



Online Safety Newsletter

July 2026

IN THE NEWS:

Social media & age restrictions

UK Announces Plans for Under-16 Social Media Restrictions

The UK Government has announced plans to introduce restrictions that would prevent children under 16 from accessing certain social media platforms from **Spring 2027**. The proposals are designed to reduce children's exposure to harmful content, addictive platform features and online risks. Platforms expected to be affected include TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, X and YouTube, while messaging services such as WhatsApp are not currently intended to be included.

What does this mean for families?

Nothing changes immediately.

The proposed restrictions are **not due to take effect until Spring 2027**, giving technology companies time to introduce age checks and comply with the new rules.

Why is the Government introducing these changes?

The proposals aim to:

- ✓ Reduce children's exposure to harmful content
- ✓ Limit features that encourage excessive screen time
- ✓ Better protect young people from contact with strangers
- ✓ Improve children's wellbeing online.

AI at Home – Supporting Your Child to Use AI Safely

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now part of everyday life. Many young people use AI to help with homework, answer questions, create images, generate videos and even have conversations.

AI can be an exciting and useful technology, but it is important that children understand how to use it safely and responsibly. As a parent or carer, you don't need to be an AI expert—the most important thing is to stay curious, keep conversations open and help your child think critically about what they see and create online.

Start the Conversation

Instead of asking:

"Are you using AI?"

Try asking:

- Which AI tools have you used recently?
- What do you normally use AI for?
- Can you show me how it works?
- Has AI ever given you an answer that didn't seem right?
- How do you know whether something online has been created by AI?

Showing genuine interest in your child's digital world helps build trust and encourages them to come to you if something worries them

One of the biggest emerging risks is the misuse of photographs using AI. Images shared on social media or messaging apps can be manipulated using AI to create fake or inappropriate content without a child's knowledge or permission. Even if an image isn't realistic, it can still be harmful and may be illegal if it depicts a child in an indecent way.

What parents can do

- Review the privacy settings on your own social media accounts.
- Consider who can see photographs of your child.
- Share family photos with trusted people only, using features such as "Close Friends" where available.
- Think carefully before posting images that show school uniforms, locations or other identifying information.

Remind Your Child

Help your child understand these simple rules:

- Never upload personal information into AI chatbots.
- Never use someone else's photograph without their permission.
- Treat AI-generated images in the same respectful way as real photographs.
- Tell a trusted adult if an AI-generated image of them or someone they know is created or shared.

If something does happen, remain calm and reassure your child that they are not to blame. Listening, supporting them and seeking help quickly can make a significant difference.

Screen Time Over the Summer Holidays

The summer holidays often mean more free time, and naturally, more time on phones, tablets and games consoles.

The aim isn't to eliminate screen time. Instead, try to help your child develop **healthy digital habits**.

Research shows that what children do on screens, when they use them and how it affects sleep, exercise and family life is often more important than the total number of hours spent online.

Summer Screen Time Checklist

- ✓ Keep devices out of bedrooms overnight.
- ✓ Have at least one screen-free meal each day.
- ✓ Encourage outdoor activities every day.
- ✓ Avoid screens for the hour before bedtime.
- ✓ Balance gaming and social media with hobbies and family time.

Signs Screen Time May Be Becoming Unhealthy

Parents may notice:

- Poor sleep
- Irritability when devices are taken away
- Less interest in hobbies
- Spending less time with family or friends
- Constant checking of notifications

If you notice several of these signs together, it may be time to review family digital routines.

Supporting Our Students

This year students have explored:

- ✓ Artificial Intelligence
- ✓ Digital Footprints
- ✓ Online Relationships
- ✓ Social Media Algorithms
- ✓ Cyber Security
- ✓ Reporting Concerns

We look forward to continuing this work next year as we help students become confident, respectful and responsible digital citizens

If you ever have concerns:

- Contact your child's Head of Year
- Speak to the Safeguarding Team

External Support:

- NSPCC
- Childline
- CEOP
- UK Safer Internet Centre

CONVERSATION STARTERS FROM THIS ISSUE:



"Show me your favourite app, game or AI tool."

Ask them:

- What do you enjoy about it?
- Who do you talk to?
- What safety features does it have?
- What would you do if someone made you uncomfortable online?

Children are much more likely to seek help if these conversations happen regularly—not just when something has gone wrong.

USEFUL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Below are free guides and support tools you can explore:

- ✓ Guides on sextortion, deepfakes and social media safety — [Internet Matters eSafety Resources](#)
- ✓ Practical parent tips for online conversations — [UK Safer Internet Centre Parent Tips](#)
- ✓ CEOP reporting advice and support — available through the CEOP website