

**BPS**

BALLIOL PRIMARY SCHOOL

E-SAFETY NEWSLETTER

February 2025

For more tips and information, please visit our school page: <https://www.balliolschool.co.uk/e-safety/>
Sign up here for a free weekly parent e-safety newsletter: <https://www.internetmatters.org/about-us/newsletters/>

E-safety Day

What is Safer Internet Day?

Established by the UK Safer Internet Centre, Safer Internet Day is celebrated around the world, this year on Tuesday 11th February 2025. The global slogan is “**Too good to be true? Protecting yourself and others from scams online**”. The internet is an amazing place but like everything in life, our children need educating about how to use it, how to stay safe, how to behave and who they can talk to if they have a problem when they are online.

Ideas to explore at home

Official Safer Internet Day Resources:

Use these resources to start a conversation with your child about online safety as well as complete activities together and watch videos exploring this year’s theme: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2025/tips-for-parents-and-carers>

Learn more about Fake News:

Read this article from Internet Matters <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/talking-to-your-kids-about-fake-news/> Then take the quiz together to see if you can find the fake online. <https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/fake-news-and-misinformation-advice-hub/find-the-fake/>

Digital Family Pledge:

Create a Digital Family Pledge with Vodafone. It will help you and your family set some rules for being online. <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/newscentre/smart-living/digital-family-pledge/>

Read a book:

‘On the internet’ has been written for your child to read, with your help when needed. It is a book for children aged 4+. <https://www.childnet.com/resources/a-learning-to-read-book/>

Setting up restrictions

Do you have parental controls set up?

Many children have access to technology and the internet through computers, tablets, games consoles, apps and many more things. Parental controls help you to stay in control of what your child can see and do online. Although they can differ from website to app to computer, this website has some great and very easy to follow guides to help you get started:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

These websites have some very useful information to help you and your children stay safe when using amazon prime video and Netflix

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/amazon-primeamazon-video>

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/netflix-everything-you-need-know-about-streaming-service>

You can also use this website to check how old your child needs to be if you are unsure:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/how-old-does-your-child-have-be>

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/>

YouTube for Kids

Lots of Balliol children enjoy watching videos on YouTube. Unfortunately, there are so many videos that are inappropriate for them to watch. Even if you as the parent or carer okays the first video, what about the ones that automatically play after the first video ends? Are they just as safe as the first? The answer is usually no not always.

So what can you do? Why not use YouTube Kids instead!

What is YouTube Kids?

YouTube Kids was created to give children a more contained environment that makes it simpler and more fun for them to explore on their own, and easier for parents and caregivers to guide their journey as they discover new and exciting interests along the way.

The YouTube Kids app has a set of parental controls for you to customise your child's individual experience. You can decide what content to make available for them to watch, set a timer to control screen time, block videos or channels, and more. Outside of our app, there are resources to help you talk openly with your child, so you can work with them to make smart decisions online and to develop healthy digital habits.

Here are some of the great YouTube for Kids features:

- Create individual profiles as unique as your children.
- Approve what your children can watch.
- Approve entire collections from our trusted partners.
- Select content levels based on your child's age
- Limit screen time.
- One easy way to block videos.
- Keep up with what they watch.

Whilst using YouTube Kids is certainly safer than allowing your children free reign on the regular version of the platform, it is not completely risk free. The content that is available through YouTube Kids is selected from the wider YouTube universe by an automated system. The best advice is always to be in the same room as your children when they are watching videos so that you can carefully monitor.

For more information, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/kids/>

What if I don't want to use YouTube kids?

Can I make YouTube any safer for my children to use?

YouTube is intended for users over the age of 13 (however, children of all ages may use the Service and YouTube Kids if enabled by a parent/legal guardian). If your child is under the age of 13 then your child should use either YouTube Kids as advised above or use a Supervised Account.

A Supervised account is a parent-managed version of YouTube. You can select one of the following options, again depending on your child's age and your requirements:

- Explore - Generally for viewers aged 9+.
- Explore more - Generally for viewers aged 13+
- Most of YouTube - This setting includes almost everything on YouTube except for videos marked as 18+ and other videos that may not be appropriate for viewers using supervised experiences.

Google have created a table to show the differences between YouTube Kids and a Supervised account to help in your decision: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10315420>

WhatsApp and age appropriateness

WhatsApp: group chats

WhatsApp is a free messaging app that allows you to send messages and videos. You must be at least 16 years old to register for and use WhatsApp.

Group chats

One of the main features is that it has a Group chat function that are set up by one person (who is the admin). Everybody in the group, even if they're not one of your child's phone contacts, will be able to see all messages within that group. If your child is added to a group with someone that they have previously blocked, that person can still see their messages and send them messages within the group. You can leave a group chat at any point so talk to your child and encourage them to leave any chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Change Group Privacy settings

In settings, you can change who can add your child to groups, for example, you can change the settings to 'my contacts', which means that only those in your child's contacts can add them to a group.

Online Bullying

WhatsApp has been used in instances of online bullying, for example sending nasty messages or sharing images of other children without their permission to embarrass them. It's important to have regular chats with your child about their online life and that they understand that they must talk to you or another trusted adult if they are being bullied. This is a helpful article from BullyingUK which talks about what to do if you are being bullied online:

<https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-to-do-if-you-re-being-bullied-on-a-social-network/>

Blocking/Reporting

If your child is using WhatsApp, then show them how to block and report a contact. You can find out how here: <https://faq.whatsapp.com/android/security-and-privacy/how-to-block-and-unblock-a-contact>

Be Kind

How we behave online should be the same as how we behave face to face. This YouTube video from Dr Linda Papadopoulos tells us how we can encourage our children to be kind online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BqKi3J7g6Q>

Further information = <https://www.whatsapp.com/safety/>

The use of chat in games

Is your child playing games online?

Children can communicate online through lots of different apps, social media and games (Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, FIFA, Fortnite for example), so it's important to know what your child is doing online and who they communicate with so you can talk about the potential risks together. Some games include communication between players, this could be via the in-game text chat, direct messages or talking through headphones. Some games do offer the ability to switch communication off or restrict bad language so make sure settings appropriate to your child are set up for each of the games they play.

Chatting to strangers

When playing online, your child might be playing games with people they don't know. It can be difficult to moderate online chat so ensure your child knows how to block and report other players that make them feel uncomfortable and that they know to talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns.

Be kind

It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they wouldn't if they were face to face with each other. Talk to your child about how they are speaking to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect, like they would if they were face-to-face. Ensure that your child understands that if they receive unkind messages (or sees something that worries them) then they should not reply or engage in conversation with the person, but they should instead tell a trusted adult.

Further information

These additional links will provide you with further guidance and support regarding this topic:

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/news/talking-to-people-online-when-should-i-be-worried/>

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/Need-advice/online-gaming/

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) seems to have been the hot topic of conversation for some time now and has divided opinion on whether it's the greatest development of our time or something to be controlled and treated with suspicion. This article focuses on generative AI and how, as parents, we can help children to navigate their way through the new tools on offer so that they avoid the pitfalls and maximise the many benefits this new technology has to offer young people today.

What Is Generative AI?

Generative AI is a tool that can create text, images or even videos based on the input it receives.

Some types of generative AI include:

- Large language models that can be used to create essays, poems and reports, based on specific instructions.
- Chatbots and virtual assistants that can provide human-like conversations and online assistance.
- Image generators that create art work or photographic images based on a set of instructions.
- Video synthesis, where generative AI creates animations and video content.
- Music composition models that generate new tunes and songs.
- Speech creation, where text-to-speech models can create a human-like voice and make voice synthesisers more realistic.
- Modelling software that can create 3D models or simulate real-life scenarios to support scientific investigation and advances in health care.

What Are the Benefits of Generative AI?

Generative AI has already been put to good use throughout the world. Doctors, scientists, artists, authors, teachers and many other professions are already seeing the benefits that AI can bring to society. Here are just some of the many ways that generative AI is being harnessed to improve our lives:

- Automation of repetitive tasks that may be laborious, costly or time-consuming.
- Improvements in communication, as generative AI can quickly and accurately translate texts into different languages or adapt them to the needs of individuals.
- Improved healthcare, where AI can speed up new discoveries and test drugs and processes efficiently and safely.
- Personalised content that makes it easier for us to find what we want, when we want it.
- Supporting individuals and organisations to be more creative, innovative and able to solve problems.
- Improved accessibility through a range of new assistive technologies.
- Maximised security through facial recognition and biometric data and monitoring cyber threats.
- Creation of immersive games and entertainments, where special effects and computer generated graphics make storytelling evermore realistic and exciting.

What's the Down Side of Generative AI?

As with any new technology, it is often how the humans behind the machine choose to behave that has an impact on how that new technology will be used. In the wrong hands, generative AI can be used maliciously and destructively.

- It can be used to create fake news, disinformation and deepfakes. These can be harmful to the individuals involved but can also impact negatively when spread throughout societies.
- AI can be employed by hackers to test and break cybersecurity systems, stealing data and money and disrupting businesses and organisations.
- There are also worries about the ethical nature of generative AI. Will the work created by artists, musicians, poets and authors be respected and valued? In light of this new technology, discussions are taking place about plagiarism and copyright.
- What is the impact on education if students use generative AI within essays and presentations? Will there be a 'dumbing down' of children if they rely on generative AI instead of finding and critically evaluating information for themselves?
- Some people worry that AI will take jobs away from humans. Will AI result in increased anxiety about job security and a rise in unemployment?

The sudden proliferation of AI means that we don't have all the answers. Only time will tell how AI develops and impacts on our society.

What's can I do as a Parent or Carer?

With so much uncertainty, it can be hard to know, as a parent, whether you should be encouraging your child to interact with AI and embrace it or whether you should be protecting them from something that may have a negative impact upon their learning and development.

The following top tips will hopefully give you some good starting points for discussing generative AI with your children.

Explain and Educate

Generative AI, as with many new technologies, is here to stay and the likelihood is that your child will be using it. Spend time talking about generative AI tools with them and making sure that they understand the technology and know about the positives and negatives.

Share and Explore

Investigate generative AI with your child so that both of you know what it can do. Try out some fun tasks together. Use a large language model tool to write a funny story based on five random words. Or why not ask the model to write a poem or a song based on an unusual topic, such as chips or flying cats? Explore image creators and create some original artwork. Maybe you could ask the model to make a photograph of a fish on a bicycle or a penguin wearing a hat?

Being Fair

Talk to your child about plagiarism. Explain that the stories, poems, music and art work they see and hear online take a lot of work and effort to produce and that it is important to always reference work if you use someone else's. It is also important that children learn to check whether or not the original creator gives permission for their work to be used. Remind children that they could get into trouble if they claim that a piece of work is theirs when it isn't.

Supervision

Set ground rules for using AI, just as you would with any other online technology. Your child should know that they can only use generative AI when a trusted adult is around. It's also a good idea to check whatever content they produce before they share it with others.

Stay Informed

Look out for other information that can keep your knowledge up to date so that you are able to answer at least some of your child's questions about AI. Read articles in the news or visit trusted websites where you know you will find balanced and well-researched articles about AI. Ask your child's teacher about whether they use AI in the classroom.

Avoid Misuse

Children come into contact with misuse of generative AI frequently these days. They may see deepfake photos and videos, where a person or animal has been made to look like they are doing or saying something even though that event never took place in real life. Some of these deepfakes are harmless fun and can be enjoyed but your child needs to know that others can be hurtful and harmful. Ask your child what they would feel like if it happened to them. Your child should have clear boundaries about what they can produce using generative AI. Remind them to have fun but think about the effect of their actions on others.

Privacy and Protection

AI tools can collect personal data without users even realising its happening. As with any online tool, it is really important that you talk about online safety with your child. Remind them about the types of personal information that should always be private. This includes their name, address, date of birth, school, phone number, email address and any passwords. Children should know that if they are worried about anything they are asked for or anything they see online, they should stop and tell a trusted adult straight away.

Computers Aren't Perfect

Remind your child that although computers can do some jobs quicker and more efficiently than humans and that they can be used to solve complex problems, computers aren't always right. Teach your child to question what they are told by generative AI and to double-check facts using other sources of information. Although, in this digital age, we all need to exercise a degree of caution, there is plenty of scope for children, and adults, to make use of generative AI in a safe way. Have fun exploring this new technology with your children, sharing viewpoints and discussing ideas.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/parents-guide-top-tips-for-navigating-generative-ai-safely-with-kids>

NSPCC

It may be that you, or your child, come across something upsetting or concerning online. It is important that you feel confident about what to do if you do see something inappropriate online, or if your child tells you they've seen something.

If you're worried about something a child or young person may have experienced online, you can contact the NSPCC Helpline for free support and advice.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/nspcc-helpline/>

If your child needs more support, they can contact Childline.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>

Further information <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-reporting/>

Being unkind online

It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they wouldn't if they were face to face with each other. Talk to your child about how they speak to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect and kindness, like they would if they were face-to-face. How they act online should be how they behave on the school playground when they are following school rules. Here are some examples of what being unkind looks like online:

- Sending nasty or hurtful messages
- Leaving unkind comments
- Sharing photographs of somebody else without their permission
- Excluding somebody on purpose
- Impersonating somebody with a fake account
- Telling/sharing lies

The above might happen whilst your child is gaming online or whilst using social media or messaging apps e.g. WhatsApp.

Top Internet Manners

Internet Matters have produced a list of 'manners' that we all should follow to create a safer and kinder online world: <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/top-internet-manners/>

What should I do if my child is being bullied online?

Ensure that your child understands that if they receive unkind messages or see something that worries them, they should not reply or engage in conversation with the perpetrator. Instead, they should tell a trusted adult. You can use the tools within an app to report any offensive or hurtful content as well as block people so they cannot contact you again in the future.

Further information <https://www.esafety.gov.au/kids/I-want-help-with/how-do-i-know-if-im-being-mean-online>