**Discussion ideas for …**

**Ella on the Outside by Cath Howe**

* How do you think Ella felt being the new girl at school?
* The writer includes letters and texts within this story as extensions of the story - almost small mini stories within the story. Discuss why you think the writer did this and what it brings to your understanding of the plot as a reader. Think about why we only see a reply from Ella’s dad at the end of the book and why we stop seeing texts to and from Grace.
* Lydia has a very strong influence on the group of girls. Discuss how the individuals of the group act when they are around Lydia and away from her. Why do you think Lydia acts the way she does in this story and why do the girls act differently around Lydia?
* Ella has choices to make throughout this story. Discuss these choices and why you think she made them. You could use what happens in chapter 17 as a turning point in the story and why Ella reassesses some of the choices she has made.
* Ella’s dad is in prison for stealing money and her mum works long hours, for the family and her own career. While Molly’s dad is dead and her mum is unwell, Molly tries to keep things going herself and look after her mum. What impact do you think these family situations have on Molly and Ella and how do they overcome these difficult situations?