Digital safeguarding – Protecting and empowering the use of digital technologies in our settings and beyond.

Ashton West End Primary School

Staff Training

November 2026



Ruth Noble
Digital Safeguarding Education Specialist

smoothwall.com



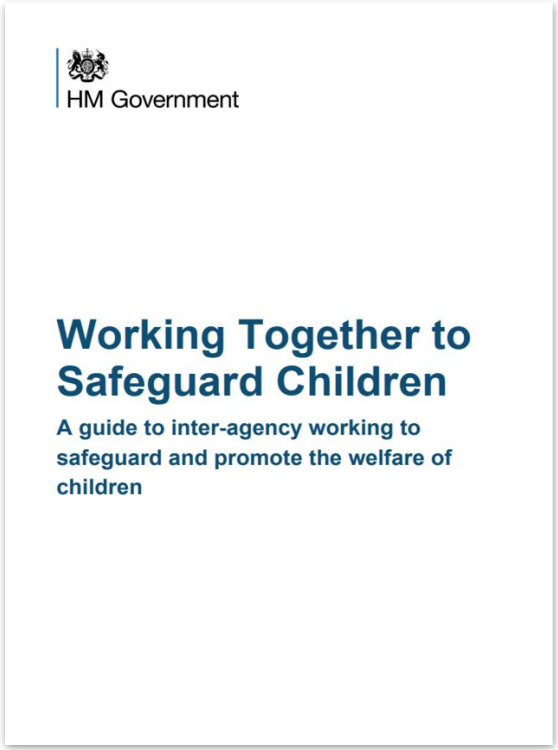
Digital Safety and Wellbeing **Framework**



qoria.com

Legislation and guidance

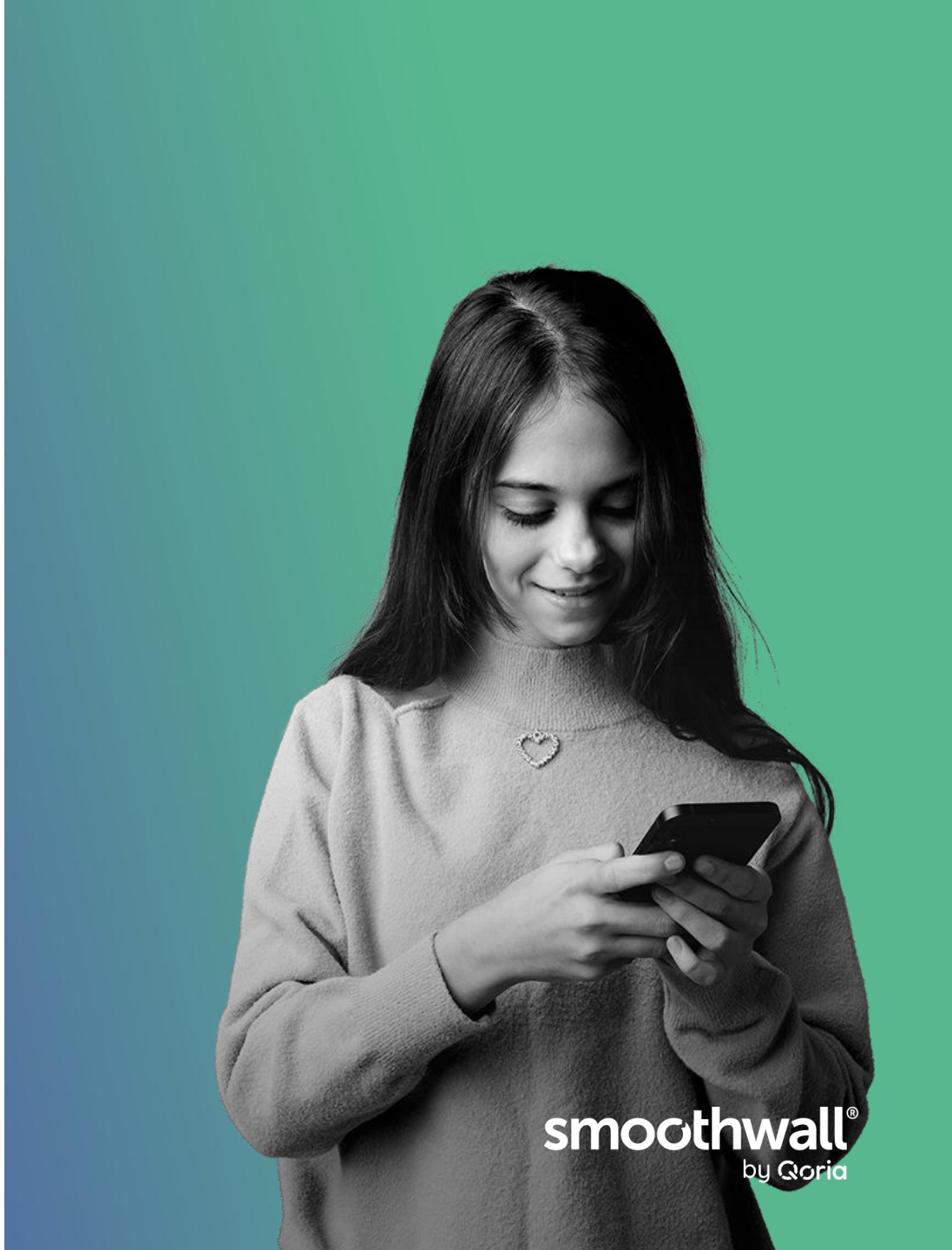






KCSIE 2026





smoothwall.com

The digital shift, in the language of the guidance

Mentions in KCSIE 2025 compared with KCSIE 2026.

Misogyny	Misandry	AI	Deepfakes
3 → **11**	2 → **4**	2 → **8**	0 → **2**

Alongside these, financial exploitation, prejudice-based harm and information security are named as risks staff must actively consider.

The 4C's of digital risks

	Content Child as recipient	**Contact** Child as participant	**Conduct** Child as actor	**Contract** Child as consumer
Aggressive	Violent, gory, graphic, racist, hateful and extremist content	Harassment, stalking, hateful behaviour, unwanted surveillance	Bullying, hateful or hostile peer activity e.g. trolling, exclusion, shaming	Identity theft, fraud, phishing, scams, gambling, blackmail, security risks
Sexual	Pornography (legal and illegal), sexualization of culture, body image norms	Sexual harassment, sexual grooming, generation and sharing of child sexual abuse	Sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual messages, sexual pressures	Sextortion, trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation, streaming child sexual abuse
Values	Age-inappropriate user-generated or marketing content, mis/disinformation	Ideological persuasion, radicalization and extremist recruitment	Potentially harmful user communities e.g. self-harm, anti-vaccine, peer pressures	Information filtering, profiling bias, polarisation, persuasive design
Cross-cutting	**Privacy and data protection abuses, physical and mental health risks, forms of discrimination**			

Social Media Ban

Guidance

Fact sheet: New rules to protect children online

Updated 18 September 2026

Overview:

- Under 16s to be banned from social media (TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, YouTube, X)
- Stronger age checks.
- Gaming isn't banned.
- Messaging apps to be allowed.

Information published on the 29th October 2026:

- **Photo ID matching**, where relevant information on a photo ID document such as a passport is checked against a live image taken during an age check
- **Banking-based checks**, which involves using the information a financial institution has on record regarding a user's age
- **Face age estimation technology** (which the regulator argues has recently improved)
- **Digital ID services**, which enable people to digitally prove who they are or provide information about themselves, such as their age



- Why are these changes being made?
- What is changing and what's banned?
- When is this changing?
- Who will it affect?
- How will children be impacted?
- What do I need to do now?
- What about educational content on sites like YouTube - will this be covered by a ban?
- How are you protecting children from the harms of AI chatbots?

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fact-sheet-new-rules-to-protect-children-online/fact-sheet-new-rules-to-protect-children-online

Social Media Ban

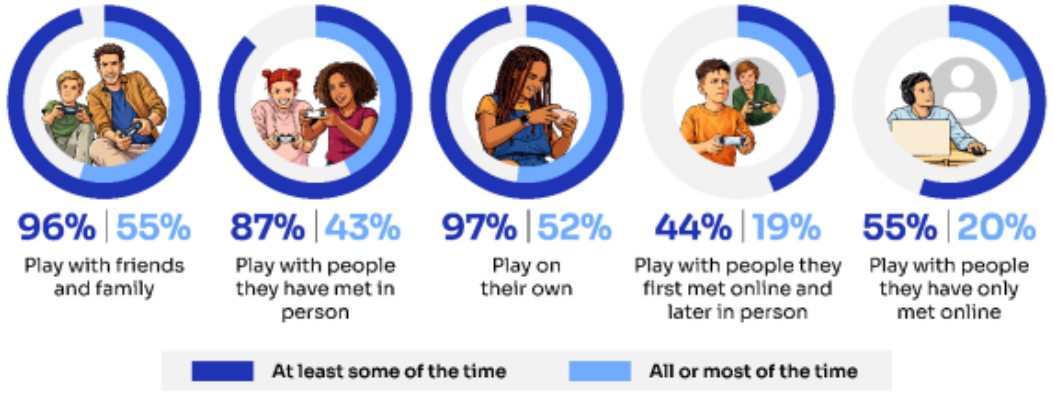


What does that mean for schools?

- Open conversations with our children/young people
- Curriculum coverage
- Awareness that companies are at fault not the children

Ofcom – Growing Up Gaming

Figure 2: Who children aged 3-17 game online with



Source: Children and Parents' Media Literacy tracker data tables (2026). QP26B/QC44B: Summary Table - When you/your child plays games online, how often do you/they do each of the following. Base: All of 3-17s AND play games online (n=1,719)

Figure 6: Where children experience upsetting behaviour



Among 8–17s who said someone had been 'nasty or hurtful' to them in the past 12 months, said it happened via...

88%	Any online/digital location
47%	Social media
43%	Face-to-face
41%	Text messaging
38%	Online games
24%	Video calls
18%	Phone calls
9%	Other sites/apps

Source: Children and Parents' Media Literacy tracker data tables (2026). QC55: When somebody was nasty or hurtful to you did it happen in any of these ways? Base: 8-17s who say this has happened to them (n=335)

Screen time

Press release

New screen time guidance for parents of under-5s

Government answers parents' calls for support on screen time with new evidence-backed guidance.

From: Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care, Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, Olivia Bailey MP, The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP, The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP and The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP

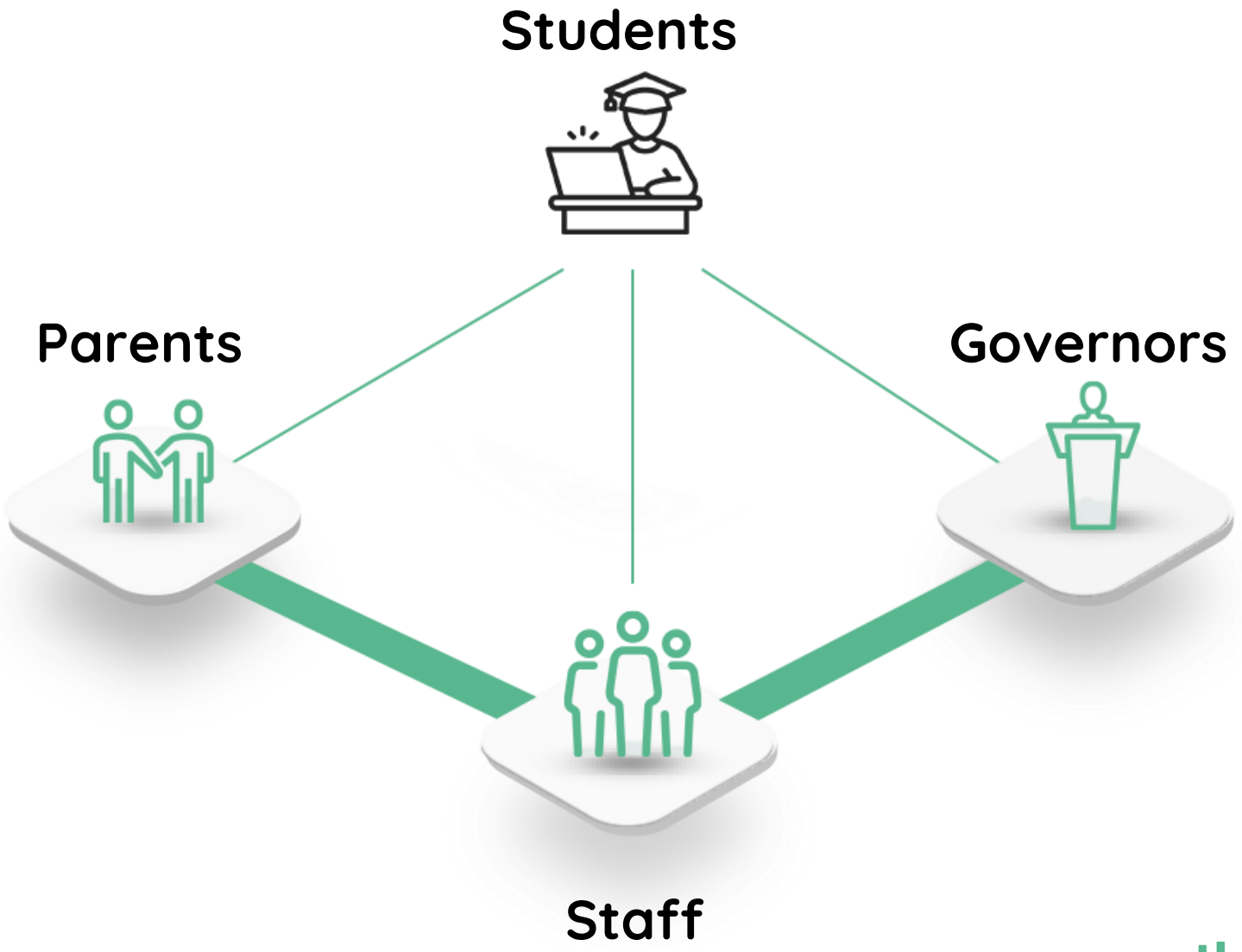
Published 26 March 2026



New social media curfews and crackdown on addictive features to better protect 16- and 17-year-olds online



Four Pillars



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Themes and trends

Themes and trends: Content, contact, conduct & commerce

Instagram



Zepeto

Whats App



Dola Ai Assistant

Snapchat

Tik Tok

Free Cash



Antiland

Reddit

Twitch

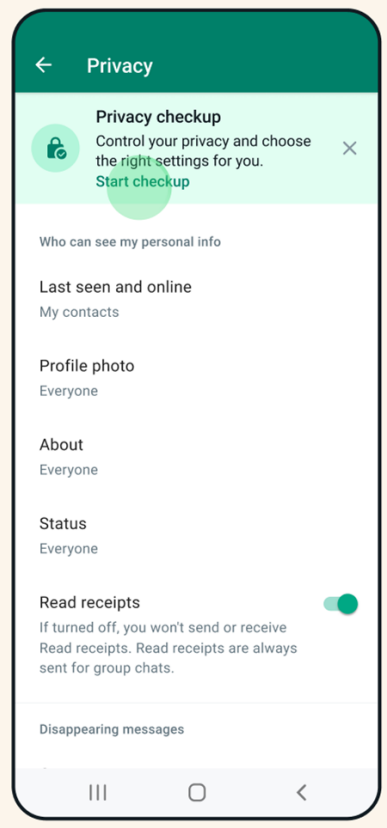
Polybuzz

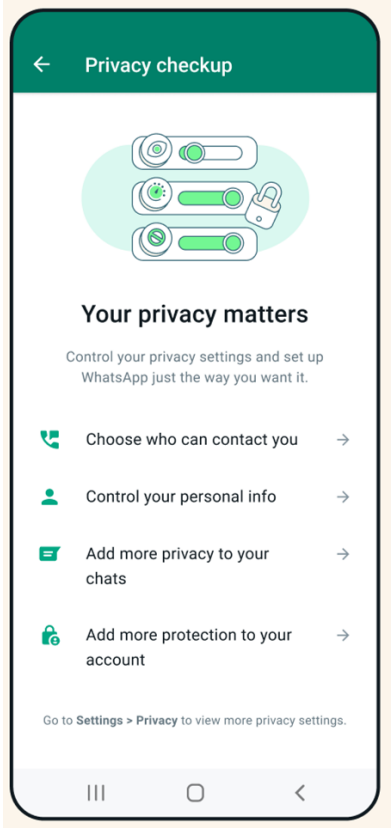


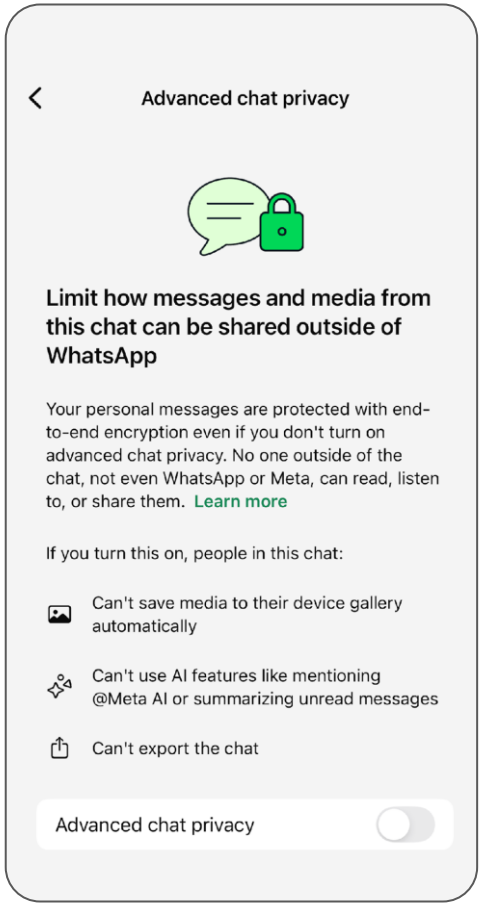
Omoggle

WhatsApp

13+









- Group chats
- Usernames

https://faq.whatsapp.com/894871699629864/?helpref=hc_fnav

Glasses



Policies – Staff / Students / Visitors

Data protection

Safeguarding risk

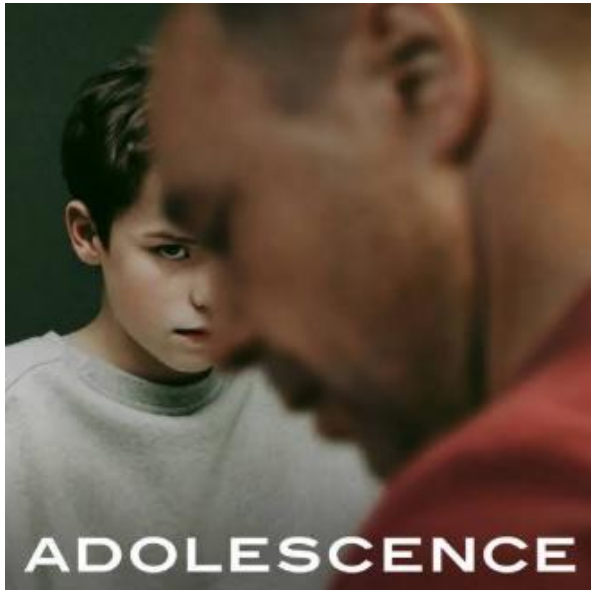
Signage

Specifically mentioned

Challenge

Manosphere





Trends

#Looksmaxxing

#Hardmaxxing

#Tanmaxxing

#Bonesmashing

#Starvemaxxing

#Pheromonemaxxing

Gaming



October 23rd



November 19th

Abbreviations

555555	PAW	KMS	LH6	LMIRL
?	?	?	?	?

Abbreviations

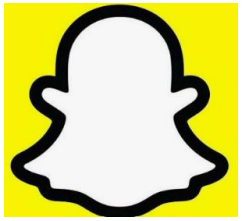
555555	PAW	KMS	LH6	LMIRL
Crying my eyes out all night long	Parents are watching	Kill myself	Lets have sex	Let’s meet in real life

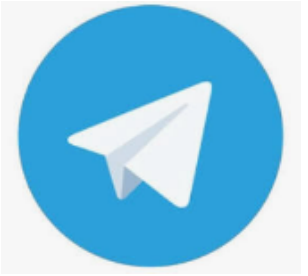
What platforms are your children exploring?



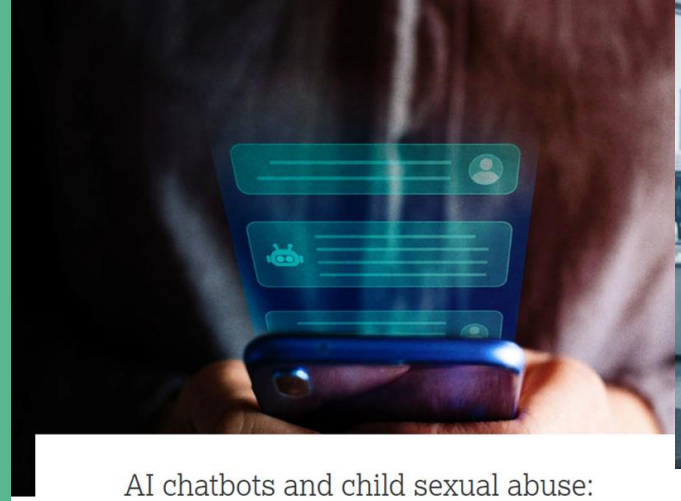








Generative AI





AI chatbots and child sexual abuse: a wake-up call for urgent safeguards

Published: Mon 22 Sep 2025

Written by: Emma Hardy, Communications Director

UK to tighten online safety laws to include AI chatbots

Keir Starmer to warn tech companies that 'no platform gets a free pass' after deepfake scandal involving Grok

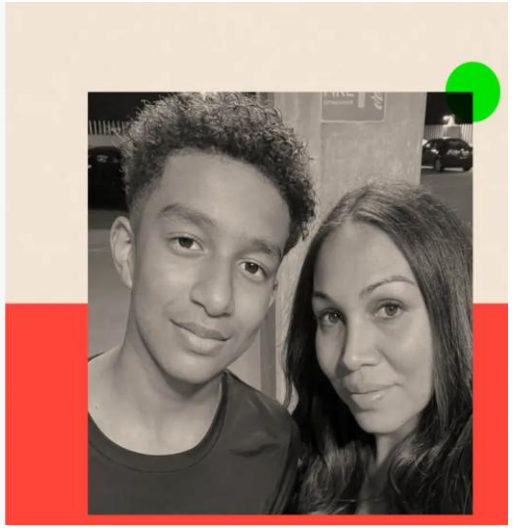


UK communications regulator Ofcom opened an investigation into Elon Musk's Grok c
Ruvic/Reuters

INDEPTH

'A predator in your home': Mothers say chatbots encouraged their sons to kill themselves

8 November 2025



Elena Martellozzo

James Stevenson

February 11th, 2026

The Grok scandal: a wake-up call for children's rights, privacy, and online safety

1 comment | 2 shares

Estimated reading time: 5 minutes

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AI in education

Lots of guidance already published by the DfE but it remains an evolving area of focus.

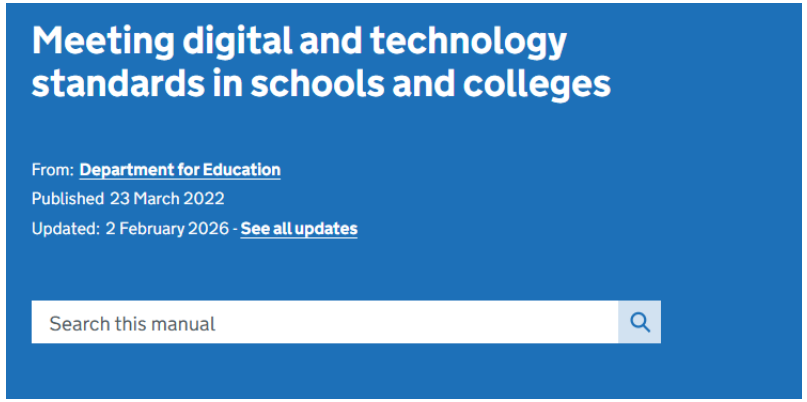
The current position...

- Schools and colleges are **not mandated to use AI** – each setting decides **if and how** AI is used.
- Any use of AI must be **safe, lawful, and aligned with existing safeguarding duties (KCSIE)**
- **Human oversight remains essential** – staff are always accountable for decisions and outcomes
- AI should **not replace professional judgement, safeguarding vigilance, or relationships**









Collection

Using AI in education settings: support materials

Support materials to help schools and colleges use AI (artificial intelligence) safely and effectively.

The materials balance the need for staff and student safety with the opportunities AI creates. They feature:

- activity focused slides
- video presentations with accompanying transcripts
- summaries of the information presented
- activities to consolidate knowledge, such as multiple-choice questions
- templates to help you reflect and plan

You can work through the modules to build your knowledge and experience as you go.

They can also be adapted:

- for individual or group use
- to suit your own needs and levels of experience

Module 3 should be used regardless of your level of experience as it contains important safety considerations.

Materials for all school and college staff

Understanding AI in education: module 1
19 May 2026 Guidance

Interacting with generative AI in education: module 2
19 May 2026 Guidance

Safe use of generative AI in education: module 3
19 May 2026 Guidance

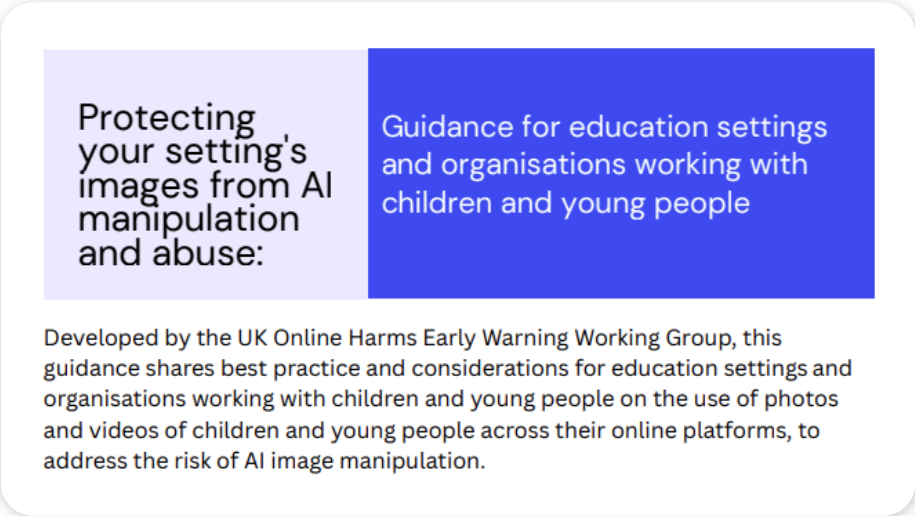
Use cases of generative AI in education: module 4
19 May 2026 Guidance

Materials for school and college leaders

Using AI in education: support for school and college leaders
19 May 2026 Guidance

https://chartered.college/safe-and-effective-use-of-ai-in-education/

Protecting your setting's images
from AI manipulation and abuse



Criminals are manipulating pictures found on school websites and social media to create sexually explicit images



Schools given advice on image safety to keep ahead of threat from AI blackmailers

08 May 2026 • UK SIC

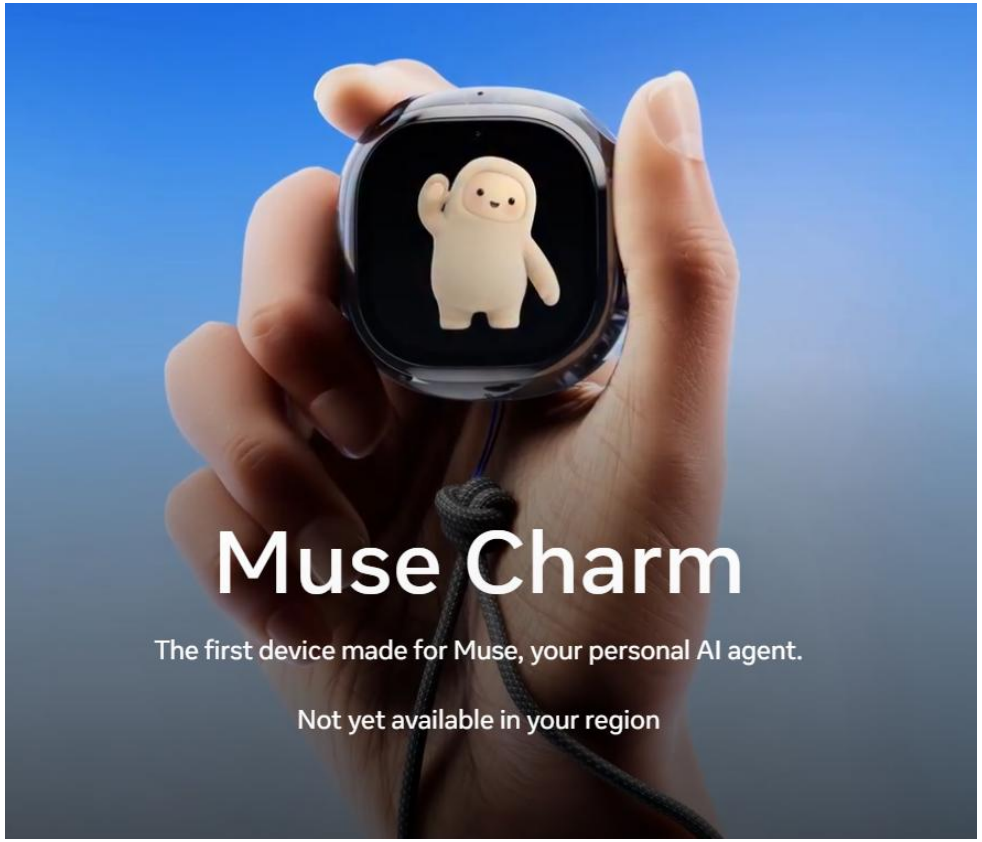
https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/image-guidance-for-education-settings

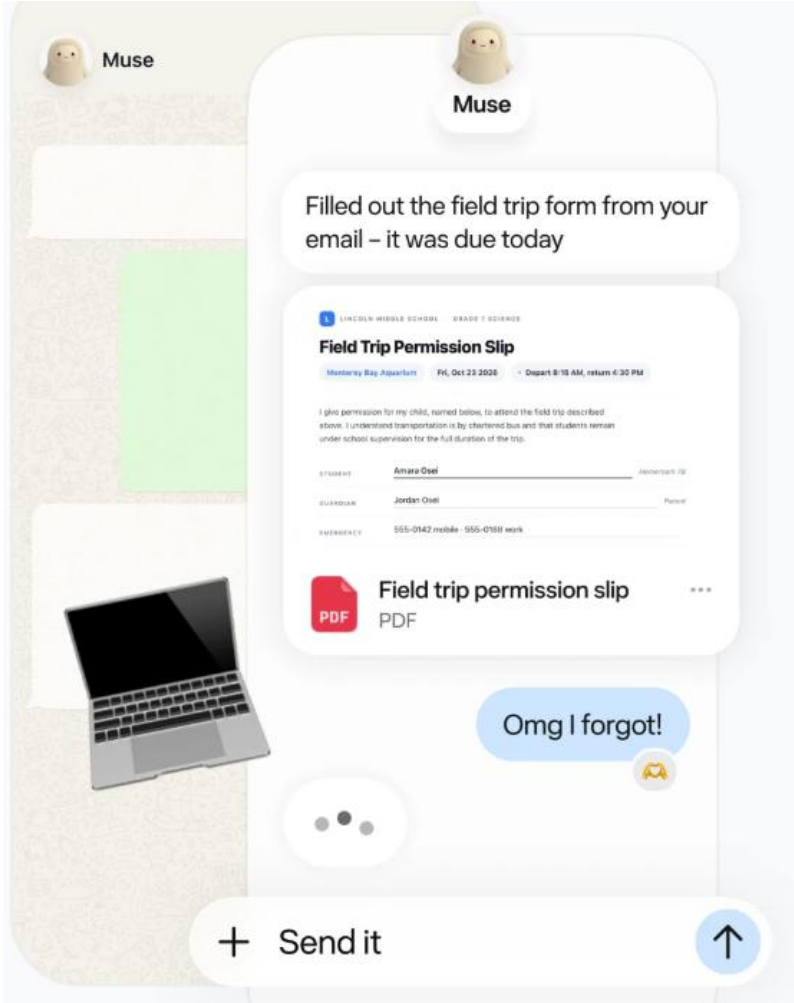
Things to think about – Staff

- What is our whole-school strategy around AI?
- Do we have a policy?
- What tools can I use to support teaching and learning?
- Am I following data protection policies?
- Am I checking the output from the AI tool? – Misinformation
- Curriculum?
- Age ratings



Muse – Personal AI Agent



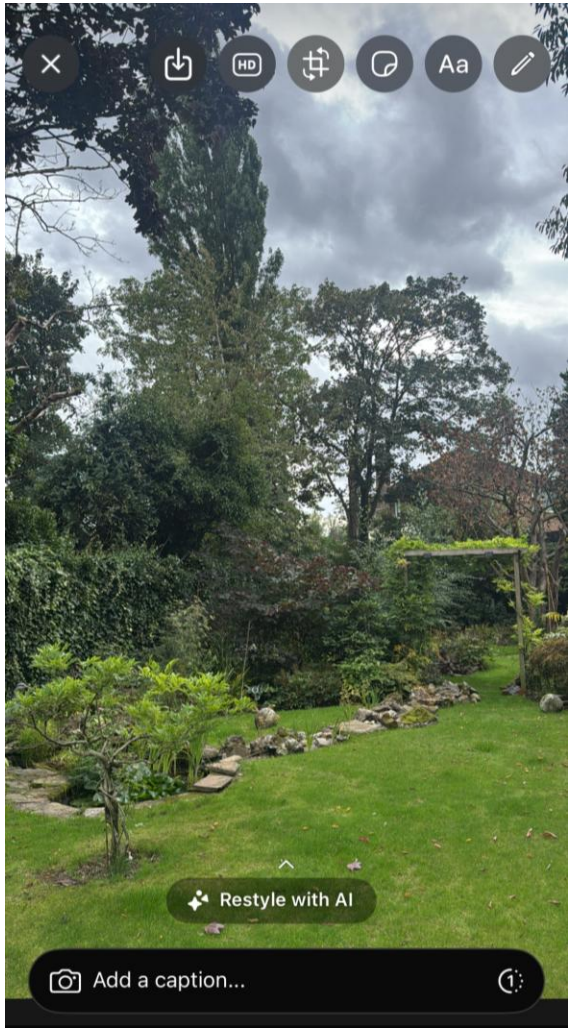


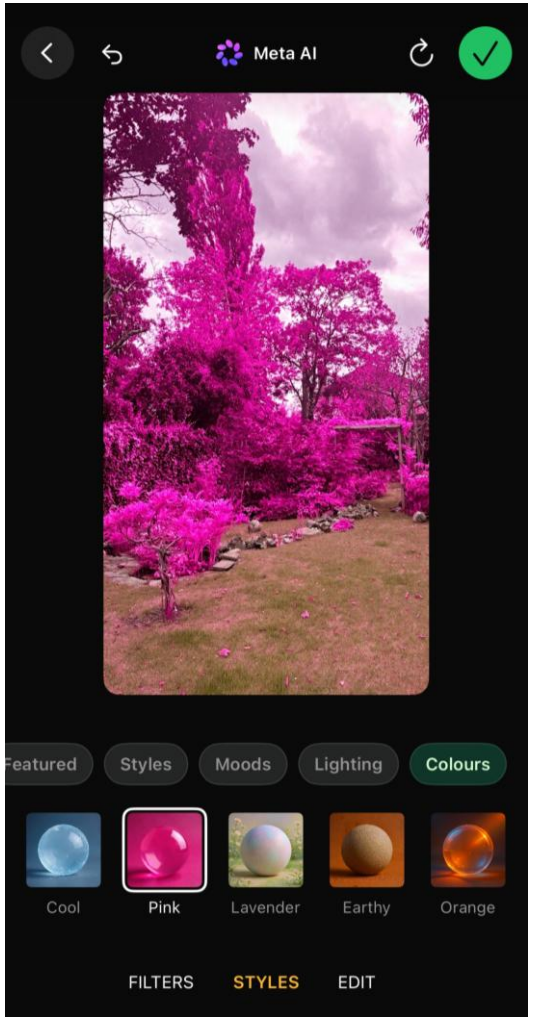
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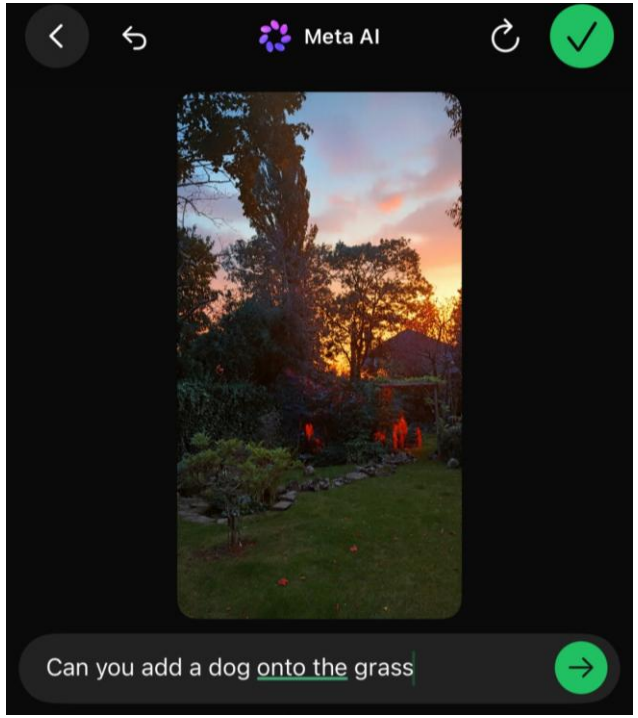
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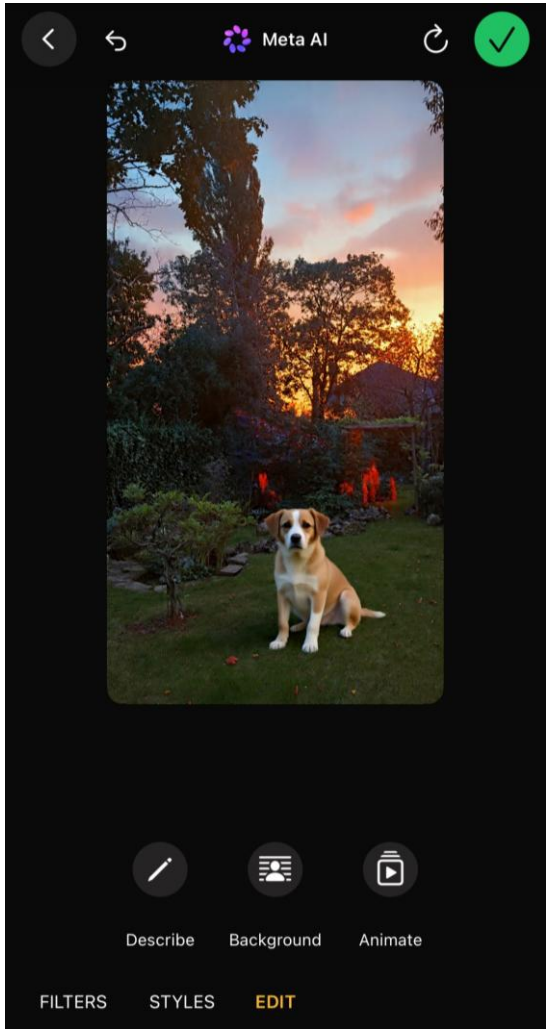
Meta AI - WhatsApp – AI Photo editing

13+









AI risks

Deep Fakes/ manipulated content

Exposure to fake news, images, or videos that normalise harmful beliefs.

Use of manipulated images for bullying, harassment, or sexual humiliation

Increased fear, shame, and anxiety from threats to share
fake content



AI risks

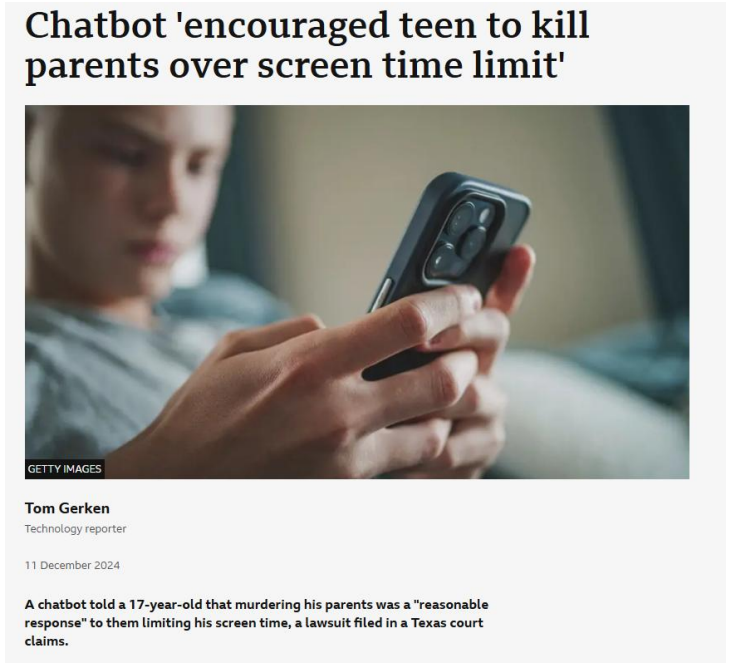
AI Chatbots & Simulated Relationships

Over-reliance on AI for emotional support or advice

Reinforcement of negative beliefs about self, others, or society

Reduced help-seeking from trusted adults

Confusion about boundaries, consent, and appropriate relationships



Chatbot 'encouraged teen to kill parents over screen time limit'

Tom Gerken
Technology reporter

11 December 2024

A chatbot told a 17-year-old that murdering his parents was a "reasonable response" to them limiting his screen time, a lawsuit filed in a Texas court claims.



- **Internet Matters** - Me, Myself and AI report
- **TES** - Pupils are confiding in AI chatbots - these are the warning signs

AI risks

Algorithmic Influence, Misinformation & Belief Shaping

Repeated exposure to misogynistic, extremist, or grievance-based content

Development of distorted worldviews and hostile attitudes

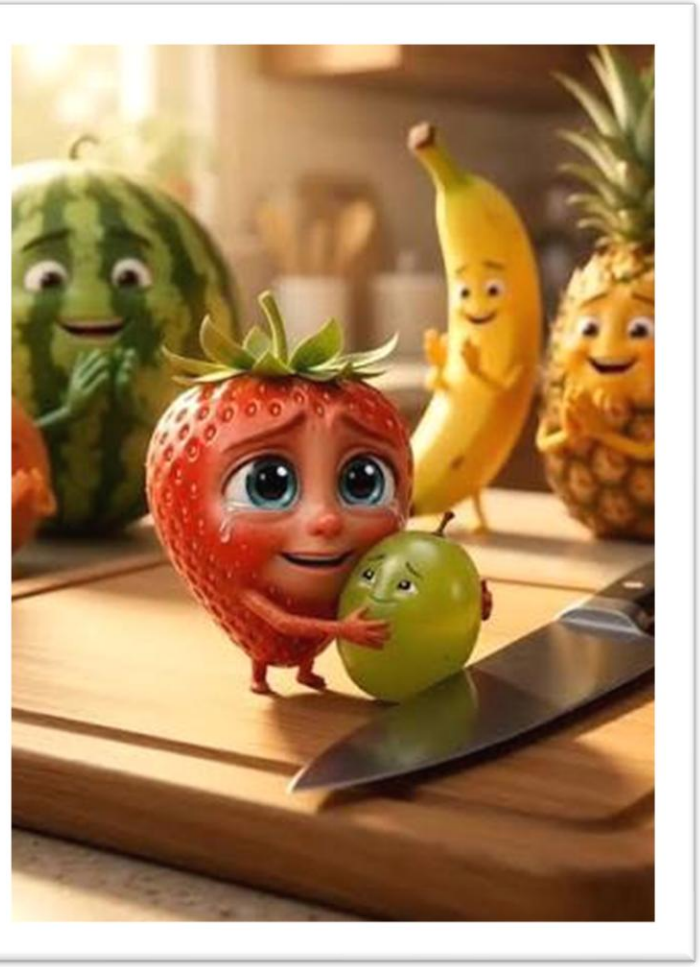
Increased anxiety, anger, or identity confusion

Reduced resilience to challenge alternative perspectives





AI Online Content

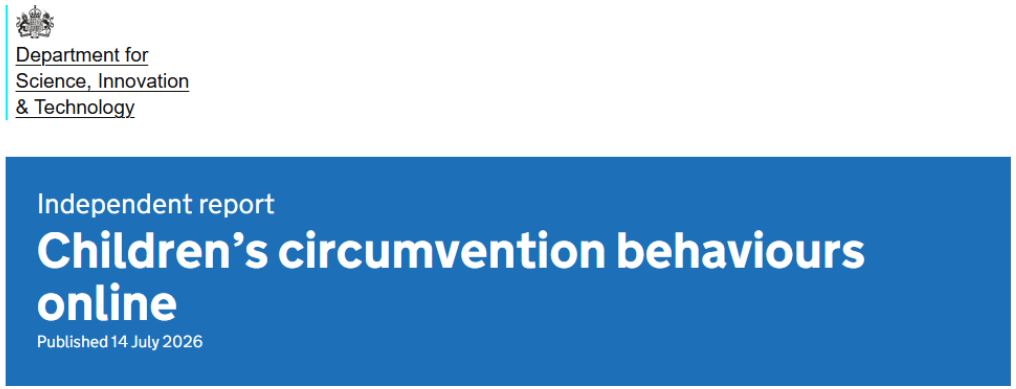


Global Network
on Extremism & Technology





Bypassing – 11-17



How are children experiencing age assurance checks online, and how effective do they think they are?

What are the most common ways children get around age checks, and why?

What motivates children to use VPNs, and how do they access them in practice?

Bypassing – 11-17

Figure 1: VPN awareness and use by age group

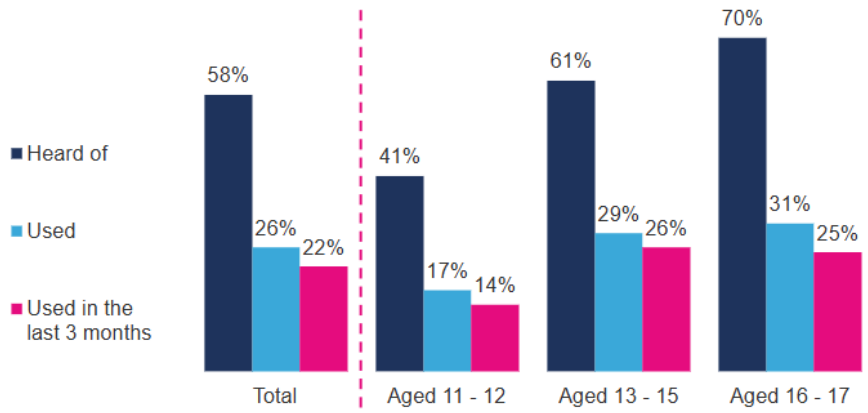
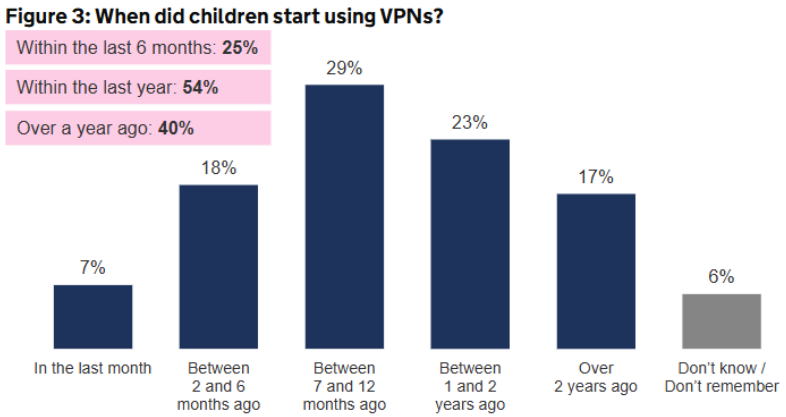


Figure 3: When did children start using VPNs?



64% used VPN at least once a week

Pretending to be older tends to be the most used method

Awareness of VPN's is spreading (Doesn't translate into usage

smoothwall® by Qoria

Bypassing – 11-17

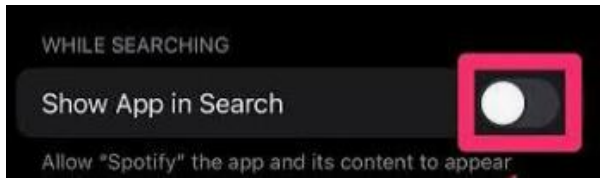
Figure 5: Reasons for VPN use

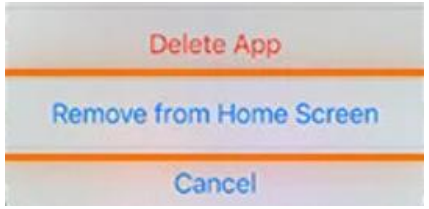


Bypassing support mechanisms

- Going onto other's Wi-Fi
- Hidden apps









91% of parents use monitoring tools — but 41% of children have tried to get around them

Your Digital Reputation



- How are your social media accounts protected?
- What images of you are available on the internet?
- Have you set up Google alerts?
- Have you used Google Reverse Image?
- Have you checked your privacy and security settings?
- Are your accounts details and passwords kept safe?
- Are you searching yourself on Google every 4-6 weeks?
- Are you aware of the policies in place at your setting?

Key Takeaways

Be curious
Take an interest in children's online lives.

Keep talking
Make online safety part of everyday conversations.

Build trust
Ensure children feel safe asking for help.

Work together
Support and empower parents, without judgement.

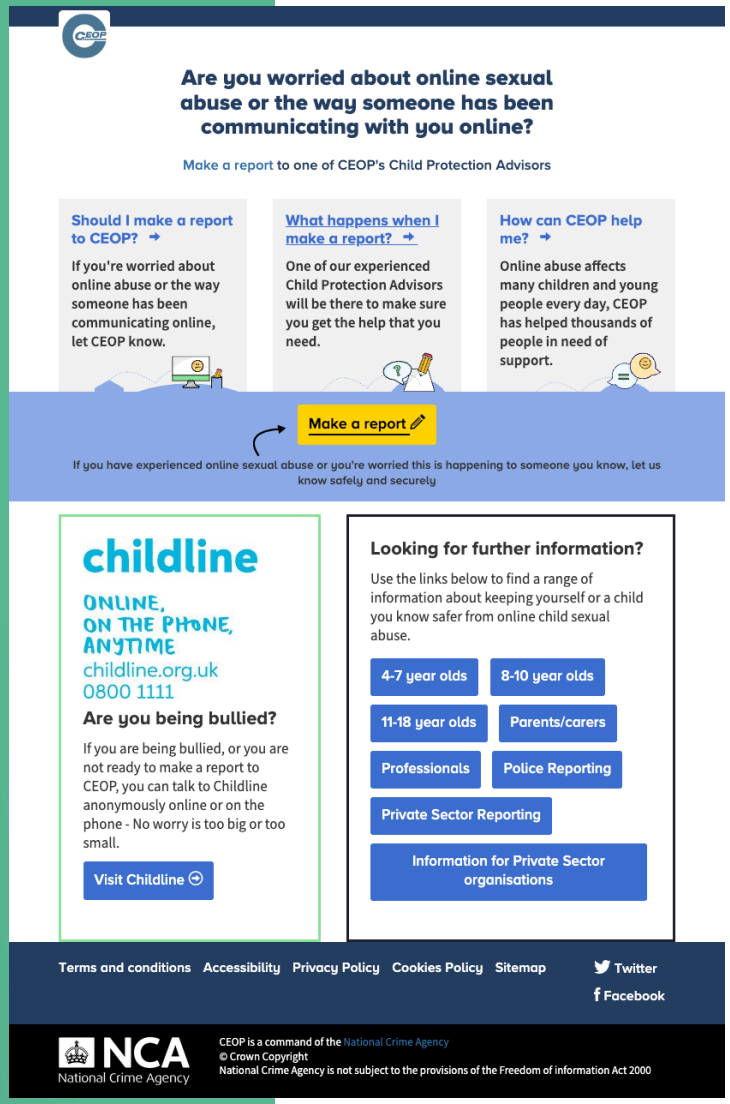
Act on concerns
Recognise, record and report safeguarding concerns.

Resources



Report harmful content

https://reportharmfulcontent.com/



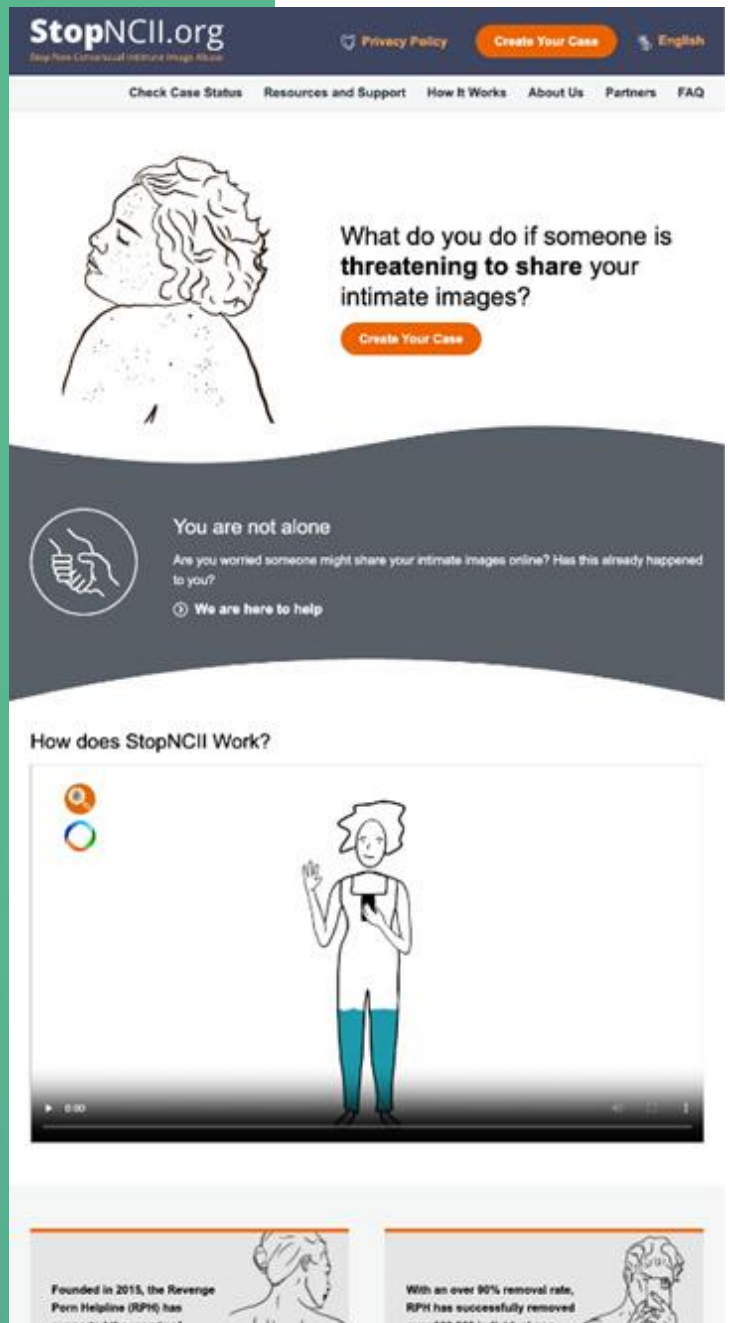
CEOP

https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/



Report remove

https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/



Stop NCII.org

https://stopncii.org/

Q&A



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Thank you

