

# HOLYHEAD SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

April 2026

## OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM



At Holyhead School we endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We believe that all children should feel safe and be able to approach someone if they have a concern. The safety and wellbeing of our students is the most important aspect of our work as a school. If you have any concerns about your child's wellbeing or safety, or want to report a concern about another child, please ask to speak to one of the Designated Safeguarding Team. –Mrs D Denny Lead DSL.

### *In this month's issue we look at:*

- Lord's Back UK Social Media Ban
- UK media regulator investigating X
- Meta and TikTok let harmful content rise
- AI Risks Parent Factsheet
- The importance of good attendance in safeguarding your child
- The importance of good school attendance on your child's mental health

### Who to contact if you are concerned about a student at Holyhead school:

Mrs D Denny Lead DSL  
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Telephone the school on 0121 523 1960 to speak to any of the safeguarding team.

## **Lord's Back UK Social Media Ban**

Online safety campaigner Baroness Kidron, another peer supporting the ban, said she worried the government's consultation would become the "playground of the tech lobbyist".

"The government has shown it will only act under pressure, not principle," she added.

However, other peers urged caution about the proposal, with Labour peer Lord Knight of Weymouth arguing it could push teenagers towards "less regulated platforms".

He added that a blanket ban would also deprive children of the more positive aspects of social media, adding that a better approach was to "listen to young people" during the government consultation.

Several charities and campaign groups, including the NSPCC, have said a full ban risks "unintended consequences," and have called instead for stronger enforcement of existing child safety rules.

The government consultation, which will run for three months, will assess the merits of a ban for under-16s, as well as overnight curfews and actions to prevent "doom-scrolling".

It will also look at whether more robust age checks could be implemented by social media firms, which could be forced to remove or limit features "which drive compulsive use of social media".

**Lords back UK social media ban for under-16s - BBC News**

## **UK Media regulator investigating X**

The UK media watchdog has opened a formal investigation into Elon Musk's X over the use of the Grok AI tool to manipulate images of women and children by removing their clothes.

Ofcom has acted after a public and political outcry over a deluge of sexual images appearing on the platform, created by Musk's Grok, which is integrated with X.

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[UK media regulator investigating Elon Musk's X after outcry over sexualised AI images | X | The Guardian](#)

## **Meta and TikTok let harmful content rise after evidence outrage drove engagement, say whistleblowers**

Social media giants made decisions which allowed more harmful content on people's feeds, after internal research into their algorithms showed how outrage fuelled engagement, whistleblowers told the BBC.

[Meta and TikTok let harmful content rise after evidence outrage drove engagement - whistleblowers - BBC News](#)

## AI risks: parent/carer factsheet

What is AI?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the use of computer systems to solve problems and make decisions. It's already a part of everyday life – for example, AI is used to give you personalised suggestions on social media, shopping sites or route-planning apps.

Generative AI takes a written prompt and runs it through an algorithm to generate new, 'natural'-seeming content. Tools include:

- Chatbots such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Grammarly, which generate text
- Text-to-image programs like DALL-E and Midjourney, which create images
- Text-to-video programs, which create videos

AI technology is developing rapidly, and these tools will only improve over time. For example, they'll be able to create more convincing images or videos.

Many AI tools are free to access, and some can be used to generate inappropriate content.

What are the safeguarding risks to my child?

AI might be involved in:

- **Hacking and scams** – text-generation tools can write convincing emails and text messages to trick children into giving people access to their social media or banking accounts
- **AI-generated child sexual abuse images** – some text-to-image tools or image-altering apps (often called 'nudifying' apps) could be used to create sexually explicit pictures of children – this might be for sexual gratification or as a means of bullying another pupil
- **'Deepfake' pornography** – putting a real person's face into pornographic videos for sexual gratification or to humiliate the person being put in the images. AI technology is used to alter the person's facial expressions to make the video look more convincing
- **'Catfishing' and 'sextortion'** – criminals can use AI-generated profile pictures to appear younger than they are to befriend and groom children and young people, and then ask for information and/or images from them (e.g. nude or semi-nude photos). They can then use this to extort the child or young person into giving them money
- **Fake news and misinformation** – text-to-image tools can be used to create convincing fake photos of world events, which could be used to promote certain beliefs (including hateful ones)
- **AI chatbot relationships** – some AI tools allow children to chat and build a relationship with a fake person. These relationships can become very intense, and the AI may make dangerous or inappropriate suggestions

Signs to look out for

If your child is facing a safeguarding issue online, they might:

- Spend more time online, or more time offline
- Be up late online, or complain of being tired because they were online all night

- Receive a lot of messages and notifications on their phone
- Have stronger emotional responses or outbursts when they are online – they may get unusually angry, upset or distant after checking their phone or using their computer/tablet
- Be secretive about their use of the internet or a device – they may refuse to show you their phone or device, or refuse to tell you what they get up to online

Useful information and links to support you and your children:

[Talking to children about AI | NSPCC](#)

[combined\\_briefing\\_-\\_understanding\\_the\\_impacts\\_of\\_generative\\_ai\\_use\\_on\\_children.pdf](#)

[Viewing Generative AI and children's safety in the round | NSPCC Learning](#)

## The importance of good attendance in safeguarding your child



Regular school attendance is a vital component of safeguarding because it ensures children are visible to trusted adults who can monitor their well-being and identify risks early. When a child is in school, they are in a safe, structured environment, whereas persistent absence can be a "red flag" for underlying issues such as neglect, abuse, or exploitation. - Mr D Beale Senior DDSL

### Key Reasons Attendance is Critical for Safeguarding

- **Visibility and Safety:** Every day a child is in school is a day they are "seen, heard, and safe". Frequent attendance allows staff to observe physical and behavioural changes that might indicate harm.
- **Early Warning System:** Patterns of irregular attendance, such as frequent lateness or unexplained absences, often serve as an early indicator of wider safeguarding concerns.
- **Protective Factor:** Education acts as a protective shield, keeping children away from extra-familial harms like criminal exploitation, gangs, and radicalisation.
- **Identifying Neglect:** Severe or sustained absence can itself constitute neglect or be a primary indicator of it in the home environment.
- **Support for Vulnerable Groups:** Children with social workers, those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and those living in poverty have higher rates of absence and require proactive monitoring to prevent them from "slipping through the gaps"

## The importance of good school attendance on your child's mental health



Research shows that school attendance and mental health are deeply interconnected, forming a "vicious cycle" where poor attendance can harm mental wellbeing, and mental health struggles make it harder to attend school. Regular attendance is not just about grades; it provides a stable environment that supports a child's safety, social development, and overall emotional health. - Mrs L Williams Deputy Mental Health lead


### Why Attendance Matters for Mental Health

- **Routine and Stability:** Schools provide a structured daily routine and a sense of belonging, which are essential for emotional regulation.
- **Social Connection:** Being in school facilitates peer relationships and helps children develop social skills, reducing isolation and loneliness.
- **Access to Support:** Schools are often the primary point of contact for pastoral care, mental health support teams, and early intervention services.
- **Long-term Outcomes:** Consistent attendance is linked to higher self-esteem and better life trajectories. Conversely, persistent absence is associated with a higher risk of unemployment, substance abuse, and lower lifetime earnings.

### The Impact of Mental Health on Attendance

- **"Probable Mental Disorders":** In England, roughly 1 in 5 children aged 8 to 16 have a "probable mental disorder," a figure that has risen significantly since 2017.
- **Increased Absence:** Children with mental health conditions miss nearly three times more school than their peers. Specifically, those with anxiety or depression are more likely to experience "school refusal" or emotional avoidance.
- **Physical Symptoms:** Mental health issues often manifest as somatic symptoms like headaches, nausea, or stomach pain, leading to frequent medical absences.

#### Key Statistics & Risks

Factor 	Impact of Poor Attendance
<b>Mental Health Risk</b>	Probability of mental ill health rises from 1.82% (no absence) to 5.27% (30% absence).
<b>Academic Performance</b>	Students with near-perfect attendance have double the odds of passing GCSE English and Maths compared to those with 90-95% attendance.
<b>Future Earnings</b>	Persistently absent secondary students could earn £10,000 less at age 28.
<b>Persistent Absence</b>	Defined as missing 10% or more of school; rates doubled post-pandemic, though they are currently starting to fall.