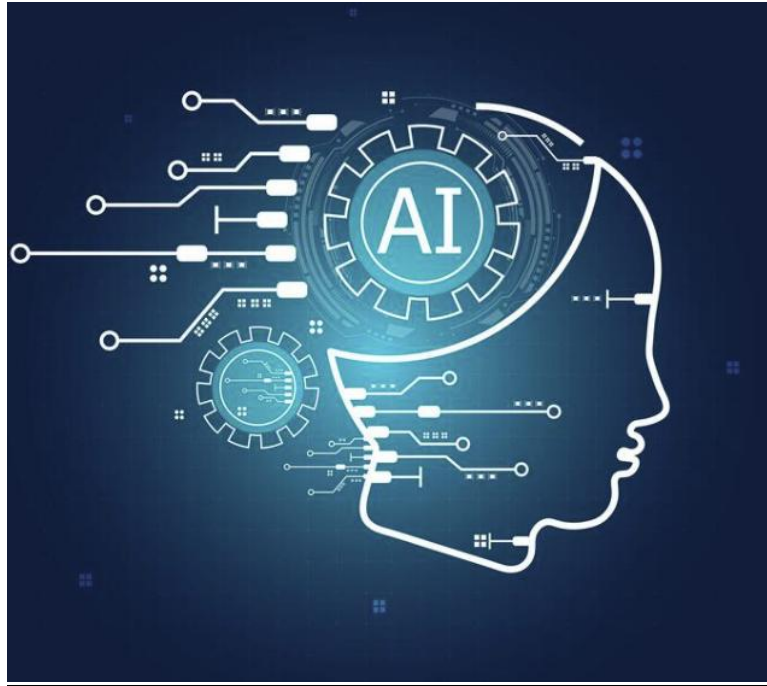




Artificial Intelligence: Helping Our Children Use AI Safely

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is becoming a normal part of everyday life.

Our students are already coming across AI through apps, websites, search engines, social media, games and, increasingly, their school work.

This week, students had an assembly looking at how AI works, some of the opportunities it brings, and some of the risks they need to be aware of.

Our message to students was simple: **AI is not something to be afraid of, but it is something we need to learn how to use properly.**

AI can get things wrong

One of the biggest messages from the assembly was that AI can sound very confident, even when it is completely wrong.

AI can:

- make up facts
- give incorrect answers
- invent websites and sources
- give poor or misleading advice

This is particularly important when students are using AI to support their school work.

We want students to use AI to help them think, learn and understand, rather than simply copying whatever it tells them.

The key message is:

If something is important, check it.

Fake photos, videos and voices

AI can now create incredibly realistic fake images, videos and even voices. These are often called **deepfakes**.

Some are harmless and made for fun. However, the same technology can also be used to:

- embarrass or bully somebody
- pretend to be another person
- spread false information
- create fake photographs or videos
- scam people

Students were reminded that something being created using AI does **not** mean normal rules about behaviour, bullying and the law suddenly disappear.

Creating or sharing harmful fake content about another person can have very serious consequences.

If a student ever sees a fake image, video or recording involving themselves or somebody they know, they should not share it and should tell a trusted adult.

AI scams are becoming more convincing

We also spoke to students about the way AI is being used by scammers.

For example, AI can now copy somebody's voice from a recording.

Imagine receiving a phone call or voice message that sounds exactly like a family member saying:

“I need some money urgently.”

It might not actually be them.

We gave students three simple words to remember:

STOP – THINK – CHECK

Before clicking a link, sending money, giving somebody information or responding to an unusual message:

Stop. Think about what you have received. Check with somebody you trust.

AI chatbots are not real people

Some AI chatbots are deliberately designed to feel like you are talking to another person.

They can be entertaining and the conversation can feel surprisingly realistic.

However, we reminded students that:

AI is not a real person.

A chatbot does not know them in the same way that a friend, parent, teacher or trusted adult does.

Students should be particularly careful about sharing personal information with AI.

They should never give an AI chatbot:

- passwords
- their home address
- bank details
- private photographs
- phone numbers
- sensitive personal information

A good rule is:

If you would not want the information posted publicly, think very carefully before typing it into an AI tool.

How old do children need to be to use AI?

Different AI services have different age limits.

Some of the most commonly used services include:

- **ChatGPT** – users must be at least **13**. Young people aged 13–17 require permission from a parent or carer.
- **Microsoft Copilot** – generally **13+**, although age requirements can vary depending on the account and country.
- **Google Gemini** – access depends on the type of Google account being used. Some younger children can access Gemini through a supervised account controlled by a parent or carer.
- **Dola** – users must be at least 13. Young people under 18 should have permission from a parent or carer
- **Character.AI** – users in Europe must be at least **16**.

Age restrictions and safety features can change, so we would always recommend that parents check the rules for any AI app or website their child is using.

It is also worth asking your child **which AI tools they are actually using**. You may be surprised!

What can parents and carers do?

The good news is that you do not need to be an AI expert.

Probably the most useful thing you can do is talk to your child about how they are using it.

Try asking:

- “What AI apps or websites do you use?”
- “What do you normally use AI for?”
- “How do you know whether an AI answer is actually correct?”
- “Would you know if a photograph or video was fake?”
- “What would you do if somebody sent you a fake picture of yourself?”
- “What information should you never give to an AI chatbot?”

These conversations do not need to be complicated.

Simply knowing what your child is using and keeping the conversation open can make a big difference.

Most importantly, if something online worries them, makes them uncomfortable or does not seem right, encourage them to tell an adult rather than dealing with it themselves.

Where can I get more advice?

There is lots of very good support available for parents and carers.

NSPCC – Online Safety

The NSPCC provides straightforward advice for parents about AI, social media, online bullying, inappropriate content and keeping children safe online.

www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Internet Matters

Internet Matters has excellent parent guides covering popular apps, games, AI, social media, privacy settings and parental controls.

It is particularly useful if you want to understand what an app does and what risks to look out for.

www.internetmatters.org

CEOP Education

CEOP provides advice for parents, carers and young people about online relationships, inappropriate contact and serious online safety concerns.

www.ceopeducation.co.uk

Childline

Childline offers free and confidential support to children and young people.

Students can call: **0800 1111** or visit: www.childline.org.uk

UK Safer Internet Centre

The UK Safer Internet Centre provides information about online safety, harmful online content and where concerns can be reported.

www.saferinternet.org.uk

If you are concerned about your child

If something involving AI or online behaviour is affecting your child at school, please contact us.

Students can speak to their Tutor, Head of Year, PSM or another trusted member of staff.

Parents and carers can also contact the school if they have concerns.