AI and Your Child

A simple guide for parents and carers

AI can be creative, useful and fun. Like any online tool, it also comes with risks. The aim is not to frighten children, but to help them use technology safely, confidently and responsibly.

What is AI?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is technology that can solve problems, make decisions or create new content. Many families already use AI without realising it - for example, in shopping suggestions, social media feeds and route-planning apps.

Generative AI can create text, pictures or videos from instructions typed by a user. Examples include chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini, writing tools such as Grammarly, and image-generation tools.

Text	Images	Video
Chatbots can answer questions and create writing.	AI tools can create or change pictures.	AI can create or alter realistic-looking video.

What should parents and carers be aware of?

Most children will use AI positively, but it is important to understand some of the ways it can be misused online.

- **Scams and fake messages** - AI can make emails and messages look very convincing. Children should never share passwords, banking details or personal information.
- **Fake or altered images** - AI can create realistic images or videos of real people. These may be used to embarrass, bully or upset someone.
- **Inappropriate or sexualised content** - some tools can create or alter sexual images, including illegal images involving children. Children should never be asked to create, send or share intimate images.
- **Fake profiles and online grooming** - people may use AI-generated pictures or messages to pretend to be someone else and gain a child's trust.
- **False information** - AI can produce convincing information, photographs or videos that are inaccurate or completely made up.
- **AI chatbots and companions** - some tools are designed to feel like a friend or companion. Children may become emotionally attached, and the advice given by AI is not always safe or appropriate.

Signs that something may be wrong

A change in behaviour does not always mean there is an online problem, but it can be a useful prompt for a calm conversation. You might notice your child:

- Spending much more - or much less - time online.
- Staying up late using a device or seeming unusually tired.
- Receiving lots of messages or notifications.
- Becoming unusually upset, angry or withdrawn after going online.
- Being more secretive about their phone, tablet or computer use.

What can we do at home?

- **Talk regularly about AI** - ask what your child uses, what they enjoy and what they think the risks might be.
- **Be curious rather than alarmed** - children are more likely to talk when they know they will be listened to calmly.
- **Remind them to protect personal information** - passwords, addresses, school details and private images should not be shared with people they do not know.
- **Encourage them to check information** - AI can make mistakes, so important facts should be checked with a trusted adult or reliable source.
- **Use parental controls where appropriate** - many apps, devices and services include family safety settings.
- **Tell them what to do if something worries them** - stop, save the evidence if safe to do so, block/report the account or content, and tell a trusted adult.

If your child tells you something worrying

Stay calm, listen and reassure them that telling you was the right thing to do. Avoid blaming or punishing them for coming to you. If you are concerned about your child's safety, contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or another appropriate safeguarding service.

Three useful questions to ask your child

- What AI tools have you seen or used?
- How can you tell if something made by AI is true?
- What would you do if an AI tool or someone online made you feel uncomfortable?

Working together helps children enjoy the benefits of technology while learning how to stay safe online.

Adapted into parent-friendly language from "AI risks: parent/carer factsheet", The Key Safeguarding, June 2026.