

Online Safety 4 Schools

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Top 10 Tips for Safeguarding Children in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

1. Build AI Literacy Across the School Community

- Ensure staff, students, governors, and parents understand what AI is and how children are using it.
- Teach the benefits, limitations, and risks of AI tools.
- Include AI awareness within digital literacy and online safety programmes.

2. Update Safeguarding Policies to Include AI

- Review existing safeguarding, online safety, behaviour, and acceptable use policies.
- Include guidance on generative AI, AI chatbots, deepfakes, and AI-generated content.
- Clearly define expectations for safe and responsible AI use.

3. Teach Critical Thinking and Verification Skills

- Encourage children to question AI-generated information rather than automatically trusting it.
- Teach students to fact-check information using reliable sources.
- Help them recognise that AI can produce inaccurate, biased, or fabricated content.

4. Protect Children's Privacy and Personal Data

- Teach children never to share personal, sensitive, or identifying information with AI tools.
- Check the privacy settings and data collection practices of AI platforms used in education.
- Ensure compliance with relevant data protection requirements.

5. Monitor the Use of AI Companions and Chatbots

- Be aware that some children may form emotional attachments to AI chatbots.
- Encourage healthy discussions about the difference between AI interactions and human relationships.
- Look out for signs that a child is becoming overly dependent on AI for emotional support.

6. Address AI-Enabled Bullying and Harmful Content

- Educate students about AI-generated bullying, impersonation, misinformation, and manipulated images or videos.

- Ensure reporting mechanisms cover AI-related incidents.
- Respond promptly to concerns involving AI-created harmful content.

7. Understand the Risks of Deepfakes and Synthetic Media

- Teach children how images, audio, and videos can be artificially generated or manipulated.
- Help students identify signs of misleading or deceptive content.
- Discuss the potential impact of deepfakes on reputation, wellbeing, and trust.

8. Maintain Human Oversight

- Avoid relying solely on AI tools when making decisions affecting children's welfare, behaviour, or educational support.
- Ensure professional judgement remains central to safeguarding practice.
- Encourage staff to verify AI-generated recommendations before acting on them.

9. Create a Culture of Open Communication

- Encourage children to talk about the AI tools they are using.
- Foster a non-judgemental environment where concerns can be raised safely.
- Involve parents and carers in conversations about AI use at home and at school.

10. Stay Informed and Continuously Review Practice

- AI technologies are evolving rapidly.
- Provide regular staff training and updates.
- Review safeguarding procedures periodically to ensure they remain relevant to emerging technologies and risks.
- Monitor guidance from education, child protection, and online safety organisations.

Key Safeguarding Principle

The focus should not be on restricting AI entirely, but on helping children use it safely, critically, responsibly, and with appropriate adult guidance. AI presents significant opportunities for learning and inclusion, but safeguarding approaches must evolve to address new risks around privacy, misinformation, exploitation, emotional dependency, and digital wellbeing.

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