SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

Secondary | March 2026 In this issue: The law on AI images | Conversations about carrying knives

New law on AI-generated indecent images: What parents/carers need to know

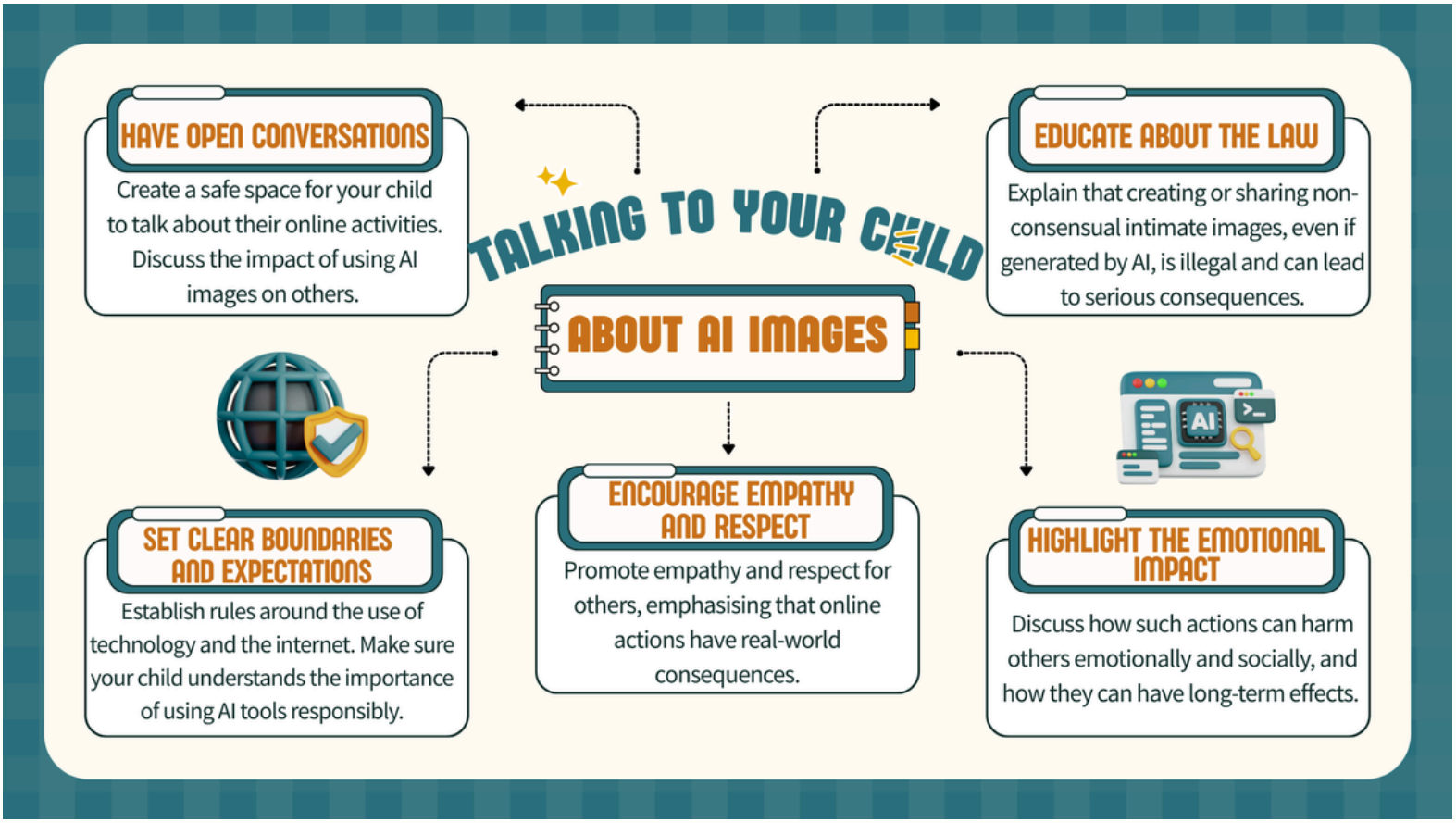
A new UK law has come into effect making it illegal to create or request the creation of non-consensual (without consent) intimate images using artificial intelligence (AI). This includes images that show individuals in sexualised or nude scenarios without their consent, even if the images are entirely fake. The law specifically targets AI-generated content that could be used to harass, bully or exploit individuals, including children.

Why this matters for parents and carers

Today, AI tools are easily accessible for children and there is a growing risk that young people might misuse these technologies to create inappropriate images as pranks or forms of cyberbullying. This can have severe emotional impact on victims and legal consequences for those using the tools. It's crucial for parents and carers to understand these risks and communicate effectively with their children about the responsible use of technology.

It's important to recognise that AI-generated images don't have to be sexual to cause real harm. Some young people have used AI to create fake images of others in embarrassing or upsetting situations, for example, making it look like someone is crying, failing at something or behaving in a way that could damage their reputation. Even if the image is obviously fake, it can still spread quickly and lead to humiliation, anxiety and social isolation. The emotional impact can be very serious.

Parents and carers should talk to their child about the wider risks of misusing AI, not just the legal side but also how it can hurt people. Encourage your them to think about how they treat others online and to speak to you or a trusted adult if they see or experience image-based bullying. Remind them that creating or sharing fake images to mock or upset someone is not harmless; it can have lasting consequences for everyone involved.



SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Supporting young people in the community: Conversations around carrying knives

Many parents and carers are worried about pressures young people face outside school, including exposure to knife crime, peer pressure to carry weapons and feeling unsafe in their local area. While not every young person is directly affected, many will hear about it through friends, social media or local news. Knowing how to support your child can make a real difference to the choices they make and how safe they feel.

Understanding why some young people carry knives

Young people rarely carry knives because they want to hurt someone. More often, it is linked to:

- fear of being attacked
- pressure from peers or older young people
- wanting to feel respected or protected
- exposure to violence online or locally
- feeling disconnected from school or community.

Understanding these reasons can help parents/carers focus on support rather than punishment or blame.

How parents can start conversations

Try to make conversations calm and curious rather than confrontational. You could:

- ask how safe they feel travelling to and from school
- talk about news stories in a neutral way
- ask what young people at school say about safety
- listen fully before responding.

Helping children handle peer pressure

You can help your child practise:

- ways to say no without losing face
- how to leave situations safely
- who to call if they feel unsafe
- planning safe routes and travel with friends.

It can help to agree 'exit plans', for example, a code word they can text if they want you to call them home

Building protective factors at home

Young people are less likely to get involved in risky situations when they:

- feel listened to and taken seriously
- have trusted adults they can talk to
- feel connected to school, clubs, sports or hobbies
- have clear but fair boundaries
- know how to get help safely.

Looking for signs a child may need extra support

Possible signs include:

- sudden changes in friends
- becoming secretive about where they go
- new expensive items with no explanation
- increased anxiety about leaving the house
- talking about needing protection.

These signs do not always mean something serious is happening but they are worth gently exploring.

If you are worried your child may be carrying a knife

- Focus first on safety and understanding why
- Seek support from school or local services early.

©The Enlightened Practitioner