

Main



Character / AI / Digital Safeguarding

17 July 2025

Dear Parents/carers

TLDR: RGS Focuses on Character, Ethical AI & Online Safety

This letter details RGS's dedication to character development, including insights from Professor Phil Cummins and RGS's character conference, introduces their exciting partnership with Good Future Foundation for ethical AI integration, and provides vital reminders on digital safeguarding, particularly regarding mobile phone use and summer holiday safety contacts.

Character

We were delighted to welcome many school leaders on Friday from as far as Manchester and Torquay to our Character conference. It was great to be able to share with other leaders, the [journey](#) we have been on and the importance we place on developing character at RGS. We were delighted to be joined by Professor Phil Cummins ([his post about the day can be found here](#)) who has been supporting schools globally on developing character. I have been reading his series of books which I would thoroughly recommend if you have an interest: [Book Series](#)

It has also been great reading through all of the work from the “working from home day” that focused on character. All of the research shows that it is essential for us to continue to get students to reflect on their own character consistently over time. This is essential because, as Phil Cummins says in his books, their “why” (or their purpose) changes throughout life. It is through understanding their “why” that enables them to flourish.

AI

This field is moving so fast that it is upon all of us, parents and teachers, to keep abreast of the developments and challenges to ensure we both develop the skills and knowledge of our young people whilst doing so ethically, emotionally and neurologically safely.

- **Summary of AI surveys:** the importance of developing the skills, but doing so ethically was the overwhelming theme: [Parent](#) and [Student](#)
- [MIT research](#) on AI and teenage brains shows that reliance on AI, particularly for essay writing, can lead to reduced brain activity and weaker neural connectivity, reinforcing the importance of academic integrity, critical thinking, and self-respect in leveraging AI as a supportive tool rather than for shortcuts.

It is with all this in mind that I am delighted to announce our **partnership with [Good Future Foundation](#)**; This exciting partnership marks a significant moment, coinciding with the launch of an innovative online platform designed to transform how educators use AI in teaching. As a primary partner, we are committed to integrating this platform across our staff and network schools, not only ensuring we are at the cutting edge of education but also able to influence its direction. Our involvement will include fostering community engagement and refining the platform to ensure its quality and relevance.

Digital safeguarding

- Online safety bill is now in force - this includes implementing stricter age verification methods to check whether a user is under 18 on adult websites; a very welcome addition.
- Mobile phones; we are aware of the impact of excessive screen use, but more importantly, uncontrolled access to social media. We would like to reiterate that the school is a no phone school from 08:40 to 15:30. The Headmaster addresses this further in his final letter of the year.
- With the Summer approaching and access to digital devices more likely to be unmonitored, **please can I urge you to pay particular attention to the following two bullet points.**
 - Smartphones are tools that students need to learn to manage with restrictions relaxed over time. If you choose to buy your child a smartphone, can I please insist that you know how to set restrictions. As parents, we put restrictions and supervision on learning to use a kitchen knife; the same theory applies here.
 - Please pay particular attention to the following platforms; they are of particular concern to the police due to the content and types of users that use them: [Discord](#) and [kik messenger](#)
- If you would like a reminder on how to setup restrictions and monitoring on your child's device, please see my previous letter:

 [Digital safeguarding - Adolescence letter to parents April 2025](#)
- The vital thing is that you maintain a dialogue with your child and have an open relationship where they are able to talk to you openly about their experiences on their smartphones.

Summer break

As we head into the summer break, we want to remind you that safeguarding remains our priority. If you have any concerns about a child's safety or well-being during the holidays, please contact our dedicated safeguarding email: [RGS Safeguarding](#) . This inbox will be monitored regularly throughout the summer.

You can also contact the Buckinghamshire Council First Response Team (MASH) on 01296 383962 (outside of working hours, the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) can be contacted at 0800 999 7677). If a child is at immediate risk of significant harm, please call 999 immediately. Further safeguarding resources and contact numbers are available on our school website.

We wish you all a fantastic and rejuvenating summer break and very much look forward to seeing you all in September.

Many thanks

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Parent AI Survey

Executive Summary

This report summarises key findings from a survey of parents regarding their perceptions of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education. The findings highlight parents' growing familiarity with AI, their mixed but generally positive views on its impact on education, and their strong belief in the importance of AI skills for students. Parents also identified both significant benefits and concerns related to AI in the classroom, expressed varied opinions on specific AI statements, and showed mixed confidence in schools addressing AI's ethical challenges. A strong majority emphasised the need for strict guidelines, and parents demonstrated a high interest in further information about AI in education.

Key Findings:

1. **Familiarity with AI:** A significant portion of parents (69.86%) reported moderate to high familiarity with AI (levels 3-5).
2. **Perceived Impact of AI on Education:** Parents generally hold a positive view (61.65% rated positive impact as 4 or 5) while acknowledging potential negative consequences (63.02% rated negative impact as 4 or 5).
3. **Importance of AI Skills for Students:** There is a strong consensus on the importance of AI-related skills, both for school learning (73.98% rated as 4 or 5) and for the wider world (90.41% rated as 4 or 5).
4. **Potential Benefits and Risks of AI in the Classroom:**
 - **Top Benefits:** Access to broader learning resources (69.86%), improved efficiency in administrative tasks (65.75%), and personalised learning experiences (61.64%).
 - **Most Significant Concerns:** Over-reliance on technology and reduced critical thinking skills (95.89%), potential for cheating (79.45%), and loss of human interaction (72.60%).
5. **Agreement with Statements about AI in Education:** Parents generally agreed that AI can provide personalised learning (54.80% agreed/strongly agreed) and help teachers provide more effective feedback (43.84% agreed/strongly agreed). A strong majority disagreed that AI will replace teachers (75.35% disagreed/strongly disagreed).
6. **Confidence in Schools Addressing Ethical Challenges:** Confidence is mixed, with nearly half (47.95%) remaining neutral.
7. **Necessity of Strict Guidelines and Regulations:** A strong majority (80.82%) believe strict guidelines are necessary.
8. **Interest in Receiving Information about AI in Education:** Parents show high interest, with nearly 70% (69.87%) being very or extremely interested.

Student AI survey

Executive Summary

This report summarises key findings from a recent survey on artificial intelligence (AI), focusing on respondents' understanding, current usage, concerns, desired learning aspects, and future perceptions of AI's role in education. The data indicates a generally positive view of AI's potential as a learning tool, coupled with an awareness of potential challenges.

Key Findings

AI Understanding and Current Usage

The survey reveals a moderate to high level of AI understanding among respondents, with the majority (78%) already utilising AI tools or applications. Common applications include:

- **Academic research or writing** (e.g., mindmapping, drafting, editing)
- **Creative projects** (e.g., generating images, music, stories)
- **Personal learning support** (e.g., virtual tutor)
- **Personal organisation or productivity** (e.g., smart assistants)

Other less frequent uses encompass coding assistance, language translation, and entertainment.

Concerns about AI

A significant minority of respondents (26%) expressed concerns about AI, with an additional 17% reporting uncertainty. Recurring concerns include:

- **Over-reliance on AI** leading to diminished independent thought.
- The potential for **AI to displace jobs**.
- Uncertainty regarding the extent of **AI's future power**.

Desired Learning Aspects in School

Respondents demonstrated a strong desire to learn more about AI in an educational setting. Key areas of interest include:

- How AI works (the underlying technology)
- Career opportunities in AI
- How AI is applied in different industries
- Practical skills for effective AI tool usage
- The future societal impact of AI
- Ethical implications and challenges of AI

Interest in AI Workshops/Clubs and School Encouragement

There is considerable interest in AI-related extracurricular activities, with 61% of respondents expressing interest in workshops or clubs ("Yes" or "Maybe"). Furthermore, a strong majority (78%) believe schools should encourage the use of AI to support learning ("Yes" or "Maybe"). Perceived Future Use of AI for Learning.

Respondents generally view AI as a valuable learning tool, with primary anticipated uses being:

- Research and information gathering
- Summarising content
- Generating ideas for projects
- Revision and practice questions
- Personal tutoring and explanations of difficult concepts
- Organisation and time management

Character Impact and Integrity

A consistent theme in the survey highlights the importance of **integrity** and **curiosity** in the context of AI use. Respondents emphasised using AI as a supportive tool to enhance learning and critical thinking, rather than as a means for shortcuts or academic dishonesty. There was a notable emphasis on AI's role in *enhancing* rather than *hindering* imagination and independent thought, with some caution against over-reliance to preserve personal cognitive abilities.