



### SPOTLIGHT ON APPS:

Social media & age restrictions

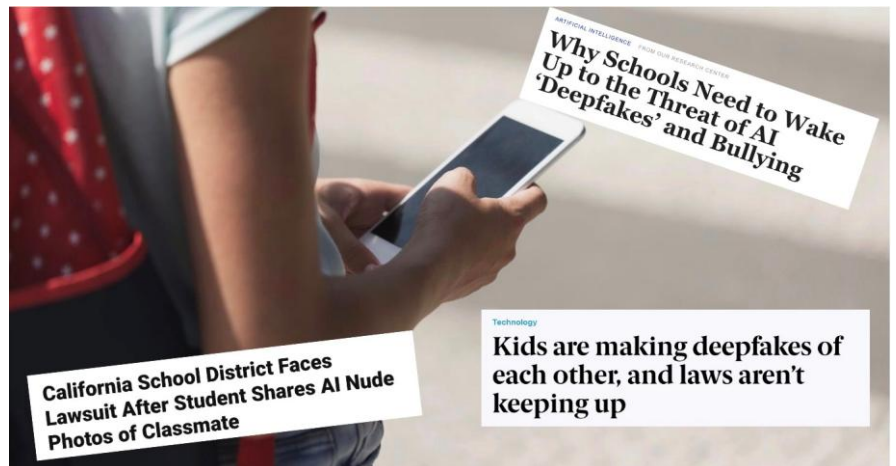


Social media platforms are in the spotlight again. The UK government has recently started consulting parents and families about whether there should be age limits for social media use and even proposals such as social media curfews for young people, due to concerns about wellbeing, sleep and mental health.

#### Key points for parents:

- App age ratings are designed to protect children, always check these before allowing access.
- If your child is under the minimum age, talk about *why* and consider alternatives.
- Explore parental controls within the apps together, this can help you understand who they're interacting with and what content they're seeing.

### This Issue's Focus: AI, Deepfakes & Image Misuse



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is everywhere, and while it brings many exciting opportunities, it also brings new online safety challenges. A worrying trend this year has been AI tools, especially chatbots and image generators, creating very realistic but fake images without permission.

Some of these tools have been used to create sexually expressive or manipulated images of real people, including images that appear to show underage individuals, which raises serious safeguarding concerns for families and schools alike

#### What parents should know:

- AI tools can generate images and videos that look real but are not.
- Manipulated images shared without someone's consent can be deeply harmful.
- Some high-profile AI scandals have prompted calls for stronger regulations and platform safety measures

**Top Tip:** Talk with your child about *digital consent*, explain that altering or sharing someone's image without their permission can be harmful and, in some cases, illegal.

# SAFEGUARDING FOCUS: SEXTORTION AWARENESS

Sextortion, when someone threatens to share private images unless paid or sent more images, remains a serious threat, both online and across social apps and games.

This can happen on:

- Messaging apps (Snapchat, WhatsApp)
- Social platforms (Instagram, TikTok)
- Gaming environments before moving to private chats

## Warning signals:

- Mood changes after using a device
- Sudden secrecy about new online contacts
- Requests for money or more personal images

## What you should do:

- Don't respond to threats
- Preserve evidence (screenshots)
- Report to the Police
- Report to school and, if appropriate, CEOP

Talking early about consent and what not to share can reduce the risk of harm.

DID YOU KNOW?

85%

of sextortion victims said embarrassment kept them from getting help.

## Supporting Our Students

This term students have taken part in Safer Internet Day. As part of this event, students:

- ✓ Explored AI ethics.
  - ✓ Looked at the positive use of AI.
  - ✓ Explored exploitation through the use of AI.
  - ✓ Were reminded how to report concerns.
- Our aim is to empower students — not alarm them.

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:



Here are some simple ways to open dialogue with your child:

1. What online apps or games are you using most this term?
2. Has anything digital ever made you feel uncomfortable or unsure?
3. If someone asked you to send a photo, what would you do?

Open conversations help build trust — and make it easier for children to ask for help if they need it.

## 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