

## **Barnardos Report Reveals 63% of Children Learn About AI Through Social Media** (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/111671>)

### **Barnardos Report Reveals 63% of Children Learn About AI (Artificial Intelligence) Through Social Media**

- Barnardos Online Safety Programme engaged with over 500 children and young people, 101 parents and 63 teachers
- 63% of children and young people heard about AI from social media
- 54% of children and young people want to learn more about AI at school
- 93% of parents surveyed said they have concerns about their children using AI
- 95% of teachers have not received any training in AI

Barnardos Online Safety Programme (<https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.barnardos.ie%2Flearning-development%2Ftraining%2Fonline-safety-programme%2F&data=05%7C02%7Csarah.maloney%40barnardos.ie%7C17ad7158a0254dedb69d08dcec49eec5%7C6d67b07014f2490ebd2c94d3c19e63db%7C0%7C0%7C638645049491300683%7C>) has released an in depth report, [Exploring AI \(Artificial Intelligence\) with Children and Young People](https://www.barnardos.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Barnardos-OSP-Report-Exploring-AI-with-Children-and-Young-People.pdf) (<https://www.barnardos.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Barnardos-OSP-Report-Exploring-AI-with-Children-and-Young-People.pdf>); shedding light on children's knowledge of AI. There was a combined approach gathering information for the consultation report, using qualitative focus groups and a quantitative survey between May and June 2024. The school-based initiative engaged with over 500 children and young people from 5th and 6th class in primary school and 1st to 3rd year in secondary school, through focus groups and surveys. 101 parents and 63 teachers also engaged with surveys.

The report was undertaken as a part of the Barnardos Online Safety Programme to help inform its work with children, parents and teachers. Since 2019, the Barnardos Online Safety Programme with the help from Google.org has reached 90,000 children in 800 schools. The topic of Artificial Intelligence was chosen for this year's consultation report as children and young people increasingly spoke about AI and the role it plays in their lives.

'AI is very cool because you can do cool things with it. It could help you with stuff you don't understand and help you do things.' Young person, aged 11

#### **Some of the key findings are:**

- 63% of **children and young people** heard about AI from social media
- 54% of **children and young people** want to learn more about AI at school
- 82% of **children and young people** said their parents or teachers know "some", "not too much" or "nothing" about AI
- 93% of **parents** surveyed said they have concerns about their children using AI
- 87% of **parents** felt their children learning about AI now was either "important" or "very important"
- 95% of **teachers** have not received any training in AI

"You don't know if it's real or not. People can create pictures and pretend its them" 13 year old

**Niamh McLoughlin, Barnardos Online Safety Programme Co-Ordinator, said:** 'Children and young people tell us that aspects of AI is useful, fun and can be used in ways that help them to understand their world. However, they also have concerns about how AI can be used to manipulate them and to invade their privacy. While the potential benefits of AI for children are recognised, we must also acknowledge the potential risks. This report highlights a lot of uncertainty from children, young people, parents and teachers about AI. The future impact of AI on children's lives is unknown, but children clearly need help to navigate AI and the online world. As parents, educators and professionals working with children, we must be able to provide the necessary support and guidance. We hope that this report will raise awareness of the extent that children are engaging with AI and inform a conversation about how we can best educate, guide and support them in their experience while also ensuring their safety and wellbeing online. Because childhood lasts a lifetime.'

'Harder to tell what is real from what is fake online' 11 year old

#### **Barnardos recommends the following actions by Government should be taken based on what children and young people have said:**

- Ensure school curriculum includes practical lessons on understanding AI, its benefits, risks and how to use it safely and responsibly.
- Provide parents with accessible, easy-to-understand resources to help them guide their children safely and confidently in their engagement with AI.
- Provide teachers with clear guidelines and practical training to confidently teach and guide students in understanding and using AI.

**Region**  
Nationwide

**Date Entered/Updated**  
21st Oct, 2024

**Expiry Date**  
25th Nov, 2024

**Source URL:** <https://www.activelink.ie/community-exchange/news/111671-barnardos-report-reveals-63-of-children-learn-about-ai-through-social-media>