Optus Digital Thumbprint

Generative AI and your child's privacy

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is becoming part of everyday learning. Many young people now use it in the classroom or when completing homework.

While GenAI can support learning, challenges do exist, including the potential "leakage" of personal information. Even minor personal details contribute to a child's online digital footprint.

When people type details into a prompt, those details may be stored or reused in unexpected ways.

Entering details in GenAI can seem like using a search engine. However, these tools may store what you type, so your information can spread further than you think.

Children might share identifying details with GenAI, like:

- **Names or school details**
- **Personal experiences**
- **Information about other people**

Pro tip:
The privacy scrub

Before your child uploads a document, such as a draft essay, to an AI tool for feedback, run a "privacy scrub". Ensure their full name, teacher's name, and student ID number are deleted from the file.

For example, instead of writing:

"Sarah Smith, Year 7 student at [School Name] working on a history assignment."

They could write:

"I'm a Year 7 student working on a history assignment."

yes OPTUS

Small habits, strong protection: Digital safety checklist

Small habits keep your child's privacy and digital footprint safe now and in the future. By supporting your child in pausing, thinking, and keeping personal details private, you are helping them build safe and confident technology habits as they learn.

Some simple rules include:

- Pause before typing to consider what needs sharing
- If it feels private, reword or leave it out
- Avoid full names, school names or locations
- Leave out personal stories that identify people
- Keep prompts focused on the learning task
- Don't upload documents containing personal information without crossing it out or redacting it

Pro tip: The nickname strategy

The eSafety Commissioner warns that many AI platforms collect, store, and reuse data to train future models.

Suggest that your child use a nickname or a fictional persona.

For example, instead of writing:

"I'm a Year 7 student at [School Name] working on a history assignment."

They could write:

"I'm a Year 7 student at Hogwart's High School working on a history assignment."

What is personal information?

- An individual's name, signature, address, phone number or date of birth
- Sensitive information
- Credit information
- Employee record information
- Photographs
- Internet protocol (IP) addresses
- Voice print and facial recognition biometrics (because they collect characteristics that make an individual's voice or face unique)
- Location information from a mobile device (because it can reveal user activity patterns and habits)

What is sensitive information?

Sensitive information is personal information that includes information or an opinion about an individual's:

- Racial or ethnic origin
- Political opinions or associations
- Religious or philosophical beliefs
- Trade union membership or associations
- Sexual orientation or practices
- Criminal record
- Health or genetic information
- Some aspects of biometric information

Find out more at: OAIC.gov.au

digitalthumbprint.com.au