

Schools Data Protection Guidance

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance

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Introduction

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology is advancing at a rapid rate across both the public and private sector. This technology, if utilised and deployed safely and with the right infrastructure in place, could have massive positive impacts for how we work.

When considering introducing any new technology, we need to understand its risks, as well as its opportunities.

Understanding how these technologies work and how to use them safely is essential as they play an increasingly significant role in our work environment.

Safety should be the top priority when deciding whether to use AI in your education setting.

What is AI?

AI stands for Artificial Intelligence, a field of computer science that aims to create machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and understanding natural language.

AI is a powerful tool that can automate tasks, analyse data, and provide valuable insights.

What is Generative AI (GenAI)?

GenAI is a specific type of AI designed to generate human-like text. GenAI is the technology that is shaping online chatbots, like Bard, Bingchat and ChatGPT as well as search engines, like Bing and Google.

GenAI uses large volumes of text data to understand and respond to any natural language input. GenAI can assist with a wide range of tasks, from generating text content to providing recommendations or answering questions as well as creating content at the click of a button including text, audio and video.

GenAI is the most readily available AI technology on the market and is mostly free to access. ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot and Google Gemini are generative AI tools, built on large language models (LLMs).

LLMs are a category of foundation models trained on large amounts of data, enabling them to understand and generate human-like content.

GenAI has already demonstrated that it can help the education workforce by reducing some administrative burdens faced on a day-to-day basis.

Evidence is still emerging on the benefits and risks of pupils using GenAI themselves. The DfE are continuing to work with the education sector to develop an understanding of effective and safe use cases.

DfE Guidance

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-education>)

Any use of GenAI whether by staff or pupils, should be **carefully considered and assessed**, evaluating the benefits and risks of its use in your education setting. The intended use

should be **specific and have clear benefits** that outweigh the risks. Different considerations will apply depending on whether it is staff or pupils (especially those under 18) using AI tools.

Safety should not be compromised. Your school should also consider that there may be uses of GenAI by staff or pupils that have not been explicitly approved or adopted in their setting. Risk assessments should include plans for mitigating against such unauthorised use cases.

Your school may choose to only use AI tools with teachers, or only on administrative tasks. Others may choose to use AI tools with pupils, but only in particular subjects, year groups or key stages. Pupils should only be using AI tools in your school with appropriate safeguards in place, such as close supervision and the use of tools with safety, filtering and monitoring features.

For any use of AI your school should:

- comply with age restrictions set by AI tools and open access LLMs
- consider online safety, including AI, when creating and implementing their school or college approach to safeguarding and related policies and procedures
- consult [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- refer to our [generative AI product safety expectations](#)
- refer to the [filtering and monitoring standards](#) to make sure they have the appropriate systems in place, including filtering and monitoring approaches that cover generative AI.

Keeping Children Safe in Education provides you with information on:

- what you need to do to protect pupils and pupils online
- your responsibilities with regards to limiting children's exposure to risks from your IT system(s)
- how to review and strengthen your cyber security by referring to guidance on [cyber security standards](#) – because GenAI could be used to increase the sophistication and credibility of attacks.

You may wish to review your Homework Policies, and any other types of unsupervised study to account for the availability of GenAI. This may include developing guidance on when it is acceptable or appropriate to use GenAI tools. You should also consider how you engage with parents/carers around the use of AI tools.

The following articles from the National Cyber Security Centre have more information on security and GenAI:

- [ChatGPT and LLMs: what's the risk](#)
- [Machine learning principles](#)

Deciding whether to use AI in your school

Make decisions together, be inclusive, consider contextual elements and draw upon collective opinions.

Identify, consider and mitigate risks by completing a DPIA and engaging with your Data Protection Officer.

Be open and transparent, involve your stakeholders in the decision-making process;

- pupils and parents/carers
- teachers, support staff and governors
- union reps
- community or democratic representatives
- consider any marginalised, minoritised or vulnerable cohorts

Using AI safely

AI, including GenAI like ChatGPT, is a valuable resource that can enhance our productivity and creativity when used responsibly. By understanding how AI works and following safe practices, we can harness its potential while maintaining the highest standards of quality and ethics.

If you are considering using AI in your school you must consider;

- 1. Data Privacy:** Always be mindful of the data you share with AI systems. You should not share any **personal information** about individuals or **commercially confidential information** related to your school into AI technologies
- 2. Data Controller/Owner:** As soon as you enter data into an AI tool you are no longer in control of that data.
- 3. Quality Control:** GenAI should be used as a tool to support staff and/or students in their work, not to replace them doing that work. You should always verify the accuracy and relevance of any AI-generated content before using it. Review and edit responses as needed.
- 4. Bias Awareness:** AI can inadvertently replicate biases present in its inputs or coding. Be aware of this and use AI to complement human judgment, not replace it.
- 5. Security:** Always protect your login credentials and follow your own policies and procedures when using any external apps or AI tools.
- 6. Ethical Considerations:** Use AI in a manner consistent with your school's values and ethical guidelines and what your stakeholders would reasonably expect of you.
- 7. Copyright:** You should consider the intellectual property rights of the source content that is used in GenAI.

Useful Links

[ICO - Guidance on AI and data protection](#)

[DfE - AI Opportunities and challenges for the education sector](#)

[DfE - AI and data protection in schools](#)