

Head of School

Friday 9th February 2024

UPDATE

Dear parents/carers and students,

I would like to wish everyone a happy half term. Although it is our last week, we have not stopped with our teaching and learning.

We have had over 120 Year 11 prefects this academic year. Students wear their prefect tie and badges with pride and support the school community throughout the school day. As our Year 11 students move closer to their examinations, we would like them to focus their attention on those important GCSE and BTECs grades. On Thursday, we held their final prefect breakfast reward. I would like to thank our students for their hard work and dedication over the past year, they have been incredible! I know they will miss their free reward breakfasts too.

Mr Bamber led a special assembly where 80 of our Year 10 students were newly appointed as Temporary Prefects. These students had to apply through a formal process and were selected based on their excellent attendance and positive attitudes to learning. I look forward to working with our new prefects.

We have also had successes in several different sports from Gymnastics, Bowling to Football. I am so proud of all the sporting opportunities our students receive at Spalding. Last Saturday, seven students from Spalding Academy went to Stamford to compete in the East Midlands Floor & Vault competition. Continuing on from their recent success at the Lincolnshire Floor & Vault competition, the under 14 Girls A Team came an incredible place 2nd place out of six teams in a very competitive competition. They were only beaten by an Independent school, which means the Spalding Academy Under 14 Girls are the best mainstream school in the whole of East Midlands. The team performed with confidence during their floor routines and had a perfect landings on their vaults - scoring some of the highest floor and vault scores of the day! A special mention goes to Emilia Wilson (Year 9) who scored an incredible 15.9 out of 16 on vault - the highest vault score of the entire day.



We are continuing to see students completing their Aspire passport and collecting their badges. A reminder that some of the Aspire challenges can be completed at home such as make and cook a family meal or complete one task to help out at home for seven days. Our amazing students have achieved over 130 badges this academic year so far. This is an incredible achievement. We are always evaluating our student rewards and we are adding in additional layers for our students who achieve an Aspire Badge.

As we approach the half term break, I would like to remind parents and students of our school safeguarding support over the holiday period. If any student requires support for a concern whilst out of school hours we have a designated email address worried@spaldingacademy.org.uk to respond with advice, guidance and support and signpost to further support if necessary. This email address is active during the holiday period, however, there may not be an immediate response due to it also being a staff holiday period and a designated staff member will reply as soon as possible.

Attached to the end of this update, I have included a parent/carer helpsheet regarding Artificial Intelligence Robots (AI Robots). Lincolnshire Safeguarding Partnership have brought to our attention the popularity of this amongst our young people. In an ever-changing world of social media and apps I wanted to raise the awareness of this. Whilst AI can be a really creative tool and has many benefits that will change how we use the internet it is important parents are aware that safety features are not in line with most commonly used apps and they therefore need to be checked by an adult and monitored in order to avoid harmful content being seen by children and young people.

We also have further support helplines and specialist external support listed on our school website via www.spaldingacademy.org.uk/safeguarding. This can be found on the Pastoral tab, click on Safeguarding and scroll to 'Who can offer additional support?'. We have been reminding all students on how to access support during the half term period in assemblies this week in the event that they should require safeguarding advice.

Finally, on Thursday evening we held our very first Trust Recruitment Roadshow at Spalding Academy. Due to the popularity of the Trust schools our student numbers continue to rapidly increase and therefore we are looking to recruit more staff, both teaching and non-teaching, in the schools across the Trust. The evening was really successful and it was an absolute pleasure to meet so many members of the local community. If you are interested in a position at one of our four Trust schools please 'Register Your Interest' or apply for current vacancies at www.slat.org.uk/vacancies

I would like to wish everyone a happy and safe half term. We return to school on Monday 19th February 2024.

Your sincerely,



Mrs Jemma Curson

Head of School, Spalding Academy

For the latest news

You can follow Spalding Academy on our official social media platforms as follows:

- www.instagram.com/SpaldingAcademy
- www.facebook.com/SpaldingAcademy
- www.twitter.com/SpaldingSLAT

AI Chatbots What is it ?

While online your children frequently encounter artificial intelligence (AI) in various forms. One increasingly common application is the AI chatbot, a computer program designed to simulate conversation with humans. They access information from across the internet and use it to generate responses that mimic human conversation. AI has a wide range of uses from providing information, engaging in conversations or assisting with problem solving. It's a powerful tool that offers exciting possibilities for children and young people, but like any tool, it also comes with potential dangers.

Examples of Chatbots;



Chat GPT
 Generates human-like responses to text-based conversations



Replika
 An AI companion that is paired with a 3D avatar



My AI
 My AI is a chatbot available on Snapchat



HiAi
 HiAi allows users to create a character to talk to



AI Friends
 Has pre set fictional characters for user to chat with



WOMBO
 An app that makes pictures based on text prompts

The dangers;

Harmful and inappropriate content:

While AI Chatbots may seem intelligent they are not able to determine what information is good or bad. This can often result in responses that may be harmful or inappropriate for young people. Some apps try to get around this by creating rules and filters for the chatbots to follow. However, whilst investigating this issue we found that most available ai chat apps would jump to sexualised, toxic and abusive conversations with little input from the user, making them inappropriate for the given age rating.

Misinformation and manipulation:

AI can be used to create deepfakes (a video of a person in which their face or body has been digitally altered) and generate realistic but fabricated content. Children may struggle to discern real from fake information, making them vulnerable to online manipulation and propaganda.

The dangers continued;



Connections and wellbeing:

AI Chatbots are designed to be a virtual friend, users can create fictional characters or create a persona from scratch. It is important to understand why children are seeking friendship in this way and if there is a need to seek further wellbeing support. We found that some of the AI apps merge AI and live chats in a way that was not overly clear. Making it possible for strangers to contact children undetected. It is essential to check for these features before giving children or young people access to these apps.

Privacy and data collection:

Many AI apps collect your personal data, including children's online activity and interactions. This data can be used for target advertising, profiling, or even sold to third parties. AI should be treated as though it is a stranger, never sharing private and personal information. Be careful of adverts whilst most AI Chat apps are free to download these include popup adverts. We found that these adverts were often for live chat apps that were not age appropriate for the rating they were given.

5 tip for safe usage;



- 1. Know your tools:** Research the chatbot and test it out before letting your child use it, understanding its features, age appropriateness, and potential risks. Check to see what parental features they have. Remember many of the chatbots we used were inappropriate so it's important to explore first.
- 2. Open communication:** Talk openly about the risks, encouraging your child to share their experiences and ask questions about things that feel uncomfortable. Try to avoid judgment or dismissiveness that could put them off sharing.
- 3. Set boundaries:** Establish time limits and nonprivate spaces in the house for chatbot use, prioritizing real-world interactions and offline activities.
- 4. Fact-check together:** Teach your child critical thinking skills, encouraging them to double-check information shared by the chatbot through reliable sources.
- 5. Be the guide:** Explore chatbots together, demonstrating responsible online behaviour and showing how to interact respectfully and safely.

Remember AI isn't all bad, however it is a new technology that requires adult supervision whilst the safety features catch up. AI even helped write some of this newsletter.



To learn more about AI and all parents need to know, visit [InternetMatters.org](https://www.internetmatters.org). A full range of step by step parental controls guides are also available.

For advice and support on young people's mental health and wellbeing check out Healthy Minds Lincolnshire for self help guides. You can also call the Here4You Line on 0800 234 6342 to speak directly to one of the practitioners who will talk through how you are feeling.

