

Safeguarding concerns: safeguarding@hurstlodgeschool.co.uk

Welcome to our Autumn Safeguarding Newsletter. We are delighted with the way in which our young people have positively settled into the new school year and are proud of the personal progress each of them are making.

Woodlands Safeguarding Team



Clare Smith
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Helen Grainger
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Jess Melling
Safeguarding Team

Who do I contact with a safeguarding concern or question?

Yateley Safeguarding Team



Adam Nosworthy
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Anne Lee
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Daniel Burnell



Elle Daniels



Steph Millington-Lee



Kat Raney



Kelly Marshall

You've had a call from the Safeguarding Team...

A safeguarding call may feel worrying, but our aim is to support your child and work with you, without judgement. Open conversations help us understand concerns early and find positive solutions together. Sometimes, we must share concerns with external agencies, such as Children's Services, healthcare professionals or the police, to protect a child. We involve families wherever possible, unless doing so could increase the risk of harm.

If you want to find out more about our processes or have any safeguarding related questions, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Safeguarding Housekeeping

- ✓ Please ensure students always have a named water bottle in school
- ✓ Clothing needs to be school-appropriate in line with our expectations
- ✓ Medication needs to be supplied to school in line with policies and procedures to ensure safe administration

Last year we hosted a very successful webinar in partnership with our filtering and monitoring provider, **Smoothwall**. The webinar was well received, and feedback was overwhelmingly in favour of more support for parents navigating the digital world. We will announce the date for another webinar in the upcoming weeks but we would like to signpost you to some resources in the meantime.

We host our own Online Safety Hub which can be accessed here:

[Online Safety Hub - Hurst Lodge School](#)



The Hub is entirely free to access and does not require account creation. It is full of articles and support topics to help with everything from managing parental controls and device restrictions to the latest risks from trending social media apps and news topics. Please do take the time to browse the hub and any feedback is very welcome.

Some other useful resources centred specifically around support for parents are:

[Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Parents & carers | Childnet](#)

[Keeping Children Safe Online | NSPCC](#)

Focus on - AI & Online Safety

AI is already part of our children's online world

AI can support learning, creativity, accessibility and problem-solving. It can also generate convincing false information, inappropriate content, manipulated images or voices, and human-like conversations. The goal is not to make children frightened of AI, but to help them use it critically, safely and with trusted adults alongside them.

5 family rules for AI

- AI can sound confident and still be wrong - check important facts.
- Never enter private information, passwords, addresses, school details or another person's personal data.
- AI is a tool, not a trusted adult, counsellor or friend.
- Never use AI to embarrass, impersonate, sexualise, threaten or bully someone.
- If something feels upsetting, secretive, sexual, threatening or strange: stop, save evidence and tell a trusted adult.

What parents should watch for

- AI chatbots or 'companions' becoming emotionally important to a child.
- Deepfakes, fake screenshots, cloned voices or altered images being shared as if real.
- Homework copied from AI without understanding or checking sources.
- Unexpected sexual, violent, self-harm or otherwise harmful content.
- Requests to move conversations elsewhere, keep secrets, share images or disclose personal information.

A useful phrase to teach

"Pause. Check. Don't share. Tell an adult." This works for suspicious AI answers, fake images, strange messages and content that makes a child uncomfortable.

Why this matters now - Generative AI is increasingly built into search, games, social media, homework tools and creative apps. Current UK guidance stresses age restrictions, appropriate safeguards, privacy, critical checking and open conversations with children.

What to focus on at different ages - Children develop online independence at different rates. Adjust boundaries to your child's needs, maturity and vulnerabilities - not just their year group.

Years 3–6 Explore together

- Use AI tools alongside an adult and check the service's minimum age before use.
- Teach the difference between a real person and a chatbot: friendly language does not mean a bot has feelings or knows the child.
- Keep names, photos, school information, location and family details private.
- Practise checking an AI answer against a trusted website, book or adult.
- Keep devices in shared spaces where possible and use parental controls appropriate to the device and app.

Try asking: "How could we check whether that answer is really true?"

Years 7–9 Build critical judgement

- Talk openly about AI in social media, gaming, image generators and chatbots - including tools that simulate friendship or relationships.
- Discuss deepfakes and edited images: seeing or hearing something is no longer proof that it happened.
- Agree clear rules for homework: AI may support thinking but should not replace learning or be presented dishonestly as the pupil's own work.
- Explain that prompts and uploads may be stored or used by services; avoid sharing personal, sensitive or school information.
- Reinforce consent: never create or share a fake image, voice or message of another person to humiliate, sexualise or deceive.

Try asking: "What would make you trust - or distrust - this AI response?"

Years 10–13 Independence with accountability

- Encourage young people to verify claims, compare sources and recognise bias, persuasion and fabricated citations.
- Discuss privacy and digital footprint when uploading CVs, coursework, photographs, voice recordings or personal experiences.
- Talk about AI-generated sexual imagery, sextortion, impersonation and scams without judgement so they know they can seek help early.
- For health, mental health, relationships, legal or financial decisions, use reliable human/professional sources rather than relying on a chatbot.
- Agree when and how AI use should be acknowledged in schoolwork, applications and creative work.

Try asking: "What could go wrong if you acted on this answer without checking it?"

Deepfakes, chatbots, scams & harmful content

Deepfakes & impersonation

- Treat urgent or unusual voice/video messages with caution - contact the person in another way.
- Look for context, source and corroboration rather than relying on visual 'tells' alone.
- Do not forward humiliating or sexualised fake content, even to warn others.
- Save evidence safely and report the content/platform.

Scams & manipulation

- AI can make phishing, fake adverts, romance scams and impersonation more convincing.
- Never share one-time codes, passwords or banking details in response to a message.
- Slow down when a message creates panic, secrecy or urgency.
- Verify requests for money or information through a separate trusted channel.

AI chatbots & companions

- Remind children that a chatbot is software, even when it sounds caring or personal.
- Be alert if a child withdraws from real relationships or feels they must keep chatbot conversations secret.
- Encourage trusted-human support for worries, distress, health or safety.
- Check age requirements and safety/privacy settings.

Homework & information

- Ask: Who is the source? Can I verify it? Is it current?
- AI can invent facts, references and quotations.
- Use AI to explain, quiz, plan or generate ideas - not to bypass thinking.
- Children should follow school expectations about acceptable and acknowledged AI use.

If an AI-generated nude or sexual image involves a child

Do not copy, forward or repeatedly view it. Preserve the information needed to report what has happened, tell the school safeguarding team where relevant, and use specialist reporting routes such as CEOP and Childline/IWF Report Remove. If there is immediate danger, contact the police.

Conversation starters for home

- Where have you noticed AI this week?
- Has an AI tool ever given you an answer you knew was wrong?
- What would you do if someone made a fake image, voice clip or message about you or a friend?

What to do when something goes wrong

Children are more likely to seek help when adults stay calm, avoid blame and focus first on safety.

DO	AVOID
Stay calm and listen before taking action.	Blaming the child or immediately removing all access without discussion.
Save usernames, URLs, dates and screenshots where safe and appropriate.	Forwarding harmful or sexual content to other people as 'evidence'.
Block/report accounts or content using the platform's tools.	Engaging with, threatening or confronting a suspected offender yourself.
Tell the school safeguarding team if the issue affects a pupil's safety or school life.	Assuming a convincing image, audio clip or message must be genuine.
Use specialist help: CEOP, Childline, Report Remove, police/999 in an emergency.	Waiting for certainty before seeking advice when a child may be at risk.

Trusted support and further reading

NSPCC - Talking to children about AI: Practical family guidance on AI, deepfakes, privacy and conversations. nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-to-children-about-ai/

Childline: Confidential support for children and young people: 0800 1111. childline.org.uk

CEOP: Report concerns about online sexual abuse, grooming or exploitation. ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

Report Remove: Helps under-18s report nude images/videos of themselves and seek removal. childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/

Internet Matters: Parent guides, including research and advice on AI chatbots. internetmatters.org

Department for Education: Current guidance on safe and effective use of generative AI in education. gov.uk/government/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education