



Fake or Real? Know the Deal

A guide for parents and carers on deepfakes and AI-generated content

Lancashire Police has launched the Fake or Real? Know the Deal campaign to help young people, families and educators recognise and respond to the growing risks of AI-generated deepfakes.

This newsletter will help you understand what deepfakes are, how they can affect young people, where they might be seen and what you can do to keep your child safe.



What are deepfakes?

Deepfakes are images, videos or audio clips created or manipulated using artificial intelligence (AI). They can make it appear as though someone has said or done something they never actually did.



Deepfakes can include sexualised images and videos. They can be used to harm, embarrass, blackmail or exploit young people.



Why does this matter?

- They can have a serious impact on a young person's safety, wellbeing and future.
- They can damage a young person's reputation and relationships.
- They can be used for bullying, harassment or blackmail.
- The content can spread quickly and widely online.
- Even if the image or video is fake, the harm and distress to the young person is very real.



What might a deepfake look like?

Deepfakes can take many forms, for example:



Altered photos

A real photo that has been changed to make it look like something is happening that didn't.



Fake videos

A video that makes it look like someone has said or done something they never did.



Fake voice notes

Audio that sounds like a real person, with a realistic voice.



Sexualised images

Nude or sexualised images created or altered using AI (even if the original image was a normal photo).



Shared content

Images or videos used to bully, harass, threaten or blackmail.



Circulated widely

Fake content that can be shared in group chats, on social media or online forums in seconds.



Where might children see deepfakes?

- Social media platforms (e.g. Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube).
- Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Discord).
- Online gaming platforms.
- Peer-to-peer sharing (e.g. in group chats).
- Websites or online forums.
- They can be shared quickly and widely, even if they are later removed from one platform.



Why are they convincing?

- They can look and sound very realistic.
- They can be created using publicly available photos, videos or audio.
- AI tools are becoming more accessible and easier to use.
- Small details (such as lighting, backgrounds and voices) can be very convincing.
- It can be hard to tell if something is real or fake, especially at first glance.





What to do if it happens to your child

A step-by-step guide for parents and carers

Finding out that your child has been targeted by a deepfake or AI-generated image or video can be distressing. It is important to stay calm, take the right action and seek support. This page explains what to do and where to get help.



1



Listen and reassure

- Stay calm and let your child know they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Do not blame them.
- Reassure them that they are not alone and that you will support them.
- Take their worries seriously, no matter how small they seem.

2



Do not view, save or share

- Do not ask your child to show you the image or video if possible.
- Do not download, save or copy the image or video.
- Do not share it with anyone else, including other family members, as this could be illegal and can cause further harm.
- Ask your child for details about where they saw it, but avoid viewing the content yourself.

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Record useful information

- If your child has seen or received a deepfake, make a note of:
 - the date and time
 - where it was seen (e.g. app, website, social media platform)
 - any usernames or profiles involved
 - what has been shared or said
 - any other relevant details
- You can take screenshots of messages or profile information, but avoid saving or sharing the image or video itself.

4



Tell the school

- Contact your child's Head of Year, Form Tutor or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible.
- We will take the concern seriously, work with you and your child, and follow our safeguarding procedures.
- We may also be able to support with removing content and provide pastoral support.

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Report to the police (if appropriate)

- If the content is sexual, involves a child under 18, or is being used to threaten, harass or blackmail, it is a criminal offence.
- Report it to the police via 101 (or 999 if there is an immediate risk).
- You can also report online via www.lancashire.police.uk
- The police can advise on next steps and may investigate.

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Report to online platforms and support services

- Report the content to the platform where it has been shared (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp). Use their reporting tools to request removal.
- You can also report to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) for illegal sexual images or videos of under 18s: www.iwf.org.uk
- If the content is a nude or sexual image they did not create, you can also use the Report Remove tool: www.childline.org.uk/report-remove



Look after your child's wellbeing

- Being targeted can be very upsetting. Look out for signs that your child may be worried, anxious or distressed.
- Encourage them to talk to a trusted adult.
- You may also want to access extra support (see page 3 for useful sources).



Keep an eye on ongoing risks

- The content may have been shared more widely than you realise.
- Continue to monitor their online activity and privacy settings.
- Talk to them about who they are communicating with online and encourage them to report anything else they see.



Remember... it's not your child's fault

- Children and young people can be targeted by deepfakes without their knowledge or consent.
- The responsibility lies with the people who create and share this content.
- What matters most is that your child feels safe, supported and believed.



If you are ever unsure, contact the school.
Our safeguarding team is here to help and advise.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.



Working together to keep children safe

Our commitment, guidance and useful resources

Deepfakes and AI-generated content are a growing issue, but by working together we can reduce the risks and ensure our children are safe, supported and empowered. This page outlines what we will do at Fulwood Academy, what you can do at home, the law, and where to get further help.

A safer digital world is a shared responsibility.



What we will do at Fulwood Academy

- Deliver age-appropriate online safety and digital literacy education, including information about deepfakes and AI.
- Reinforce our expectations around respectful behaviour online and offline.
- Provide pupils with clear information about where to get help if they see or experience harmful content.
- Take all reports of deepfakes seriously and follow our safeguarding procedures.
- Work with parents, carers and external partners (including the Police and safeguarding services) to support pupils.
- Provide pastoral support for any pupil affected.
- Review and update our approach as technology and risks evolve.



What you can do at home

- Have **regular, open conversations** about online life, relationships and the risks of AI-generated content.
- **Be curious** and interested in the apps, games and platforms your child uses.
- Talk about the importance of not creating, sharing or forwarding nude or sexual images (even if they think they are 'jokes' or created with AI).
- **Check privacy settings** and encourage safe and respectful online behaviour.
- Remind your child that they can always talk to you or another trusted adult if they are worried or see something concerning.
- **Look out** for changes in behaviour, mood or online habits, which may suggest they have been affected.
- Make use of the support and advice listed below.



Conversation starters

Ideas to help you talk to your child

- "What apps and websites do you use and what do you enjoy about them?"
- "Have you heard of deepfakes? What do you know about them?"
- "What would you do if you saw a fake or worrying image online?"
- "Would you feel comfortable talking to me if something like this happened to you or a friend?"
- "How can we make sure you stay safe and look out for your friends?"



The law and key points to know

- Creating, sharing or threatening to share sexual images of a child (even AI-generated) is a serious criminal offence, even if the image is not real.
- It is also an offence to possess AI-generated sexual images of a child.
- Anyone under the age of 18 cannot legally consent to sexual activity, including the creation or sharing of sexual images.
- The police can investigate and take action, even if the content was created using AI.
- Education, support and early intervention are key to preventing harm and keeping children safe.



Useful support and advice

There are a number of trusted organisations that provide advice, guidance and support for parents, carers and young people.

NSPCC

Advice on online safety, sharing images and keeping children safe.
www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety



Practical advice, guides and conversation starters.
www.saferinternet.org.uk



Report sexual images or videos of under 18s (including AI-generated content).
www.iwf.org.uk



Support and advice for young people.
www.childline.org.uk | 0800 1111



Help to remove nude or sexual images shared online (if the person in the image is under 18).
www.childline.org.uk/report-remove



Where to get help

If you are worried that your child has been affected by a deepfake or has seen concerning content, you can contact:



School

Contact your child's Form Tutor, Head of Year or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).



Police

Call 101 for non-urgent concerns or **999** if there is an immediate risk.



Report online

You can also report to the platforms where the content has been shared.



Remember...

- Your child is not alone. It is never their fault.
- The sooner you speak up, the sooner we can help.
- Together we can create a safer, kinder digital world for all of our young people.

*Listen.
Support.
Believe.
Take action.*



If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school.
Our safeguarding team is here to help, advise and support.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.