

## Anxiety rises as school brawl memes spread

Anxious parents across England have reacted to viral AI-generated social media posts threatening organised "school wars" between named secondary schools. The memes, which feature masked figures and set dates for mass fights, encourage violence and even the use of weapons, prompting warnings from police, schools and local authorities. The trend, which began in London and has now spread to other cities, has led to increased police patrols and letters sent to millions of parents. However, authorities have confirmed no verified incidents of violence linked to the posts so far. Campaigners and youth workers warn that while the threats appear to be fabricated, social media platforms risk fuelling panic and potentially real-world harm if the content is not swiftly removed.

*The Observer*

## Ministers move to ban social media for under-16s

Ministers will move closer to banning social media for under-16s next week by launching a formal consultation on age limits and platform design changes, including curbs on infinite scrolling. Although the review will not initially endorse a specific option, government insiders increasingly expect Keir Starmer to back a ban by the summer, reflecting political pressure and public concern. Some officials doubt how enforceable a ban would be but see it as a clear signal to tech firms. The move follows calls from Labour MPs and campaigners, and Australia's recent ban has strengthened support.

*The Guardian*

## Instagram to alert parents on teen searches

Instagram will notify parents if their teenagers repeatedly search for terms related to suicide or self-harm. Starting next week, parents using Instagram's parental supervision tools in the UK, US, Australia, and Canada will receive alerts via email, text, or WhatsApp. Meta stated that these notifications aim to help parents support their teens. The move aligns with the UK's Online Safety Act, which mandates platforms to protect children from harmful content.

*The Daily Telegraph* *The Times*

## Deepfakes spreading rapidly in schools

Deepfake images and videos are increasingly affecting schools, with ministers warning the issue is "spreading like wildfire" among teenagers. Children's minister Josh MacAlister said cases of peer-on-peer abuse have left victims distressed, with altered images shared widely among pupils and sometimes drawing many teenagers into harmful behaviour. Deepfakes, often used to humiliate or sexually exploit victims, pose new challenges for teachers and parents. The Government is exploring ways to support schools, alongside safeguarding minister Jess Phillips.

*The Daily Telegraph*

## Boy charged over Nottingham school stabbing

A 15-year-old boy has been charged with causing grievous bodily harm and two counts of possessing a knife on school premises after a stabbing at the **Nottingham University Academy of Science and Technology** (NUAST) on Thursday left another pupil with serious injuries. The injuries are not believed to be life-threatening, and the boy who has been charged will appear at Nottingham Magistrates' Court today. Head teacher Dave Thompson has notified parents that the school will reopen today, and that usual routines will be resumed "as quickly as possible".

*BBC News* *Mirror.co.uk*