

Mental health issues contribute to rise in homeschooling

Mental health issues have contributed significantly to the recent rise in homeschooling in England, as official numbers show a 38% increase in students since 2022. Blackpool, which has high rates of deprivation and mental health concerns, has one of the highest percentages of home-schooled children in the UK (2.6%). Parents find the flexibility of home education beneficial, as it allows for a more personalised learning approach. However, concerns remain about the lack of regulation of home schooling, particularly in deprived areas. Reports suggest that homeschooling children with behavioural problems and low prior attainment could potentially widen educational inequalities. While some parents adapt well, others express worries over the absence of oversight and support systems for vulnerable children. Recent tragic cases have prompted calls for tighter controls, such as a national register for home-schooled children.

The Sunday Times

Children fear being targeted by AI deepfakes

Research commissioned by the UK Safer Internet Centre and Nominet, to mark Safer Internet Day, has found that 12% of children aged 13-17 have seen their peers use AI to create deepfake sexual images and videos of other people, while 60% of eight to 17-year-olds are concerned about AI being used to make inappropriate images of them - concerns shared by 65% of parents. Around a third of parents were also concerned about the impact of AI on their children's cognitive development and creativity. Daniel Kebede, general secretary of the NEU, said young people "are already using AI at an unprecedented rate", yet "the evidence is clear that the risks of AI use in education, particularly for young people's learning and development, overshadow the benefits". The Government, he said, must "act urgently to ensure that children have the information, support and resources they need to make informed, safe and ethical decisions about AI".

The Independent UK

More than a third of children confiding in AI chatbots

Research commissioned by Vodafone has found that 81% of 11-to-16-year-olds have used AI chatbots - with 37% having confided in a chatbot and with one in three having shared information with a chatbot that they would not tell their parents, teachers or friends. The survey's findings have sparked concerns, with child psychologist Dr Elly Hanson saying chatbots' ability to mimic "human empathy, personality and connection" is "leading many children and young people to feel like chatbots are their friends and is interfering with their social development". Gary Moore, head teacher at **Regent High School** in London, commented: "The rule 101 when it comes to safeguarding is you don't keep secrets. Who's telling the chatbot not to keep a secret if I'm having suicidal thoughts or if I'm confiding that I've been abused, where's that information going?"

London Evening Standard The Independent UK The Times

Teen charged over alleged attack at Pembrokeshire school

A 15-year-old boy has been charged with attempted murder, grievous bodily harm and possession of a bladed article on education premises at Swansea Magistrates Court in connection with an alleged attack on female teacher at **Milford Haven Comprehensive School** in Pembrokeshire on Thursday. The boy has been remanded into youth detention to appear at Swansea Crown Court on Monday. Detective Chief Inspector Matthew Briggs said police are "continuing to support the victim whilst they recover from this traumatic event", and will be "working closely with local secondary schools to offer support over the coming week".

Sky News BBC News London Evening Standard Metro Mirror.co.uk Sunday Express The Independent UK The Sunday Telegraph