



BOURNE  
ACADEMY

# Head of School

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025

UPDATE

Dear parents/carers and students,

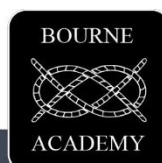
I would like to wish everyone a happy half term. Although it is our last week, we have not stopped with our teaching and learning.

We are continuing to see lots of students completing their Aspire passport and collecting their badges. A reminder that some of the Aspire challenges can be completed at home such as make and cook a family meal or complete one task to help out at home for seven days. Our amazing students have achieved over 300 badges this academic year so far. This is an incredible achievement. We are always evaluating our student rewards and we are adding in additional layers for our students who achieve an Aspire Badge.

Well done to five of our Year 10 students who competed in the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge. This challenge is a national competition that is held every year across the country, to help develop students' problem-solving skills in Maths. The students have been coming every Monday at lunch for the past three months to practise for the challenge. They have worked extremely hard, and it has great to see the enthusiasm that these five students have for Maths. The results they achieved were amazing as they gained one silver and three bronze awards for their fantastic efforts.

I would like to highlight our annual 'World Book Day' event which is on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Our Year 7 students can celebrate 'World Book Day' by coming to school dressed as their favourite character from a book for the day. As well as coming in character, students should bring a copy of the book they are dressing up as. To encourage creativity and reward students for their efforts, there will also be a 'Best Costume' competition in the library at lunchtime with prizes for first place and runners-up. This fun event will be taking place in all schools across the Trust and is another of the many initiatives to encourage students to get into books and reading. It is not compulsory for our Year 7 students to take part, but it would be great to have as many students as possible. We can't wait to see all of the fantastic costumes that our Year 7 students come to school in and we will share the highlights on the website.

We have over forty students and staff embarking on our annual ski trip to Andorra. Andorra is nestled in the Pyrenees mountains between France and Spain, offering a fantastic blend of French and Spanish culture. The resort is ideal for school groups, as it has a range of amenities on offer, with a variety of evening activities within easy reach of the hotel. The ski area offers a number of beginner slopes, along with over 200km of blue, red and black runs for those more competent skiers to explore with their instructors. I am sure our students (and staff) will have a superb time!



Aspire • Challenge • Achieve

As communicated earlier this week, we will soon be closing the uniform shop and changing suppliers to Nationwide School Uniforms. We are offering parents/carers the opportunity to get up to 50% off the remaining stock, such as Bourne Academy blazers, SLAT trousers, SLAT skirts and some PE items. **These will be available to purchase using ParentMail, from 12 noon on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025.** Please can I make you aware that the sale items can only be purchased online and not in person. Not all sizes will be available as this is remaining stock only. Some items such as ties will not be included in the sale. Due to items already being discounted, there will be no additional discount for Free School Meals / Pupil Premium. When you have placed your order via ParentMail, we will contact you again when your order is ready for collection. Additional information on how to place orders and price lists from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, plus details of the 'Pop-up Shop' in the summer holidays will be communicated shortly. We would like to once again reassure parents/carers, that whilst the uniform supplier is changing, our school uniform will not be changing and the uniform policy is unchanged. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to offer families value for money with their school uniform.

As we approach the half term break, I would like to remind parents and students about our school active safeguarding support over the holiday period. If any student requires support for an 'out of school hours' concern, we have a designated email address ([worried@bourneacademy.org](mailto:worried@bourneacademy.org)). This email address is active during the holiday period with designated staff available to respond. There may not be an immediate response due to it being a staff holiday period however, please be reassured that there will be support and advice signposted as soon as possible.

Attached to the end of this update, I have included a parent/carer helpsheet regarding Artificial Intelligence Robots (AI Robots). There has been a rise in the popularity of this amongst our young people and in an ever-changing world of social media and apps I wanted to raise the awareness of this. Whilst AI can be a really creative tool and has many benefits that will change how we use the internet, it is important parents are aware that safety features are not in line with most commonly used apps, and they therefore need to be checked by an adult and monitored in order to avoid harmful content being seen or created by children and young people.

If you or your child require further safeguarding support, specialist external support and helplines are listed on our school website ([www.bourneacademy.org/safeguarding](http://www.bourneacademy.org/safeguarding)). This can be found on the Pastoral tab / Safeguarding and scroll to 'Who can offer additional support?'

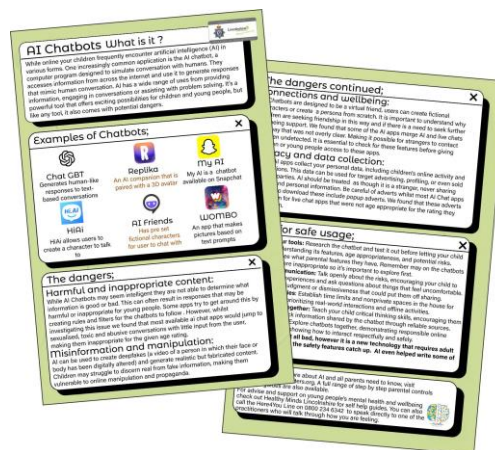
I would like to wish you a happy and safe half term. We return to school on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Kindest regards,



**Mrs Jemma Curson**

Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Head of School, Bourne Academy



**For the latest news**

You can follow Bourne Academy on our official social media platforms as follows:

- [www.instagram.com/BourneAcademy](https://www.instagram.com/BourneAcademy)
- [www.facebook.com/BourneAcademyLincs](https://www.facebook.com/BourneAcademyLincs)
- [www.twitter.com/BourneSLAT](https://www.twitter.com/BourneSLAT)

# AI Chatbots What is it ?

While online your children frequently encounter artificial intelligence (AI) in various forms. One increasingly common application is the AI chatbot, a computer program designed to simulate conversation with humans. They access information from across the internet and use it to generate responses that mimic human conversation. AI has a wide range of uses from providing information, engaging in conversations or assisting with problem solving. It's a powerful tool that offers exciting possibilities for children and young people, but like any tool, it also comes with potential dangers.

## Examples of Chatbots;



**Chat GPT**  
 Generates human-like responses to text-based conversations



**Replika**  
 An AI companion that is paired with a 3D avatar



**My AI**  
 My AI is a chatbot available on Snapchat



**HiAi**  
 HiAi allows users to create a character to talk to



**AI Friends**  
 Has pre set fictional characters for user to chat with



**WOMBO**  
 An app that makes pictures based on text prompts

## The dangers;

### Harmful and inappropriate content:

While AI Chatbots may seem intelligent they are not able to determine what information is good or bad. This can often result in responses that may be harmful or inappropriate for young people. Some apps try to get around this by creating rules and filters for the chatbots to follow. However, whilst investigating this issue we found that most available ai chat apps would jump to sexualised, toxic and abusive conversations with little input from the user, making them inappropriate for the given age rating.

### Misinformation and manipulation:

AI can be used to create deepfakes (a video of a person in which their face or body has been digitally altered) and generate realistic but fabricated content. Children may struggle to discern real from fake information, making them vulnerable to online manipulation and propaganda.

## The dangers continued;



### Connections and wellbeing:

AI Chatbots are designed to be a virtual friend, users can create fictional characters or create a persona from scratch. It is important to understand why children are seeking friendship in this way and if there is a need to seek further wellbeing support. We found that some of the AI apps merge AI and live chats in a way that was not overly clear. Making it possible for strangers to contact children undetected. It is essential to check for these features before giving children or young people access to these apps.

### Privacy and data collection:

Many AI apps collect your personal data, including children's online activity and interactions. This data can be used for target advertising, profiling, or even sold to third parties. AI should be treated as though it is a stranger, never sharing private and personal information. Be careful of adverts whilst most AI Chat apps are free to download these include popup adverts. We found that these adverts were often for live chat apps that were not age appropriate for the rating they were given.

## 5 tip for safe usage;



- 1. Know your tools:** Research the chatbot and test it out before letting your child use it, understanding its features, age appropriateness, and potential risks. Check to see what parental features they have. Remember many of the chatbots we used were inappropriate so it's important to explore first.
- 2. Open communication:** Talk openly about the risks, encouraging your child to share their experiences and ask questions about things that feel uncomfortable. Try to avoid judgment or dismissiveness that could put them off sharing.
- 3. Set boundaries:** Establish time limits and nonprivate spaces in the house for chatbot use, prioritizing real-world interactions and offline activities.
- 4. Fact-check together:** Teach your child critical thinking skills, encouraging them to double-check information shared by the chatbot through reliable sources.
- 5. Be the guide:** Explore chatbots together, demonstrating responsible online behaviour and showing how to interact respectfully and safely.

**Remember AI isn't all bad, however it is a new technology that requires adult supervision whilst the safety features catch up. AI even helped write some of this newsletter.**



To learn more about AI and all parents need to know, visit [InternetMatters.org](https://www.internetmatters.org). A full range of step by step parental controls guides are also available.

For advice and support on young people's mental health and wellbeing check out Healthy Minds Lincolnshire for self help guides. You can also call the Here4You Line on 0800 234 6342 to speak directly to one of the practitioners who will talk through how you are feeling.





TRAIN TO TEACH WITH  
LINCOLNSHIRE ITT



# Get Into Teaching

## OPEN EVENING

**Wednesday 12th March 2025 • 5.30pm to 7.00pm**

South Lincolnshire Academies Trust (SLAT) are now one of the **Lead Partners for Lincolnshire ITT** and can talk to you about starting your teaching journey with us. At this 'Get Into Teaching' event, which will be held at Spalding Academy, you will discover how you can gain a recognised teaching qualification with our one-year school centred Initial Teacher Training.

If any of the following applies to you, you will benefit from attending:

- Recently gained a Level 6 undergraduate degree (e.g. BA, BSc, BEd, BEng) in any subject
- Currently studying a Level 6 undergraduate degree (e.g. BA, BSc, BEd, BEng) in any subject
- Currently studying A-levels or Level 3 BTECs and wanting to get into teaching
- Wanting to change career and become a teacher
- Working in a non-teaching role within a school or college environment and wanting to get into teaching

**You could train either at the schools in our highly successful Trust (Bourne Academy, Spalding Academy, Giles Academy and Cowley Academy) or at a variety of other secondary schools in the Lincolnshire, Rutland and Peterborough areas.**

This event starts at 5.30pm where there will be a presentation then the opportunity to speak to staff informally. You will learn about the different training pathways, entry requirements and details about student finances. We will cover school placements, the course content, support available plus timescales. We can also provide help so you can successfully apply.

To attend, please visit [www.slat.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.slat.org.uk/vacancies) to register in advance.



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South Lincolnshire  
Academies Trust

Spalding Academy, Neville Avenue, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 2EJ  
[www.slat.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.slat.org.uk/vacancies)