

Purpose

- An exciting opportunity for children to present their views to adults of influence and to see that they really can make a difference in a political way;
- Engage young people in the democratic process;
- Gain insight into the views of young people on key issues for the Council;
- Encourage intra-school and inter-school debate;
- Develop young people's communication skills.

Format – Stage One

- A relevant topic is agreed that young people's input is relevant to and sought, this year led by Steve Darling MP.
This year's topic is:

Growing Up Digital: How can we make the internet a kinder, safer, and better place for children?

(see next slides for more information)

- The topic is shared with all schools, along with an overview of the format;
- Schools invite their **Year 5 pupils** to enter an in-school competition in **teams of 4** where they present their views on the chosen topic, including highlighting any research that they have done on the issue raised;
- Presentations are 5 minutes long and must be spoken presentations. Visual aids may be used, but PowerPoint and other presentation software / equipment is not allowed. This is to focus young people on the use of persuasive language and oral presentation skills;
- Presentations take place in front of the school community and an official school election is held to identify the best presentation. Schools may wish to invite their ward councilors to the presentations and engage school council members as 'ballot officials';
- The in-school 'winners' become the school's elected representatives at the Children's Parliament event.

Theme

Growing Up Digital: How can we make the internet a kinder, safer, and better place for children?

In a world where AI can edit photos, mimic voices, and create fake videos, how can we be sure of what we're seeing?

This year, we're challenging you to become 'Digital Detectives.' We're not here to talk about 'screen time'—we're here to talk about how you lead the way in making the internet a space for truth, safety, and kindness.

Suggestions for tackling this theme are included on the next slide.

You might consider:

- A starter session such as BBC Bitesize's *Artificial or Real Quiz*: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zqnwxg8>

KEY QUESTIONS

1. **Truth vs. Fiction:** With the rise of AI and photo editing, how can we verify what is real online, and why does it matter if we can't tell the difference?
2. **The "Under 16" Reality:** Many social media platforms have age restrictions, yet children often find ways around them. What are the *actual* risks (like grooming, misinformation, or mental health) that these rules are trying to protect us from?
3. **Digital Citizenship:** If the internet is a public space, what "rules of kindness" should we follow to stop online bullying and look out for one another?
4. **Taking Control:** How can we manage our own use of the internet and social media so that it helps us grow and learn, rather than controlling how we feel?

Format – Stage Two

- All schools are invited to send their elected representatives to present to the Children's Parliament, in The Banking Hall at the Town Hall on **Friday 19th June, 10.00am – 1.00pm (approx.)**.
- Each primary school has five minutes to present to the panel of judges, which includes council leaders, LA Education leaders and (hopefully) our local MP Steve Darling.
- All schools are given voting slips which are collated and form a single 'schools' vote'.
- Judges meet to decide on the most effective presentation.
- The winning team is awarded a prize of a visit to the Houses of Parliament, and a trophy for their school, as well as individual medals.