

# The Bulletin

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week we have successfully nominated our 3 new student council members as Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary. The successful candidates will be an integral part of ensuring that students voices are heard (at least!) weekly in a designated forum. Parents and carers of these students will be notified of their achievement in a letter sent home tonight.

This week we say good bye to one of our home tutored students who is returning to their mainstream school; we wish them the very best of luck in their transition back and look forward to hear how they are doing.

Thank you to those who were able to donate to our Jeans for Genes cause this week.

A reminder that our first parent/carer support session begins in a couple of weeks' time on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October.

We look forward to welcoming Victoria our new speech and language therapist to the school next week. She will be working on a part-time basis at Ashley College. If you are concerned about your child's speech and language needs and would like to have an informal chat about potential assessment or intervention do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Have a great weekend.

Louise.

Our value this half term is

**Resilience**

Our vision:

- To provide a safe, enriching and nurturing environment, with wellbeing at its heart; where children and young people, can learn, gain confidence and thrive.

Our values:

To promote **resilience**, **self-confidence**, **tolerance**, and **respect**

Our aims: **'Building confidence for the future'**



We raised £25 for Jeans for Genes last Friday. Thank you for your contributions.

## Dyslexia Awareness Week

The week of 2<sup>nd</sup> October – 9<sup>th</sup> October marks dyslexia awareness week

From 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023, we will be celebrating individuals with dyslexia from all backgrounds and walks of life. We will enjoy learning about individual journeys with dyslexia and discovering the diversity of experience in our community. Having dyslexia can bring its challenges but it also shapes experience and perspective and makes you **Uniquely You**. We want to inspire everyone to value and appreciate individuals with dyslexia

There is capacity within the college for Dyslexia screening and full assessments. Please contact us directly if you have concerns about your child's Literacy needs.

[What is Dyslexia?](#)

**Dyslexia Awareness Week**

Celebrate being **Uniquely You**  
#DAW23



## "Saluting our Sisters"



"October marks the start of Black History Month. Black History Month 2023 is a momentous occasion to recognise and celebrate the invaluable contributions of black people to British society.

Black people have always been at the forefront of social justice movements, fighting against oppression and paving the way for change. However, despite their countless contributions to society, the achievements of black women, in particular, have too often been overlooked or forgotten. That is why, this year, Black History Month will be celebrating the exceptional achievements of black women." – credit blackhistorymonth.org.uk

We look forward to updating you over the course of this month about the events we are running at Ashley College.

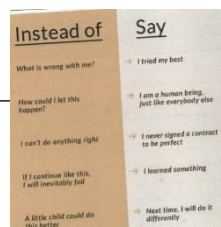
London has lots of events running throughout this month which you and your family might like to participate in.

[Black History Month in London - Black History Month Events in London 2023](#)

## Growth Mindset

This week in wellbeing students focused on a growth mindset and trying to change their language when they are feeling negative. People with a growth mindset are more likely to embrace challenges, persist in the face of obstacles, enjoy putting in the effort, learn from criticism, and find inspiration in others' successes. People who embrace a growth mindset understand the value of effort and persistence in reaching for their goals.

[Creating Positive Thinking in Families](#)



## Here to listen: our safeguarding team



Designated safeguarding lead (DSL): **Louise Togher**  
Contact details: **07735826382**  
**ltogher@ashleycollege.brent.sch.uk**



Deputy DSL: **Ranjna Shiyani**  
Contact details: **07900192271**



Deputy DSL: **Anne-Marie Mika**  
Contact details: **07866217122**



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence – particularly in terms of how it generates natural language – has seen significant development over the last six months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat, for example). One form of AI to become especially popular has been the ‘AI friend’ or chatbot, as children eagerly experiment with these new-found computer-generated companions. There are now numerous apps available with this ‘virtual friend’ functionality, with the likelihood of it being added to other, successful platforms soon.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always be able to recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. So there’s a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

### REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could very likely hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

### LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn’t always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it’s being told or replying insensitively to a young user who’s already struggling could potentially impact a child’s emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

### UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they’ve been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour (as many originate from the USA or the UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview). This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours.

### COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child’s own powers of critical thinking, creativity and ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

### PRIVACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts are warning that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties, for instance).

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If your child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they’re aware of and how they’re using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with your child and perhaps do your own research to ensure you think they’re suitable. Once you’re totally happy, you could sit with your young one and begin exploring AI chatbots together.

### CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If your child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space at home, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you’ll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

### FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside your child to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it’s appropriate. It’s important to make sure that children are still getting plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

### TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we’d strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps your child can download and use. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

### RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It’s unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it’s probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to your child. In particular, emphasise that AI isn’t a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something that isn’t entirely impartial or accurate.

### Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.



[@natonlinesafety](https://twitter.com/natonlinesafety)

[/NationalOnlineSafety](https://www.facebook.com/NationalOnlineSafety)

[@nationalonlinesafety](https://www.instagram.com/nationalonlinesafety)

[@national\\_online\\_safety](https://www.tiktok.com/@national_online_safety)

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 21.08.2023