



RADLETT
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Safeguarding Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

We welcome you to the Summer edition of our Safeguarding Newsletter, where you will find lots of helpful information and links.

At Radlett Preparatory School, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety, please speak to a member of the school's Safeguarding Team.

We wish you all a wonderful summer break!

Safeguarding Vs. Child Protection

Safeguarding is defined by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

The NSPCC defines Child Protection as:

- Part of the safeguarding process.
- It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Sharing of Information

In order to safeguard children, there are occasions where information must be shared with external agencies. When a concern is raised, regarding a safeguarding matter, appropriate staff members will explore the concern and where appropriate, will make contact with parents to gain more information and understand the context of the concern further. Following this, it may be appropriate to involve an external agency or for a referral to be made. When sharing information, we follow school and local authority policy as well as guidelines set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

When pupils move on to new settings, we have a duty of care and responsibility to share any relevant information with their new schools to ensure they're safety and measures are in place for any families who may need support.

For more information please see our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety, please speak to a member of the school's safeguarding team:



Mrs Foster— Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



Ms Collings—Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)



Mrs Flynn (Principal & DDSL)



Mrs Warren (DDSL)



Mrs Wolpert (DDSL)

PSHCE—‘Changing me’

During the summer term, pupils have taken part in weekly Jigsaw lessons with a focus on ‘Changing Me’. All children from Reception to Year 6 discussed how their bodies grow and change. Pupils in Reception learned about their bodies, understanding the purpose of their arms and legs. In KS1, children identified similarities and differences between boys’ and girls’ bodies. They also further developed a basic understanding of consent and the importance of personal space. In KS2, children learned about internal and external changes their bodies go through as they move towards puberty. The most important aspect of these lessons was to know and use the scientific anatomically correct names for parts of the human body.



Positive Minds - Watford Football Club

Year 6 were lucky enough to participate in a Watford Football Club initiative. The Positive Minds Workshop was a ten-week programme. Lessons were both interactive and informative. Sessions included: looking at mental health, building positive relationships, resilience, positive well-being, gaming, social media, body image and emotions.

Great discussions were had by all children, and they learnt who to discuss serious matters with in a mature manner. The sessions ended with an invite to visit Watford Football Club for a tour, interaction with some of their community outreach participants and also team building exercises.



Important Numbers

Herts Police

0845 3300 222 (main switchboard)

999 (emergency calls)

101 (non-emergency calls)

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

Childline

0800 1111

Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline

08088 088 088

Useful links:

- [Families First \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/families-first)
- [PEGI – Pan European Game Information – age restrictions, parental controls](https://www.pegi.com/)
- [Jessie & Friends \(thinkuknow.co.uk\)](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/jessie/)
- [Talk PANTS & Join Pantosaurus - The Underwear Rule | NSPCC](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keep-us-safe/underwear-rule/)
- [Sandbox Homepage \(mindler.co.uk\)](https://www.mindler.co.uk/)
- [hfl-online-safety-newsletter-summer-2023-parents-and-carers \(thegrid.org.uk\)](https://www.thegrid.org.uk/hfl-online-safety-newsletter-summer-2023-parents-and-carers/)

Contact the Safeguarding Team on:

01923 856812 or safeguarding@radlettprep.co.uk

For a copy of our school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2022, please follow the link below or visit the ‘Policies’ page on the school website. [CHILD-PROTECTION-SAFEGUARDING-REVIEW-SEPT-23.pdf \(radlettprep.co.uk\)](https://www.radlettprep.co.uk/CHILD-PROTECTION-SAFEGUARDING-REVIEW-SEPT-23.pdf)

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence – particularly in terms of how it generates natural language – has seen significant development over the last six months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat, for example). One form of AI to become especially popular has been the 'AI friend' or chatbot, as children eagerly experiment with these new-found computer-generated companions. There are now numerous apps available with this 'virtual friend' functionality, with the likelihood of it being added to other successful platforms soon.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always be able to recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. So there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could very likely hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour (as many originate from the USA or the UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview). This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours.

COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, creativity and ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts are warning that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties, for instance).

Advice for Parents & Carers

CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If your child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with your child and perhaps do your own research to ensure you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit with your young one and begin exploring AI chatbots together.

CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If your child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space at home, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside your child to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children are still getting plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps your child can download and use. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to your child. In particular, emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something that isn't entirely impartial or accurate.

Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.



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