

# Cotham School

## Online Safety Newsletter

Academic Year:  
2024/2025

Term: 6  
Date: 14/07/2025



### Newsletter Topic:

1. What is: AI Chatbots
2. Social Media Focus: Snapchat My AI

### What is Artificial Intelligence?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the simulation of human intelligence in computer systems. AI can learn, reason, and adapt to situations. As AI has developed, it has gained the ability to interpret speech, analyse images, and engage in fluid, natural conversations.

### What is the Impact?

AI is now a key part of daily life, improving efficiency in personal and business applications. While it drives innovation, managing its risks remains a challenge.

### Artificial Intelligence in Schools

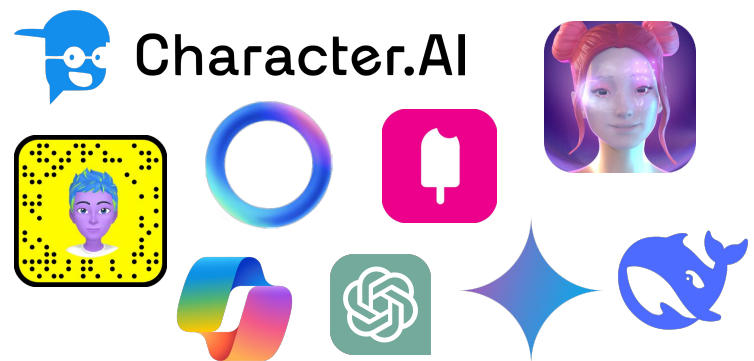
AI tools in education are a topic of ongoing debate. In June 2025, the Department for Education released guidance on managing AI in schools. AI has the potential to improve student outcomes, streamline administrative tasks, and reduce teacher workloads.

### Benefits of Artificial Intelligence

- + Provides tailored responses
- + Processes large amounts of information efficiently
- + Supports idea development and knowledge expansion
- + Delivers quick and effective responses

### Limitations of Artificial Intelligence

- Responses may be harmful, biased or inaccurate
- Information requires research and appropriate checks
- AI is evolving rapidly - Current gaps within safeguarding and regulation



### The Rise of AI Chatbots and Companions

AI-driven chatbots and virtual companions are becoming increasingly popular, offering interactive conversations that simulate personal relationships. While these technologies can provide entertainment and support, they also pose significant risks, particularly for children and young people.

### Examples of AI Companion Chatbots

Replika: <https://replika.com/>

Character.AI: <https://character.ai/>

Kuki: <https://chat.kuki.ai/>

Xiaoice: Not widely available in the UK.

Meta AI: Integrated into apps like Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp.

### Potential Risks for Young Users

Children engaging with AI chatbots may be exposed to inappropriate content, misinformation, or even harmful advice. These chatbots can distort reality, encourage excessive use, and create dependencies that may negatively impact mental health and development.

### Impact on Young People's Mental Health

Snapchat's My AI tool has the potential to influence young people's mental well-being. While it may offer helpful information and support, excessive reliance on the chatbot could lead to feelings of isolation or loneliness. Since AI interactions can feel personal, some young users may turn to My AI for emotional support, possibly diminishing real-life social connections.

### Concerns Over Advertising

As an example, Snapchat is testing sponsored links in My AI, offering brands new engagement opportunities. While this could boost marketing, it may also expose young users to more targeted ads, influencing spending habits. Parents should consider enabling controls to limit inappropriate content.

### Privacy Considerations for Young Users

Conversations with AI chatbots raises privacy concerns. Young users may share sensitive data, risking security. Parents and educators should teach safe online interactions.

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### Social Media: Snapchat

Snapchat is a multimedia messaging app developed by Snap Inc. It allows users to send photos, videos, and messages (called “Snaps”) that disappear after being viewed. The app is known for its focus on ephemeral content, creative filters, and augmented reality (AR) features.



### Age Requirements: 13+.

#### Key Features:

- Snaps
- Stories
- Chats
- Filters
- Discover Page
- Snap Maps
- Memories
- Streaks

### Safety and Privacy Features:

- View and location sharing control
- Report and block
- Ghost mode - hide location
- Parental control tools
- 24h data deletion
- 2FA security
- AI Moderation
- Safety center resources.

**How to:** Turn off My AI on Snapchat.

### What is My AI on Snapchat?

My AI on Snapchat is an AI chatbot that was integrated into the Snapchat application. It's designed to act as a virtual friend, capable of answering questions, offering advice, generating creative content, and engaging in conversations. It's powered by large language models (ChatGPT, Gemini), and has been trained on a data specific to Snapchat.



### How to Use My AI:

1. **Access My AI:** Find it at the top of your Chats or type @myai in any chat.
2. **Start Chatting:** Tap “My AI” and type your message.
  - a. **Ask Questions/Advice:** Get trivia, gift ideas, travel tips, recipe suggestions, etc.
  - b. **Generate Content:** Create stories, poems, and chat ideas.
  - c. **Get Recommendations:** See nearby places (if location is on).
  - d. **Play Games:** Simple text-based games.
  - e. **Customise:** Change its name and avatar (bio for Snapchat+).
  - f. **Give Feedback:** Long-press messages to submit feedback or report.

### Controversies

Snapchat's AI faced backlash for its forced placement and paywall for removal. **However, it can be blocked through Snapchat Family Center.** Inappropriate responses, especially to younger users, sparked safety concerns. Data privacy was another worry, as chats are saved for personalisation. Sponsored links in conversations were also found to be unsuitable.

**More information:** [BBC Bitesize Article](#)


### How long are my interactions stored?

All the content shared with My AI is stored until you delete it.


### How can I delete my data?

You can delete content sent to My AI in your Chat within 24 hours. You can also delete past content shared with My AI by following these steps:

#### On Android:

1. Tap your Profile icon and tap  to go to Settings
2. Scroll down to “Privacy Controls”
3. Tap “Clear Data”
4. Tap “Clear My AI Data” and confirm

#### On iPhone:

1. Tap your Profile icon and tap  to go to Settings
2. Scroll down to “Account Actions”
3. Tap “Clear My AI Data”, and confirm

