



# Online Safety Newsletter September 2025

## Sherwood Junior School Online Safety Newsletter

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## Welcome Back!



Welcome back to Sherwood's Online Safety Newsletter!

This year, in computing, children will be diving into a **wide range of engaging and creative learning opportunities**, including:

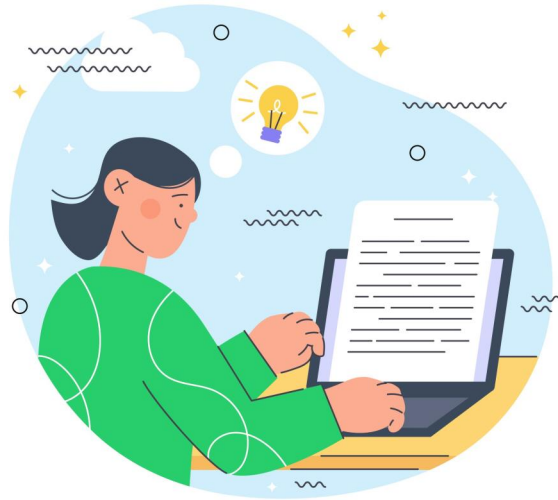
- 🖥️ **Coding** – learning how to give instructions to computers and create simple programs
- 🗣️ **Presenting** – building confidence in sharing ideas and speaking clearly
- 🎨 **Animation** – designing and bringing characters and stories to life
- 🧠 **Digital skills** – exploring how to use technology safely and responsibly

We're also thrilled to share that the school has invested in **lots of brand-new laptops and iPads**, giving children even more opportunities to explore, create and learn using modern technology.

As part of our curriculum, we'll also be focusing on **online safety**, helping children understand how to stay safe, make good choices, and know what to do if something online makes them feel unsure or uncomfortable.

As always, don't forget that all of our past online safety newsletters and useful guides, tips and tricks can be found on our school website, [here](#).

## What is AI? A reminder...



### What Is AI?

AI (Artificial Intelligence) is when computers or machines can do tasks that usually need human thinking—like answering questions, giving advice, or helping with homework. AI is becoming more common in everyday life. You might have seen it in:

- **Search engines** like Google, which now show AI-generated summaries.
- **Virtual assistants** such as Alexa, Siri, or Meta AI.
- **Chatbots** like ChatGPT or Snapchat’s My AI.

### How Can AI Help Children?

AI can be a useful tool when used safely and responsibly. For example:

- **Homework help** – AI can explain tricky topics or give ideas.
- **Finding information** – AI can answer questions and offer suggestions.

### What Are the Risks?





While AI can be helpful, it’s important to be aware of the risks:

- **Wrong answers** – AI doesn’t always get things right. Children should check facts with a trusted adult or reliable source.
- **Privacy** – Some AI tools collect personal data. Always check privacy settings and policies.

- **Unsuitable apps** – Many AI chat apps are rated 17+ and are not suitable for children.
- **Image misuse** – Some AI tools can change photos in unsafe ways, which can be a serious safeguarding concern.
- **Fake videos (deepfakes)** – AI can create videos that look real but aren't, which can be confusing or harmful.

### **How Can You Keep Your Child Safe?**

Here are some simple steps to help protect your child when using AI:

-  **Check age ratings** on apps and websites.
-  **Talk about digital safety** – help your child understand that not everything online is true.
-  **Use parental controls** on devices and broadband.
-  **Keep the conversation going** – encourage your child to speak to you or a trusted adult if something online worries them.

### **Want to Learn More?**

- What is AI? – [Internet Matters](#)
- Should you worry if your child has an AI friend? – [Parent Zone](#)

## Roblox - Grow a Garden

### **What Is Roblox?**




Roblox is a popular online platform where children can play a wide variety of games created by other users. One of the newest games, **Grow a Garden**, is currently very popular.

Roblox says this game is suitable for everyone and describes it as having **minimal content maturity**, which may include:

- Mild cartoon-style violence
- Light, unrealistic blood
- Occasional spooky or scary moments

### **Things to Be Aware Of**





Even though Grow a Garden may seem safe, it's important to remember that **Roblox is an online platform** with many different games and features. Here are some key things to watch out for:

-  **Chat** – Children can talk to other players, including strangers.
-  **In-game purchases** – Players can spend real money on items in the game.
-  **Screentime** – It's easy to lose track of time, so setting limits is helpful.

Because Roblox includes **user-generated content**, not all games may be suitable for younger children. Some may include inappropriate themes or unsafe interactions.

### **Tips for Parents & Carers**

To help keep your child safe while playing Roblox:

-  **Check the games they play** and talk to them about what they enjoy.
-  **Set up parental controls** to manage chat, spending, and access.
-  **Teach your child how to report** anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.
-  **Keep the conversation open** – encourage your child to speak to you if something doesn't feel right.

### **Learn More**

- [Roblox Parental Controls Overview](#)

## Coverstar



### What Is Coverstar?

Coverstar is an app that describes itself as a “**safe TikTok alternative.**” Children can use it to:



- Post videos
- Leave public comments
- Livestream performances

There’s **no private messaging**, but users can still interact with others through public comments.

Coverstar says children under 13 need **parental permission** to use the app, although there’s no strict age limit.

### What Should Parents Know?

While Coverstar aims to be child-friendly, there are still important things to consider:

-  **Public comments** – Children can still talk to strangers through comments.
-  **In-app purchases** – Items can be bought within the app, costing between **£0.99 and £59.99.**

- 🔍 **User-generated content** – Although Coverstar uses moderation tools, not all content may be suitable for younger children.

### 👨👩👧👦 **Tips for Keeping Your Child Safe**

If your child is using Coverstar:

- ✅ **Check the app's settings** and make sure parental controls are in place.
- 🧠 **Teach your child how to report** anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- 💬 **Talk regularly** about what they're watching and posting online.
- 📱 **Review age ratings** – Bark recommends Coverstar for children aged **10 and up**.

## Online Grooming



### 🚨 **What Is Grooming?**

**Grooming** is when someone tries to build a relationship with a child—online or in person—with the intention of causing harm or taking advantage of them. It's important that children learn to spot the **warning signs** and know what to do if something doesn't feel right.

### 🧠 **Helping Children Stay Safe**

We can help protect children by:

- Talking openly about **safe and unsafe behaviour online**

- Teaching them to **recognise red flags**, like someone asking them to keep secrets or trying to move conversations to private chats
- Encouraging them to **speak to a trusted adult** if anything makes them feel uncomfortable

### **Where to Find Support**

[Childline](#) has lots of helpful advice and resources for children and families, including how to stay safe online and what to do if they're worried about grooming.

## Monitoring in-game spending



### **In-Game Spending – What Parents Should Know**

Many games encourage children to spend money while playing. This can be to:

- Unlock new levels
- Buy special outfits or characters
- Get ahead of friends

Game companies often use clever techniques to make these purchases feel urgent or exciting, which can lead to children spending more than expected.

### **Helpful Guide for Families**

**Internet Matters** has created a fantastic guide for parents that explains:

- How children spend money in games
- What in-game currency is and how it works
- The benefits and risks of spending in games

- Tips and resources to help manage spending

 **Learn More**

 [View the Internet Matters Guide on In-Game Spending](#)

## Contact Us



If you have any questions regarding online safety, please speak to your child's class teacher or Mrs Burton.

Visit us on the web at [www.sherwood.notts.sch.uk](http://www.sherwood.notts.sch.uk)

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