



SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

WITH DR SANDRA WISEMAN

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Safer Internet Day 2026 – Key facts for schools

Date: Tuesday 10th February 2026

Campaign theme: Smart tech, safe choices – Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI

This year's resources and activities focus on helping young people understand and engage with artificial intelligence safely and responsibly. Safer Internet Day is coordinated in the UK by the UK Safer Internet Centre, a partnership of organisations including Childnet, Internet Watch Foundation and SWGfL.

Purpose and safeguarding relevance

The campaign is designed to:

- Raise awareness about online safety with a focus on how children engage with AI, including voice assistants, chatbots and other smart tech.
- Empower pupils with the skills and confidence to make safe online choices.
- Support conversations about risks, benefits, responsibility and ethical use of technology, all core online safeguarding topics.

From a safeguarding perspective, this aligns with effective practice around:

- Digital resilience and risk awareness in pupils
- Preventative education as part of a whole-school online safety strategy
- Parental engagement on managing online risk and technology at home
- Curriculum links to RSHE/Computing/digital literacy

Free official resources for schools

Schools can access a suite of free materials designed for different age groups and whole-school use:

Age-appropriate materials

Official resource packs include:

- Infant/Early Years (3-7)
- Primary (7-11)
- Lower Secondary (11-14)
- Upper Secondary (14-18)

Each pack includes presentations, classroom activities and a whole-school assembly plan.

Quizzes and engagement tools

Interactive quizzes for pupils (e.g. 7-11 and 11-14) help assess understanding and spark classroom discussion about safe tech choices.

Communication templates

Adaptable letters to parents and carers are provided to support school-home engagement around the message and activities.

Professional development

Free webinars are available for educators and safeguarding leads to explore how to use the resources and embed learning effectively.

Practical steps for schools

Here's how schools can incorporate Safer Internet Day into safeguarding practice:

Planning and reporting

- Record planned activities on your school's online safety calendar.
- Consider how the theme fits into your online safety policy and risk assessments (e.g. AI tools used by pupils, AI-generated content moderation).
- Link activities to the school's RSHE/Computing curriculum and safeguarding evidence for governors/inspectors.

Staff and pupil education

- Use the official lesson plans and assembly content to educate pupils about safe AI use and wider online safety.
- Tailor messages for different age groups and developmental stages.
- Link classroom discussions to current safeguarding concerns (e.g. misinformation, inappropriate content, consent, privacy).

Parent and carer engagement

- Send home letters and guides so families can reinforce safe tech choices at home.
- Host a brief parent workshop or share materials via newsletters and social platforms.

Monitoring and follow-up

- Evaluate pupil understanding post-Safer Internet Day through class discussions or follow-up activities.
- Use quizzes or reflective surveys to monitor impact.
- Feed insights into your annual online safety review and policy updates.

School voice and promotion

- Schools are encouraged to register support for Safer Internet Day and share planned activities publicly via the Safer Internet Day supporters map (no cost).

This can help reinforce your school's commitment to creating a positive and safe online environment.

Safeguarding connections

The Safer Internet Day theme for 2026 aligns with key safeguarding priorities such as:

- Digital wellbeing

- Online risk awareness
- Responsible use of technology
- Engagement with parents and carers on online safety
- Curriculum integration of safeguarding principles

Read:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2026>

Useful resources:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2026/top-tips-for-young-people>
<https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2026/top-tips-for-parents-and-carers>

Why Early Help matters: What schools need to know about Family Hubs and infant wellbeing.

A cross-party report by the UK Health and Social Care Committee highlights concerns about early child health and support services in England, particularly during the first 1,000 days of life (conception to age two), a critical period for brain development, emotional wellbeing and long-term wellbeing.


Why this matters to safeguarding in schools


Although the focus of the report is on very early years services, the outcomes it describes have direct safeguarding relevance because:


- Early health and development strongly influence children's wellbeing, emotional regulation, readiness for learning, and vulnerability to harm later in childhood.
- Gaps in early support can compound adverse childhood experiences, increasing demand on school pastoral and safeguarding systems as children age.
- Early intervention and parental support reduce stressors that often underpin behavioural and mental health concerns in school settings.

Key recommendations and findings


 **1. Expansion of Family Hubs:** The Committee recommends that Family Hubs, local centres offering integrated support (health, early years, parenting advice), should be expanded to every community with stable long-term funding. **Safeguarding link:** Family Hubs can act as early protective support networks for families, helping detect and prevent issues before they escalate into safeguarding concerns seen in school pastoral work.


 **2. Re-build the health visiting workforce:** MPs called for the Government to recruit at least 1,000 additional health visitors because numbers have fallen sharply in the last decade. A minimum of six contacts between health visitors and every infant is recommended to ensure families aren't slipping through gaps. **Safeguarding link:** Health visitors are key for early identification of developmental, emotional or family concerns (e.g. bonding issues, parental mental health), which can influence later child safety and school engagement.


 **3. New vaccination strategy:** The report calls for a renewed national strategy to increase vaccination coverage, targeting 95% uptake across England, a goal that has lapsed. Pilots are emerging where health visitors deliver vaccinations directly, helping families overcome barriers. **Safeguarding link:** High vaccination coverage protects children against preventable diseases reducing illness, absence, and vulnerability in school populations.

 **4. Perinatal mental health support:** MPs emphasised the importance of better perinatal mental health support for caregivers through Family Hubs to safeguard early attachment and developmental wellbeing. **Safeguarding link:** Early caregiver mental health concerns are often associated with later child emotional and behavioural issues requiring support in schools.

What schools should note

 **Early Help and partnership working:** Schools should be aware of and signpost families to Family Hubs and health visiting services as part of early help and safeguarding pathways.

 **Attendance and health:** Falling vaccination rates and health disparities increase absence risks and potential outbreaks, relevant to health and safety and safeguarding attendance monitoring.

 **Vulnerable families:** Early years instability (limited health visitor contacts, limited parental support) can signal higher safeguarding risk later, share information with families and wider multi-agency contacts.

 **Curriculum and conversations:** Embed messages about health, wellbeing, prevention and support services into PSHE/RSHE, particularly for parents/carers of foundation and primary age pupils

Read:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committees/81/health-and-social-care-committee/news/211450/boost-infants-life-chances-with-more-family-hubs-health-visitors-and-new-vaccines-strategy-mps-tell-gov/>

Forthcoming free safeguarding webinars for Spring term 1 2026

Eating disorders - Tuesday 3rd February

Children with a family member in prison (Bitesize webinar) -Tuesday 10th February

Spring term 2 - 5-minute 'bitesize' safeguarding refresher videos

Child modern slavery - Tuesday 3rd March

Children missing from home or care -Tuesday 10th March

Child abduction and community safety incidents - Tuesday 17th March

Faith based abuse - Tuesday 24th March

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