

Trust Lead:	Director/HR
Governor Lead:	Executive Head/Headteacher/CFOO
Nominated Lead Member of Staff:	J Timmins
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Guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Schools 2026

Executive Summary

Trust Guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Schools

This guidance sets out the Trust's approach to the ethical, safe, and effective use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

It establishes Trust-wide safeguards and non-negotiable requirements, while not prescribing how schools must use AI educationally. Schools retain autonomy to determine their own approach to AI use in line with their context, values, and educational aims.

Trust-wide REQUIREMENTS (MUST)

All schools must ensure that:

- Safeguarding and data protection
 - GDPR and UK data-protection legislation are complied with
 - No personal, sensitive, or identifiable student or staff data is entered into AI systems
 - Safeguarding risks (e.g. bias, misinformation, harmful outputs) are considered
 - Only approved or risk-assessed AI tools are used
- Professional accountability
 - Staff remain responsible for decisions, feedback, and outcomes informed by AI
 - AI output is not treated as authoritative and does not replace professional judgement
- Academic integrity
 - Expectations around AI use for assessed and formal work are explicit
 - Student work reflects their own understanding
 - Misuse of AI is addressed through clear, proportionate processes
- Training and governance
 - Staff receive appropriate training for safe and informed AI use
 - The Trust AI tools register is followed

These requirements apply regardless of a school's educational approach to AI.

Professional GUIDANCE (SHOULD)

Where AI is used, schools are encouraged to:

- Use AI to support learning, not replace thinking
- Promote critical engagement with AI output
- Design assessment that values reasoning and process

- Consider inclusion, access, and fairness
- Use AI to support workload and wellbeing responsibly

School-level AUTONOMY

Each school determines its own position on student AI use (including prohibiting, restricting, or embedding AI) and must maintain a School AI Policy or Position Statement aligned with this Trust guidance.

Oversight

The Trust will maintain an AI tools register, review practice and risk through a termly AI Review Committee and update this guidance as AI and education evolve.

Trust Guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Schools

1. Purpose

This document sets out Trust-wide guidance on the ethical, safe, and effective use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education.

It establishes:

- **non-negotiable requirements** that apply across all schools, and
- **professional guidance** that allows schools to adopt different approaches to AI use in line with their context, values, and educational aims.

The guidance is intended to support student learning, staff confidence, academic integrity, safeguarding, and data protection, while recognising that both AI technologies and educational practice continue to evolve.

This guidance defines Trust-wide safeguards and responsibilities, not a required educational model for AI use. The Trust recognises that schools may approach AI in different ways, and that a single, prescriptive set of rules risks either constraining responsible innovation or encouraging informal and inconsistent practice where AI use is discouraged.

The guidance therefore adopts a **principle-led, process-focused approach**, establishing clear requirements while allowing schools to exercise professional judgement in how AI is used.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to:

- all staff (teaching, operational, and support)
- all students
- all AI tools used for teaching, learning, assessment, administration, or support

This includes, but is not limited to, generative AI tools, chatbots, image and media generation tools, automated feedback systems, and adaptive learning platforms.

3. Trust-wide MUST requirements

The following requirements apply in **all schools within the Trust**, regardless of their individual approach to AI use.

3.1 Safeguarding and data protection

Schools **must**:

- Comply with **GDPR and UK data protection legislation**

- **Ensure** that **no personal, sensitive, or identifiable data** relating to students or staff is entered into AI systems
- Consider safeguarding risks associated with AI, including exposure to inappropriate content, bias, misinformation, or harmful outputs
- Use only AI tools that have been **approved or risk-assessed** through agreed processes AI tools **must not** be used in ways that compromise student safety or wellbeing.

3.2 Accountability and professional judgement

- Staff **must** remain responsible for decisions, feedback, and outcomes that result from AI guidance and/or generated content
- AI output **must not** be treated as authoritative or used without professional oversight
- AI tools **must not** replace teacher judgement, subject expertise, or professional responsibility
- AI-generated communications must not be sent without appropriate checking and professional oversight

3.3 Academic integrity and transparency

Schools **must**:

- Make expectations around AI use explicit for assessed work and formal tasks
- Where the use of AI is permitted for a task, appropriate signalling must be in place (for example, a traffic light system: Red – no use; Amber – springboard only; Green – AI may be used throughout)
- Have a clear process for addressing **inappropriate or undisclosed use of AI**
- Ensure that submitted work accurately reflects a student's **own understanding**

Where misuse occurs, this should be addressed **educationally first**, with disciplinary processes applied where appropriate and proportionate.

3.4 Training and staff preparedness

Schools **must**:

- Ensure that all teaching staff receive appropriate training in the safe and effective use of AI, appropriate to their role and responsibilities
- Ensure staff understand:
 - the capabilities and limitations of AI tools

- safeguarding and data protection considerations
- expectations around transparency and academic integrity

The Trust must:

- Ensure that operational and support staff receive appropriate AI training delivered or coordinated by the HET
- Ensure that training is proportionate to role and responsibility

Training is intended to ensure **confidence, awareness, and safe practice**, rather than technical expertise.

3.5 Application in existing policies

The use of AI **must be referenced, where relevant**, within existing Trust and school policies, including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- GDPR
- Communications
- Behaviour
- Code of Conduct
- IT Code of Conduct
- Curriculum
- Homework
- SEND
- Assessment, Reporting and, Recording
- Examinations
- Anti-bullying
- Anti-racism
- Remote Learning

(This list is not exhaustive.)

3.6 Approved AI tools and Trust register

The Trust **must** maintain a **central register of AI tools**, that:

- Lists tools that are **approved, restricted, or not permitted**
- Identifies tools that present heightened risks, including deep fakes, impersonation, or identity misuse
- Is accessible to all schools and staff

Schools **must**:

- Refer to the register when selecting or using AI tools
- Not use tools that are listed as **not permitted**

Inclusion on the Trust register indicates risk status, not an expectation of adoption.

4 Professional guidance - academic (SHOULD)

The following guidance supports effective and responsible practice while allowing for **professional judgement** at school and classroom level.

4.1 Teaching and learning

Where AI use is permitted in-school, schools **should**:

- Support students in using AI as a **learning aid**, not a replacement for thinking
- Encourage critical engagement with AI output, including questioning accuracy, bias, and reliability
- Help students understand the **limitations and uncertainties** of AI systems

4.2 Assessment and curriculum design

Teachers **should**:

- Be explicit about when AI may, may not, or must not be used for specific tasks, **in line with agreed signalling approaches**
- Design tasks that value **process, reasoning, explanation, and reflection**
- Avoid assumptions about students' access to AI outside school

Where AI use is not explicitly permitted, the expectation should be that students rely on their **own knowledge and skills**.

4.3 Inclusion

Schools **should**:

- Consider differences in student access to AI tools outside school when determining expectations
- Consider how access to AI tools may advantage or disadvantage different students
- Avoid practices that widen existing gaps in attainment or opportunity
- Ensure expectations around AI use are fair, transparent, and clearly communicated

4.4 Staff development and modelling

Schools **should**:

- Provide opportunities for staff to explore AI tools in a **safe and supported way**
- Encourage sharing of practice within and across schools
- Model appropriate, transparent, and reflective use of AI

Staff are not expected to be AI experts; confidence and understanding are expected to develop over time.

5 Professional guidance – operational and organisational (SHOULD)

The following guidance supports responsible and consistent use of AI **outside direct teaching and learning activities**, while allowing for professional judgement and local context.

5.1 Use of AI for administrative and operational tasks

Staff should:

- Use AI tools to support administrative efficiency where appropriate, while retaining professional oversight
- Ensure AI is used to assist, not replace, professional decision-making
- Avoid reliance on AI for tasks requiring human judgement, nuance, or sensitivity
- Provide opportunities for other staff to explore AI tools in a **safe and supported way**

AI should be treated as a support tool, not a decision-maker.

5.2 Communications and external-facing use

Staff should:

- Use AI cautiously when drafting communications to students, parents, carers, or external agencies
- Ensure tone, accuracy, and appropriateness are reviewed before communications are shared
- Be transparent where AI has been used to assist in producing formal communications, where appropriate

AI-generated content should support clarity and consistency, not introduce risk or misunderstanding.

5.3 Awareness of risk, bias, and limitation

Staff should:

- Remain aware that AI systems may generate inaccurate, biased, or misleading outputs
- Encourage staff to question and verify AI-generated information
- Avoid assuming that AI output reflects Trust values, school context, or professional standards

AI outputs reflect patterns in data, not understanding or intent.

5.4 Responsible experimentation and innovation

Schools should:

- Encourage responsible exploration of AI tools within agreed frameworks
- Share learning, concerns, and emerging practice through Trust channels
- Avoid informal adoption of AI tools without appropriate consideration of safeguarding, data protection, and risk

Innovation should be deliberate, visible, and shared, not isolated or informal.

5.5 Workload and wellbeing

Schools should:

- Consider how AI may be used to support staff workload and wellbeing
- Avoid introducing AI in ways that increase pressure, surveillance, or unrealistic expectations
- Ensure AI use enhances professional autonomy rather than diminishing it AI should reduce friction, not create it.

6 School-level autonomy

Each school within the Trust may determine its **own position** on student AI use, which may include:

- prohibiting student use of AI
- permitting restricted or guided use
- embedding AI as part of teaching and learning

Schools **should** document their position clearly and communicate it to staff, students, and parents where appropriate.

To support this, each school within the Trust must maintain a **School AI Policy** that:

- aligns with this Trust guidance
- reflects the School's context, values, and approach to AI use
- acts as the **single point of reference** for AI use within that school

Where relevant, existing Trust and school policies should reference the School AI Policy, rather than duplicating AI-specific guidance.

7 Oversight, review, and governance

7.1 AI Review Committee

The Trust **must** establish an **AI Review Committee** which:

- Meets **once per term**
- Includes representation from:
 - teaching staff across Trust schools
 - safeguarding leads
 - relevant Trust and HET representatives

The committee will:

- Review emerging AI tools and practices
- Consider safeguarding, ethical, and educational implications
- Update the **Trust AI tools register**
- Share relevant guidance and updates with schools

7.2 Continuous review

The Trust **must**:

- Monitor developments in AI relevant to education
- Respond to incidents, concerns, or emerging risks
- Review and update this guidance regularly to ensure it remains current and proportionate

8 Status of this guidance

This document provides **Trust-level guidance**, not a single mandated model of practice. It sets out what **must** be done to ensure safety, legality, and integrity, and what **should** be considered to support effective and ethical use of AI.