

THE HAVEN

Operated by the Autistic Girls Network charity — 1196655 (England and Wales), SC054837 (Scotland)

Navigating the Digital Age of Consent: A Guide for Parents at The Haven

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In our increasingly digital world, understanding how to protect our children's online privacy and safety is paramount. This guide aims to provide you with essential information about the *Navigating the Digital Age of Consent_ A Guide for Parents at The Haven* in the UK and practical steps to support your child's online wellbeing.

What Is the *Navigating the Digital Age of Consent_ A Guide for Parents at The Haven*?

The *Navigating the Digital Age of Consent_ A Guide for Parents at The Haven* refers to the minimum age at which a child can legally consent to

the processing of their personal data by online services. In the UK, this age is set at 13. This means that children under 13 require parental consent to sign up for most online platforms that collect personal data, such as social media sites and apps .

○Key Legislation Protecting Children Online

1. UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

- Age Requirement: Children under 13 cannot consent to data processing; parental consent is mandatory.

- **Parental Role:** Parents must provide consent for their children's data to be processed by online services .

2. Children's Code (Age Appropriate Design Code)

- **Purpose:** Ensures online services are designed with children's best interests in mind.
- **Requirements:** Services must implement high privacy settings by default and provide clear information suitable for children .

3. Online Safety Act 2023

- **Objective:** Mandates online platforms to protect users from harmful content.
- **Child Protection:** Requires platforms to prevent children from accessing inappropriate content and to implement robust age verification systems .

AI and your child's online life

Generative AI tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, Snapchat's My AI, character chatbots, image and video generators) are now part of how children engage online. This brings opportunities — accessibility support, study help, creativity — and new risks.

The Haven's approach is the **Diamond AI** posture: *work with AI, don't offload decisions to AI, don't defer entirely from AI*. We don't ban it and we don't blindly adopt it. We support learners to use AI thoughtfully and within boundaries.

What parents and carers can usefully know:

- **AI chatbots are not friends or therapists.** Some children form intense attachments to character chatbots. These tools can simulate empathy without offering it; they can also handle disclosures of distress poorly. If your child is using companion AI tools, regular conversations about who they really turn to in distress matter.
- **Deepfakes and AI-generated images.** AI image and video generators can be used to create non-consensual intimate imagery, including of classmates. This is an offence under the Online Safety Act 2023 and constitutes child sexual abuse material when minors are depicted. If your child encounters or is affected by AI-generated imagery, treat it as a safeguarding matter and contact the DSL.
- **AI in homework.** Schools, including The Haven, are working through how to support AI use that genuinely supports learning rather than replaces it. We talk to learners about this directly. Your support in encouraging your child to use AI as a thinking partner — not a thinking replacement — aligns with our Diamond posture.
- **Data and AI.** Many free AI tools train on user inputs. Encourage your child not to paste personal information, photos, or schoolwork containing identifying details into public AI services.

If you have concerns about your child's AI use, please contact our pastoral team or the DSL.

Practical Steps for Parents

1. **Open Communication:** Engage in regular conversations with your child about their

online activities and the importance of privacy.

1. Parental Controls: Utilize parental control features on devices and apps to monitor and limit your child's online exposure.

1. Educate About Consent: Teach your child about the significance of consent and the implications of sharing personal information online.

1. Stay Informed: Keep up-to-date with the latest online trends and platforms your child may be using.

1. Report Concerns: Encourage your child to report any uncomfortable online experiences, and know how to report issues to relevant authorities or platforms.

Resources for Further Support

- UK Safer Internet Centre: Offers guidance on online safety for parents and carers.

Visit Website

- Internet Matters: Provides resources to help keep children safe online. Visit Website

- Childnet International: Delivers advice and resources for parents on internet safety.

Visit Website

At The Haven, we are committed to partnering with parents to ensure our students navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. Should you have any concerns or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our pastoral care team.

This PDF was generated from the published policy at policies.thehavenonline.school on 26 August 2026. The website is the authoritative, most current version of this policy.