

As our children grow into confident young digital citizens, it’s completely natural for parents and carers to feel unsure about how best to support them online. The digital world changes quickly, but you don’t need to be an expert to make a real difference. This newsletter brings together practical, non-judgemental guidance to help you support your teen’s wellbeing, balance screen use, and build resilience in an increasingly digital world. Our aim is to empower you with clear, calm information that helps your family feel confident and connected.



## Helping Children and Teens Navigate AI Safely and Confidently

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a normal part of teens’ daily lives — from homework tools to creative apps that generate images, videos and music. While AI can support learning and encourage creativity, it’s important for young people to understand how to use it thoughtfully.

AI tools can sometimes produce incorrect or misleading information, because they generate answers based on patterns rather than verified facts. They can also create images or videos that appear real but aren’t, which may confuse teens or contribute to misinformation. Some AI models may unintentionally reflect biases, exposing young people to stereotypes or unfair assumptions.

Supporting digital resilience doesn’t mean limiting curiosity — it’s about empowering your child to navigate AI safely:

- Encourage them to check facts using trusted sources.
- Remind them that not everyone online is who they appear to be, and AI can imitate real people.
- Keep communication open so they feel able to discuss anything confusing or concerning.
- Help them understand that AI should support, not replace, their own judgement.

### If you’d like to explore this topic further:

- **Childnet** – AI & Online Safety: <https://www.childnet.com>
- **Internet Matters** – AI Guidance for Parents: <https://www.internetmatters.org>
- **NSPCC** – Keeping Children Safe Online: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

These resources offer practical advice to help your teen grow into a confident, critical and safe digital citizen.

## AI Chatbots – What Parents and Carers Need to Know

AI chatbots are becoming a normal part of many teenagers’ online lives — helping with homework, answering quick questions, or offering a space to explore ideas. While they can be useful, it’s important for young people to understand their limits. AI chatbots can sometimes give incorrect or misleading answers, and some teens may be tempted to treat them like real friends or sources of emotional support, which can impact healthy relationships. Chatbots may also present information that isn’t always age-appropriate or fact-checked. You can support your teen by encouraging open conversations, checking information together, and reminding them that AI can assist but it can’t replace real-life support.

This AI guide for parents & carers provides more detailed information:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2025/artificial-intelligence-safety-tips-for-parents/>

## Building Your Child’s Digital Resilience

Many parents and carers tell us that the digital world feels overwhelming at times — fast-moving apps, constant updates, new AI tools, and online trends that seem to appear overnight.

It’s completely normal to feel unsure about how to guide your child when technology changes so quickly. The good news is that you don’t need to know everything about every platform to make a real difference. What matters most is helping your teen develop the confidence and skills to navigate the online world safely and thoughtfully.

Digital resilience grows gradually. It begins when young people feel able to talk openly about what they’re seeing online — whether that’s something exciting, confusing, or upsetting. Taking a calm, curious approach (“Tell me more about that”) helps your child practice identifying what feels positive and what feels unhelpful.

You can also support resilience by exploring how online platforms work together. Teens benefit from understanding that algorithms shape what appears on their feeds, that not everything online is accurate, and that it’s okay to step back when something feels overwhelming. Encouraging simple habits — such as pausing before responding, checking information from trusted sources, or taking a break when emotions feel heightened — helps them build the judgement they’ll use throughout their digital lives.

Above all, remind your child that they’re not alone. Keeping communication open and supportive reassures them that whatever they encounter online, you’re there to help them navigate it with confidence.

For further questions and guidance, reach out to the Safeguarding Team at your child’s academy who can offer advice and signpost further support if needed.

## Understanding Screen Time Guidance



The World Health Organization (WHO) offers guidance to help families find a healthy balance, but these are not strict rules — they are flexible recommendations to support wellbeing, not to police parents and carers decisions:

- Under 1 year - screen time is not recommended
- Under 2 years: No more than 1 hour per day, when engaging with reading, activities or chatting with a family member.
- Ages 2–5: No more than 1 hour per day of high-quality content, ideally watched together with an adult.
- Ages 6–17: WHO does not set a strict hourly limit but advises consistent boundaries so screen use does not interfere with sleep, physical activity, learning or social interaction.

A helpful routine is a “tech-off” wind-down hour before bedtime to support healthy sleep.

If you need advice and support around any aspect of your child’s well being you can get in touch with the Pastoral team at your academy.

## BOOSTING DIGITAL WELLBEING & MENTAL HEALTH

For many children and teens, being online is an important part of social life, learning, and relaxation. When balanced well, digital spaces can boost creativity and connection.

However, research shows that higher non-school screen use in teenagers is linked with increased anxiety, lower mood, and disrupted sleep routines. Evening screen exposure can interfere with sleep quality by disrupting melatonin release.

This doesn’t mean screens are harmful in themselves — it simply reinforces the value of helping young people build healthy habits and awareness of how online activities make them feel.

Parents and carers can support their child’s digital wellbeing by:

- Encouraging breaks during long periods of screen use
- Helping them notice which online activities lift or drain their mood
- Supporting device-free wind-down time before bed
- Making space for offline hobbies, movement, and rest
- Keeping open conversations about emotions linked to online life

### Prefer to watch than read?

This two minute UNICEF video provides 3 powerful tips to help you manage your child’s screen time:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLujG-rYQvQ&t=118s>

The following websites all contain useful sources of information for parents and carers. Click the image to access.

