SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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What are AI chatbots?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbots – such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini and others are becoming more common in everyday life. Children may encounter them at school, in games or even through websites and apps. While these tools can be useful and fun, it's important for parents to understand how they work, the potential risks and how to keep children safe.

AI chatbots are computer programmes that can hold a conversation with a person.

They can:

- answer questions (e.g. helping with homework or explaining a tricky topic).
- spark creativity (e.g. helping write a poem, story or quiz).
- support hobbies and interests (e.g. generating recipe ideas, sports facts or coding tips).
- provide entertainment (e.g. riddles, jokes or role-play style games).

Used wisely, chatbots can be a helpful tool for learning and fun.

When conversations can become concerning

Although conversations may start out innocent, there are risks to be aware of:

- **Unpredictable responses:** chatbots sometimes give inaccurate, confusing or inappropriate information.
- **Role-play risks:** a child may ask the chatbot to pretend to be a friend, character or even a parent figure. This can blur the line between fantasy and reality.
- **Sensitive topics:** children may explore personal worries with a chatbot and the answers they receive might not always be supportive, accurate or safe.
- **Over-reliance:** a child might start turning to a chatbot for advice instead of trusted adults.

Key message: AI chatbots can be a useful tool, but they are not a replacement for safe, supportive human relationships. With guidance, supervision and open conversations, parents can help children explore this technology in a safe and balanced way.

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Roblox: What every parent needs to know

Roblox is one of the most popular online gaming platforms for children, with millions of young players logging in every day. Unlike traditional video games, Roblox isn't just one single game – it's a whole virtual universe where users can play, create and share games with others around the world. This makes it exciting and engaging for children, but it also introduces some important safeguarding concerns that parents need to be aware of.

What is Roblox?

🎮 A gaming platform – millions of user-made games ('experiences') to explore, from obstacle courses to role-play adventures.

🗣️ A social space – players can chat, make friends and join groups, making it as much about socialising as gaming.

🛠️ A creative tool – children can design their own games and characters, sometimes learning coding along the way.

Why children love it

- Roblox sparks imagination, teamwork, and problem-solving. Children enjoy playing with friends, creating unique games or characters, and being part of a huge online community.
- But because it can be open and social, risks include strangers contacting children, age-inappropriate content, and the games being so immersive that switching off can be hard.

The risks parents should know about

- Online grooming – strangers can use chat to befriend children with harmful intentions, often starting with friendly messages, gifts or in-game help before encouraging private chats elsewhere.
- Inappropriate content – despite moderation, some games may include violence, scary themes or sexualised material.
- Over-absorption – Roblox is designed to keep players hooked, which can impact sleep, schoolwork and family time.
- In-game purchases – using 'Robux,' children may feel pressured to spend on costumes, upgrades or items, leading to overspending.