightening, I never dreamed I'd see daylight again.'

The seamstress now has trouble sleeping at night and occasionally grips a nurse's hand in apparent panic attacks.

Colonel Azizur Rahman, a military doctor at the hospital, said: 'We don't want those memories to haunt her now, so we

are not allowing anybody to ask her anything.'

It has emerged that Miss Begum's family learned she was alive after watching the rescue on television.

Her mother Zobeida Begum, who is in her sixties, said: 'I could not believe it when I saw her alive in the hospital.'

Her sister Asma said: 'We got her back when we had just lost all hope of finding her alive.'

Doctors said last night that Miss Begum is suffering from dehydration but will make a full recovery.

The death toll in the worst industrial accident in the country's history has reached 1,100 and the government faces criticism for not imposing better checks on buildings run by the garments industry.

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