

# Checklist for Ethical AI in Schools

## Ensuring responsible, fair, and transparent use of AI

Use this checklist to review how AI tools are selected, implemented, and used across your school. Ethical AI is not about avoiding innovation — it's about using it **safely, fairly, and with trust**.

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### 1 Purpose & Educational Value

- AI tools are used **to enhance learning, not replace teachers**
- Each AI tool has a **clear educational or operational purpose**
- AI use aligns with the **school's values, curriculum aims, and safeguarding policies**
- Staff can clearly explain **why** a particular AI tool is being used

#### Ask yourself:

Would we still choose this tool if AI wasn't a "buzzword"?

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### 2 Fairness, Equity & Bias

- The school has considered **potential bias** in AI outputs
- Staff understand that AI can **reflect societal and data biases**
- AI tools are accessible to all students, including those with SEND
- Supports equitable learning opportunities; does not widen the digital divide
- AI tools are tested with **diverse examples** before widespread use
- AI is **not used as the sole decision-maker** for:
  - Behaviour
  - Assessment
  - SEND identification
  - Safeguarding concerns
- Pupils are taught to **question AI responses** critically, not accept them blindly

### 3 Data Privacy & GDPR Compliance

- AI tools are **GDPR compliant** and suitable for use in schools
- No unnecessary **personal data** is entered into AI tools, anonymization used where possible
- Staff know **what data is collected, stored, and processed**
- Pupil data is **never uploaded without a clear legal basis**
- Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) completed for high-risk tools; clear policies for data retention and deletion
- AI tools are tested for accessibility (e.g., screen readers, language support) to ensure inclusion for pupils with SEND

#### Red flag :

If you don't know where the data goes, don't use the tool.



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## 4 Transparency & Explainability

- Staff can explain **what the AI does and what it does not do**
- Pupils are told when AI has been used to support learning materials
- AI-generated content is **clearly labelled where appropriate**
- Parents and carers can access **plain-English explanations** of AI use
- AI tools are not presented as “objective” or “always correct”

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## 5 Human Oversight & Accountability

- A **human is always responsible** for decisions supported by AI
- AI outputs are **checked, edited, and validated** before use
- Staff understand they remain **professionally accountable**; There is a clear process for **challenging or overriding AI outputs**

**AI assists — humans decide.**

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## 6 Staff Training & Confidence

- Staff receive **regular training** on AI use and limitations
- Ethical considerations are part of CPD, not an afterthought
- Staff know **what is permitted and what is not**
- Clear guidance exists for:
  - Lesson planning
  - Assessment support
  - Administrative use
- Staff feel confident saying “*this isn’t appropriate to use AI for*”
- Training includes AI literacy for educators

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## 7 Pupil Understanding & Digital Literacy

Pupils are taught:

- What AI is
- How it works (at an age-appropriate level)
- Its strengths and limitations

Pupils learn about:

- Bias
- Hallucinations
- Ethical use
- Academic honesty

AI use supports **critical thinking**, not shortcuts

Clear guidance on avoiding plagiarism and maintaining academic honesty when using AI

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## 8 Safeguarding & Wellbeing

AI tools are age-appropriate

Safeguarding risks have been assessed

AI is **not used for emotional support or counselling**

Clear boundaries exist for pupil interaction with AI tools

Concerns about AI outputs can be **reported easily**

There is a process for detecting and addressing inappropriate AI use by pupils

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## 9 Policies & Governance

The school has a **written AI policy or guidance**

AI use is reviewed regularly

Senior leaders understand AI risks and responsibilities

Governors are informed about AI strategy and safeguards

The policy evolves as AI technology changes

A named senior leader is accountable for AI oversight

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## **Review & Continuous Improvement**

- AI tools are evaluated for **impact and effectiveness**
- Feedback is gathered from staff and pupils
- Tools that no longer add value are **stopped**
- Ethical considerations are revisited at least annually
- Impact is measured against predefined success criteria (e.g., improved learning outcomes, reduced workload)

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### **Final Sense-Check**

Ask these three questions before adopting any AI tool:

1. **Is this safe?**
2. **Is this fair?**
3. **Does this genuinely improve learning or workload?**

If the answer isn't a confident yes to all three — pause.

### **Additional guidance and regulations**

Schools should ensure alignment with the following national guidance:

[DfE guidance on Generative AI in education](#)

[Ofqual approach to regulating AI usage in the qualifications sector](#)

[JCQ AI Use in Assessments \(Apr 25\)](#)

