

AI AND SOCIAL MEDIA: WHAT PARENTS AND CARERS NEED TO KNOW



THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PUT TOGETHER BY THE HEAD OF DIGITAL LEARNING, EDUCATION AND INNOVATION FOR THE “PORTSMOUTH: THE DIGITAL CITY” PROJECT TO SUPPORT PARENTS AND CARERS ACROSS THE CITY FOLLOWING RECENT UPDATES TO SOCIAL MEDIA APPS AND AN INCREASED ACCESS TO AI TOOLS.

UNDERSTANDING AI IN SOCIAL MEDIA

AI is becoming a permanent feature in social media apps used by children and young people. In April 2023, Snapchat introduced "My AI", an AI chatbot integrated into the app. Now, in March 2025, Meta AI has been added to WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, meaning that many children may now interact with AI daily, often without parental consent or oversight.

Unlike traditional search engines, AI chatbots generate responses that may not always be accurate or appropriate. While AI can offer educational and creative benefits, it's essential for parents and carers to understand:

Age restrictions and parental consent laws (children under 13 require parental consent for data processing).

Privacy concerns—AI interactions can influence children's digital footprints.

The Online Safety Act (OSA) applies to platforms that facilitate user-generated content, which may include generative AI tools.

This guidance, aligned with [Education for a Connected World](#) and [Project Evolve](#) (our E Safety Curriculum), helps parents and carers navigate these challenges with age-appropriate advice.

EARLY YEARS & INFANTS (AGES 3-7)



Key Message:

Young children should have supervised access to digital devices, with clear boundaries.

AI & Young Children:

AI tools may appear in children's apps, voice assistants, and educational platforms. While useful, they should not replace human interaction.



What Parents Can Do:

- Use Parental Controls ([NSPCC Guide](#)) to restrict AI interactions.
- Be aware that AI in social media is not designed for young children.
- Encourage offline play and safe, guided use of technology.

EARLY YEARS & INFANTS (AGES 3-7)



Questions to ask your child:

- Why does the internet have lots of information?
- Who puts it there?
- Why do people put information on the internet?
- Is 'information' always true?
- What can we do if we see something online that makes us upset?

- What is a smart speaker?
- Have you used a smart speaker? Or maybe you've used a 'digital assistant' on a tablet, smartphone or computer (where you talk rather than type or swipe)?
- Does a smart speaker or digital assistant know everything? Is there any question it can't answer? Is it always right?
- How does a smart speaker answer questions? Is it a real person?
- Are there some questions that are better to ask a grownup?

JUNIORS (AGES 7-11)



Key Message:

Children begin to explore digital platforms but need ongoing support and supervision.

AI & Social Media

AI & Social Media: Many children in this age group use social media despite age restrictions (WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook: 13+). AI features like Meta AI could expose them to misleading content or privacy risks.



What Parents Can Do:

- Discuss why social media and AI tools have age limits ([Safer Internet Guide](#)).
- Talk about how AI generates responses and why it may not always be reliable.
- Teach children to question digital content (e.g., “Who created this? Is it true?”).
- Use AI safety settings and parental controls ([Internet Matters AI Guide](#)).

JUNIORS (AGES 7-11)



Questions to ask your child:

AI & Bots

- What is a 'bot'?
- What are bots used for?
- Can bots be helpful?
- How do you know if you're talking to a bot? Does it matter if you know?

Misinformation & Disinformation

- What is misinformation?
- What is disinformation (false information intended to be harmful)?
- Is a hoax misinformation or disinformation?
- Why do people create false or misleading information online?
- Why do people share misinformation and disinformation?
- Who creates the information we see online?
- Can we think of any examples of inaccurate or untrue information being shared online?
- If lots of people share inaccurate or untrue information, what could happen?
- How can we help prevent the spread of false information?

Evaluating Online Information

- How do you know if something you see online is genuine?
- What things would you look for to check if something is reliable?
- How would you know if a piece of evidence is trustworthy?
- What is 'critical thinking'?
- How can we use critical thinking skills?
- What is the difference between facts, opinions, and beliefs?

SECONDARY (AGES 11-18)



Key Message:

Teens should be empowered to think critically about AI and online safety.

AI & Social Media

Many teenagers now interact with AI-driven chatbots, content recommendations, and deepfake technologies. AI can influence their opinions, behaviours, and privacy.



What Parents Can Do:

- Have open conversations about AI in social media ([NSPCC AI Safety Tips](#)).
- Teach them about personal data and AI algorithms—how AI learns from their interactions.
- Encourage them to question AI-generated content (e.g., deepfakes, misinformation).
- Help them understand the Online Safety Act (OSA) and their rights online.
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SECONDARY (AGES 11-18)



Questions to ask your child:

Manipulation of Images & Online Content

- What is meant by the phrases 'a picture tells a thousand words' and 'the camera never lies'?
- How easy is it to manipulate online images? What impact could this have on someone's reputation?
- What is the purpose of filtering a selfie? Does it matter if someone looks completely different online?

Search Engines, Algorithms & Personalisation

- Why do search results appear in a certain order?
- Is this ranking purely commercial, or are there other factors?
- Why doesn't everyone get the same search results?
- Do search engines actually search the entire web?
- How could our personal data influence the adverts we see?

Context & Misinformation

- What is context, and what is false context?
- Why might someone misrepresent accurate information (disinform)?
- If we share misleading content, what impact does it have...
 - On others?
 - On us?
- Can you give an example of something that has been shared in a false context?
- How could we check if something we see online is accurate?

SECONDARY (AGES 11-18)



Bots & Their Influence

- What is a bot, and what are its characteristics?
- Can bots be helpful or harmful? How might they be damaging?
- How can a bot influence opinions, trends, or elections?
- Do social media companies do enough to reduce the impact of bots?
- Should bot accounts be allowed on social media?
- Why might real people re-share content from bots?

Deepfakes & AI-Generated Content

- What is a deepfake, and how are they created?
- Who might create a deepfake, and what are their motivations?
- What risks do deepfakes pose...
 - To an average internet user?
 - To high-profile individuals?
 - To communities and society?
 - To democracy and political processes?
- What advice would you give to someone worried about deepfakes?
- How can someone identify deepfakes?
- What can be done to limit their impact?

SECONDARY (AGES 11-18)



Fake News & Online Deception

- What do we think of when we hear the term 'Fake News'?
- Is Fake News something new?
- Why is Fake News created, and is it always deliberate?
- Will everyone agree on whether something is Fake News?
- What factors influence our perception of Fake News?
- Are there different types of Fake News?
- Who is more susceptible to Fake News, and why?

Fake & Imitation Websites

- Why are fake websites created? What is to be gained?
- How could users be misled into thinking a fake site is real?
- How might we tell the difference between a genuine news website and a spoofed site?
- What do we understand by 'website spoofing'?
- Are all fake websites designed to deceive, or are some just satirical?
- Would everyone recognise satire, or might some users believe it's true?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Children and young people increasingly interact with AI without realising it. As AI becomes embedded in social media, gaming, and everyday apps, it's crucial for parents and carers to:

Understand the risks and benefits of AI.

Use parental controls and discuss AI with their children.

Stay informed about the latest AI developments in online platforms.

For more information, visit:

- [!\[\]\(79de0df6c6ddd2d4eb74f1cc5f48ec50_img.jpg\) Safer Internet Social Media Guide](#)
- [!\[\]\(d4c9768318b38eff1042b07478e20b4c_img.jpg\) NSPCC Online Safety & Parental Controls](#)
- [!\[\]\(27d314856359a9d7feca17161bc1f4a4_img.jpg\) Internet Matters AI Parent Guide](#)
- [!\[\]\(d355663486c698e3972a8b93ac8b2102_img.jpg\) NSPCC AI Safety Tips](#)

AI WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

We still have spaces in our AI webinars for parents and carers.

Follow the links below to find out more and register using the form on the next page.

For more information, please email Gemma info@portsmouththedigitalcity.co.uk



SESSION DETAILS

Session 1: Introduction to AI - What Parents Need to Know

1 Get to grips with the basics of artificial intelligence. Learn what AI is, how it's shaping the world around us, and how your child may already be using it in their everyday life.

Thurs 01.05.2025
17:00 to 18:00

Session 2: Using AI to Support Your Child in English

2 Explore AI tools that can help with reading, writing, and language development. From grammar checkers to creative writing assistants, discover ways to boost your child's confidence and skills in English.

Mon 12.05.2025
17:00 to 18:00

Session 3: Using AI to Support Your Child in Maths

3 Maths doesn't have to be a struggle! Learn how AI apps and platforms can make learning maths more engaging, personalised, and effective for children at all levels.

Thurs 22.05.2025
17:00 to 18:00

PORTSMOUTH EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP The Digital City Project Technology for children, technology for adults, technology for all



AI WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

SIGN UP TODAY



The Digital
City Project

Technology for children, technology for adults, technology for all

Portsmouth: The Digital City "AI Made Simple: Supporting Your Family in the Digital Age"

Please use this form to register your interest for our parent and carer webinar series "AI Made Simple: Supporting Your Family in the Digital Age"

Discover how artificial intelligence can transform learning and everyday life for you and your child by joining our FREE webinar series, running in the summer term as part of the "Portsmouth: The Digital City" project. Within these sessions, you will learn how to harness AI safely, effectively, and creatively at home, whilst also gaining top tips and nuggets of wisdom to empower your family in the digital age. Each session is tailored to provide practical advice, easy-to-use tools, and insights into how AI can support education, inclusion, and everyday tasks for parents, carers, and children alike. Don't miss this exciting opportunity to stay ahead in the digital world and help your family thrive! Sign up today!

Other Info: This event is not suitable for children

This form will close on Monday 31st March 2025.

If you have any questions, please do email info@portsmouththedigitalcity.co.uk

* Required

1. Your name *

Enter your answer

2. Your email address *

