

# Head of School

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025

UPDATE

Dear parents/carers and students,

On Wednesday this week, we celebrated the end of the Year 11 Prefect duties with a celebration Prefect Breakfast. They now hand over the baton to Year 10 students who have been selected for Temporary Prefect positions following successful applications. We have been able to award lots of students in Year 10 with temporary prefect status in this trial position prior to being awarded full prefect status. Congratulations to all Year 10 students who have been awarded this important role in the school.

On Tuesday we took part in 'Safer Internet Day', which is a global campaign with the aim to make the internet a safer and better place for all. The theme for this year was 'Too good to be true' and we used this as an opportunity to run sessions for Key Stage 3. The aim was to help students scams especially with the growth of AI, be aware of online sextortion and how to stay safe using the internet.

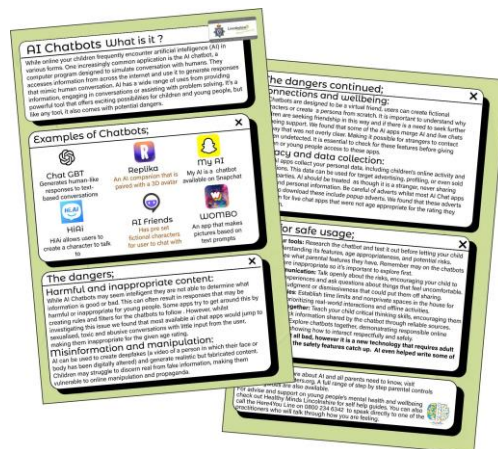
Over 100 of our Year 11 students have applied to the SLAT Sixth Form at Bourne Academy, so we have arranged two separate trips to the Sixth Form in February and March 2025. The first of these visits took place yesterday, and the second visit will be after half term. With the summer exams around the corner, this has helped the Year 11 students plan ahead and be better prepared for when they start in September 2025. They had a guided tour of the school visiting subject classrooms, met key staff and heard from former Spalding Academy students who are now at Sixth Form as well as having the opportunity to ask any questions throughout the day.



In celebration of 'World Book Day' on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025, we are inviting our Year 7 students only to dress up as a character from their favourite book. They may arrive to school in their costume and remain in their costume throughout the day. They are welcome to bring with them a copy of the book that they are dressing as a character from but they do not need to do this. On this day, we are also having a 'Best Costume' competition in our Library. Students wishing to enter the competition should attend the Library at 1.20pm on the day. There will be prizes available for winning entries. We do ask please that parents/carers ensure costumes are appropriate for school and clearly relate to a character from a book. This is not an additional opportunity for a non-uniform day.

As we approach the half term break, I would like to remind parents and students about our school active safeguarding support over the holiday period. If any student requires support for an 'out of school hours' concern, we have a designated email address ([worried@spaldingacademy.org.uk](mailto:worried@spaldingacademy.org.uk)). This email address is active during the holiday period with designated staff available to respond. There may not be an immediate response due to it being a staff holiday period however, please be reassured that there will be support and advice signposted as soon as possible.

Attached to the end of this update, I have included a parent/carer helpsheet regarding Artificial Intelligence Robots (AI Robots). There has been a rise in the popularity of this amongst our young people and 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 or created by children and young people.



If you or your child require further safeguarding support, specialist external support and helplines are listed on our school website ([www.spaldingacademy.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.spaldingacademy.org.uk/safeguarding)). This can be found on the Pastoral tab / Safeguarding and scroll to 'Who can offer additional support?'

Term 3 has been an amazing term and we look forward to welcoming all students back to school on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

I hope you and your families all have a fantastic half term break.

Kindest regards,

**Mr Glenn Martin**  
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](https://www.instagram.com/SpaldingAcademy)
- [www.facebook.com/SpaldingAcademy](https://www.facebook.com/SpaldingAcademy)
- [www.twitter.com/SpaldingSLAT](https://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.





TRAIN TO TEACH WITH  
LINCOLNSHIRE ITT



# Get Into Teaching OPEN EVENING

**Wednesday 12th March 2025 • 5.30pm to 7.00pm**

South Lincolnshire Academies Trust (SLAT) are now one of the **Lead Partners for Lincolnshire ITT** and can talk to you about starting your teaching journey with us. At this 'Get Into Teaching' event, which will be held at Spalding Academy, you will discover how you can gain a recognised teaching qualification with our one-year school centred Initial Teacher Training.

If any of the following applies to you, you will benefit from attending:

- Recently gained a Level 6 undergraduate degree (e.g. BA, BSc, BEd, BEng) in any subject
- Currently studying a Level 6 undergraduate degree (e.g. BA, BSc, BEd, BEng) in any subject
- Currently studying A-levels or Level 3 BTECs and wanting to get into teaching
- Wanting to change career and become a teacher
- Working in a non-teaching role within a school or college environment and wanting to get into teaching

**You could train either at the schools in our highly successful Trust (Bourne Academy, Spalding Academy, Giles Academy and Cowley Academy) or at a variety of other secondary schools in the Lincolnshire, Rutland and Peterborough areas.**

This event starts at 5.30pm where there will be a presentation then the opportunity to speak to staff informally. You will learn about the different training pathways, entry requirements and details about student finances. We will cover school placements, the course content, support available plus timescales. We can also provide help so you can successfully apply.

To attend, please visit [www.slat.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.slat.org.uk/vacancies) to register in advance.



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South Lincolnshire  
Academies Trust

Spalding Academy, Neville Avenue, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 2EJ  
[www.slat.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.slat.org.uk/vacancies)