

Safeguarding scenario: What would you do? 🤖 🛡️

As a former Headteacher and now Safeguarding Consultant, one of the questions I increasingly ask during safeguarding training and audits is:

? What would you do if a pupil reported that an AI-generated image, video or message was being used to target them?

Imagine a pupil tells you:

- ◆ "Someone has created a fake image of me and shared it online."
- ◆ "People are sending AI-generated messages pretending to be me."
- ◆ "A fake video is being shared around school and everyone thinks it's real."

As artificial intelligence becomes more accessible, schools are increasingly having to respond to new forms of bullying, harassment, humiliation and online abuse.

⚠️ The content may be fake, but the impact on the child is very real

Even when images, videos or messages have been artificially generated, the emotional harm, reputational damage and distress experienced by the pupil can be significant.

✅ So what should schools do?

🛡️ Treat it as a serious safeguarding and behaviour concern

Do not dismiss incidents because the content is "fake" or AI-generated. Follow your safeguarding, behaviour and online safety procedures.

📄 Record and report

Log concerns accurately and ensure incidents are recorded. Individual incidents may appear isolated, but records can help identify emerging patterns, repeat behaviours or wider safeguarding risks.

❤️ Prioritise the pupil's wellbeing

Listen, reassure and support the child. Consider the emotional impact and involve parents or carers where appropriate.

🔍 Investigate the impact, not just the intent

Whether the creator intended harm or believed it was a joke, schools should focus on the effect on the victim and the wider school community.

⚖️ Respond proportionately

Responses may include sanctions, restorative approaches, education, parental engagement or, in some cases, referral to external agencies.

📖 Review your policies





Ensure emerging risks associated with AI, deepfakes and manipulated content are reflected within safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying and online safety policies.

Educate pupils


Children need to understand how AI can be used responsibly, how deepfakes are created, and how to critically evaluate online content.

Remember...

Artificial intelligence may be changing the way harm occurs, but the safeguarding principles remain the same.

-  Professional curiosity
-  Accurate recording
-  Shared responsibility
-  A child-centred approach

Schools that proactively educate pupils and staff about AI-related risks will be better placed to respond when incidents occur.

 Have you encountered AI-generated images, videos or messages being used to target pupils? How did your school respond, and what do you think schools need to be doing next?