AI CHATBOTS AND VIRTUAL COMPANIONS

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

AI chatbots can be helpful tools, but they also come with risks. It's important to understand why students use them, what to watch for, and how to keep them safe.

WHY STUDENTS USE AI CHATBOTS

- Seek advice on everyday questions
- Feel a sense of companionship
- Talk about feelings or emotional challenges
- Get help with schoolwork or creative ideas
- Feel it's easier than talking to adults or peers

POPULAR AI TOOLS

- ChatGPT
- Google Gemini
- Microsoft Copilot
- Character.AI
- Meta AI
- Replika
- And many others…

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Information shared may be stored, used to improve the tool, or shared with others.
- Chats are not always private.
- AI can provide inaccurate or harmful information ("hallucinations").
- Students may form emotional attachments to AI, which can impact real-life relationships.

POTENTIAL RISKS

- Inappropriate content or conversations
- Sharing personal information (name, age, address, school, etc.)
- Exposure to harmful ideas or self-harm content
- Emotional dependence on AI instead of real people
- Links to other unsafe websites or people
- Potential grooming or manipulation through AI-generated personas

PARENT ACTION

ASK WHICH AI TOOLS YOUR CHILDREN USE AND WHAT INFORMATION THEY SHARE.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD

- What AI tools do you use?
- What do you like about them?
- What kind of information do you share?

TIPS FOR FAMILIES

- Have regular, open conversations about AI and how it's used.
- Review privacy settings and account restrictions.
- Remind them not to share personal information (name, age, address, school, photos, etc.).
- Talk about the difference between AI responses and trusted adult advice.
- Encourage real-world relationships with family and friends.
- Model healthy technology use at home.

KEEP THE FOCUS ON REAL CONNECTIONS

- Encourage activities, hobbies, and relationships in real life.
- Let them know they can always talk to you, a trusted adult, or a school counselor.
- Remind them that real people care and can offer support in ways AI cannot.

STAY INFORMED. STAY CONNECTED. HELP KEEP OUR STUDENTS SAFE ONLINE.