

AI risks: parent/carer factsheet

What is AI?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the use of computer systems to solve problems and make decisions. It's already a part of everyday life – for example, AI is used to give you personalised suggestions on social media, shopping sites or route-planning apps.

Generative AI takes a written prompt and runs it through an algorithm to generate new, 'natural'-seeming content. Tools include:

- Chatbots such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Grammarly, which generate text
- Text-to-image programs like DALL-E and Midjourney, which create images
- Text-to-video programs, which create videos

AI technology is developing rapidly, and these tools will only improve over time. For example, they'll be able to create more convincing images or videos.

Many AI tools are free to access, and some can be used to generate inappropriate content.

What are the safeguarding risks to my child?

AI might be involved in:

- **Hacking and scams** – text-generation tools can write convincing emails and text messages to trick children into giving people access to their social media or banking accounts
- **AI-generated child sexual abuse images** – some text-to-image tools or image-altering apps (often called 'nudifying' apps) could be used to create sexually explicit pictures of children – this might be for sexual gratification or as a means of bullying another pupil
- **'Deepfake' pornography** – putting a real person's face into pornographic videos for sexual gratification or to humiliate the person being put in the images. AI technology is used to alter the person's facial expressions to make the video look more convincing
- **'Catfishing' and 'sextortion'** – criminals can use AI-generated profile pictures to appear younger than they are to befriend and groom children and young people, and then ask for information and/or images from them (e.g. nude or semi-nude photos). They can then use this to extort the child or young person into giving them money
- **Fake news and misinformation** – text-to-image tools can be used to create convincing fake photos of world events, which could be used to promote certain beliefs (including hateful ones)
- **AI chatbot relationships** – some AI tools allow children to chat and build a relationship with a fake person. These relationships can become very intense, and the AI may make dangerous or inappropriate suggestions

Signs to look out for

If your child is facing a safeguarding issue online, they might:

- Spend more time online, or more time offline
- Be up late online, or complain of being tired because they were online all night
- Receive a lot of messages and notifications on their phone
- Have stronger emotional responses or outbursts when they are online – they may get unusually angry, upset or distant after checking their phone or using their computer/tablet
- Be secretive about their use of the internet or a device – they may refuse to show you their phone or device, or refuse to tell you what they get up to online

What can we do at home?

We talk about the risks of AI in school, but this is always more effective if the conversations happen at home, too.

You can help keep your child safe by:

- **Talking about AI** – you can talk about both what it's good for, and where it can be more dangerous
- **Being aware of what they're doing online** – most social media apps have ways for parents/carers to monitor their child's activity
- **Listening to them** if they tell you anything that's worrying them – don't blame them for anything that's happened

Sources

This factsheet was produced by [The Key Safeguarding: thekeysupport.com/safeguarding](https://thekeysupport.com/safeguarding)

- With thanks to education expert Aaron King for his help with this content
- [What are AI chatbots and companions?](https://internetmatters.org/what-are-ai-chatbots-and-companions/), Internet Matters