



EDITH STEIN **CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST**

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

APPROVED BY DIRECTORS	May 2026
SCRUTINISED BY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY / LOCAL GOVERNING BODY SUB COMMITTEE	July 2026
DATE LAST REVIEWED	May 2026
MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE	Chief Executive Officer
STATUTORY / NON-STATUTORY	Non Statutory



Policy Amendments

Version Date	Section / Page	Amendments
May 2026		New policy (4.5 and 7.4 to be populated by individual schools – see below - at Oaklands this will be updated by the IT Network Manager)
July 2026	4.5 / Page 5	Details of AI Tool used by Oaklands
	7.4 / Page 7	Oaklands conditions for adding software to computer system

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1.0 Catholic Social Teaching

- 1.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI) should be used within a Catholic context in a way that upholds the dignity of the human person, promotes the common good, and respects teaching on morality. Catholic teaching affirms that every person is created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore technology must always serve humanity - never replace, diminish, or manipulate it.
In line with the principles articulated in the Church's social teaching, especially in documents such as *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis, AI should be oriented toward protecting employees, reducing injustice, caring for creation, and fostering authentic human development rather than profit alone.
- 1.2 In practical terms, this means AI should be used to support education, while avoiding using the technology to undermine truth, exploit the vulnerable, erode privacy, or contribute to social division. Transparency, accountability, and a commitment to truth are essential.
- 1.3 Ultimately, our Catholic understanding of technology is that it is a gift from God and in itself a reflection of participation in God's creative action. AI should therefore be used not as a substitute for human judgment or relationship, but as a tool ordered toward love, justice, and the flourishing of every person.

2.0 Statement and Scope

- 2.1 AI is increasingly being used across education to support teaching, learning, and administration. ESCAT recognises the opportunities AI presents for enhancing efficiency and innovation in schools. However, AI must be used in a safe, ethical, and responsible manner, ensuring compliance with safeguarding, data protection, and academic integrity principles.
- 2.2 This policy ensures compliance with:
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (*See Appendix A*)
 - UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (*See Appendix A*)
 - DfE Guidance on Generative AI in Education 2025 (*See Appendix A*)
 - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), General ICT Policy, and Data Protection Policy. (*See Appendix A*)
- 2.3 This policy applies to all staff, students, and third parties who use AI or AI related tools in the school environment.

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 The integration of AI in UK schools has evolved significantly over recent years, reflecting both technological advances and the educational community's response to the opportunities and challenges it presents.
- 3.2 A consensus is emerging about the benefits of AI to enhance personalised learning and streamline administrative tasks, while also raising concerns around data privacy, ethical use, and the preparedness of teachers to effectively integrate AI tools into classrooms.
- 3.3 This ongoing dialogue reflects the recognition of AI's transformative potential in education, balanced with a need for careful implementation to protect learner welfare and promote equitable outcomes. These considerations are shaping a pathway for embedding AI in schools, focusing on teacher training, ethical guidelines, and fostering digital competency among students.
- 3.4 AI is rapidly becoming an integral part of education, influencing teaching methods, administrative processes, and student learning. This section outlines where AI applies within ESCAT schools and the principles governing its responsible use.

- 3.5 This policy applies to all AI tools, platforms, and applications used within Trust schools including:
- AI tools used for teaching, learning, assessment, and administration
 - Any third-party AI platforms accessed by students or staff in a school-related capacity
 - AI systems embedded in school-approved software and services
- 3.6 AI must not be used in a way that compromises ethics, student safety, data privacy, fairness, or academic integrity.

4.0 Legislative Background and Key Documents

- 4.1 The UK Online Safety Act 2023 is designed to make the internet safer, particularly for children and vulnerable users, by regulating online content and holding tech companies accountable for harmful material. It is still yet to be fully understood where there may be gaps in regulation to protect children and young people from possible harm caused by AI. Ofcom is the online safety regulator in the UK and is responsible for publishing codes of practice and guidance on how companies can comply with their duties. (See *Appendix A*)
- 4.2 The current National AI Strategy and guidance from GOV.UK is set out in the link below.
[National AI Strategy - GOV.UK](#)
- 4.3 The current AI Road map from GOV.UK is set out in the link below.
[AI Roadmap - GOV.UK](#)
- 4.4 The UNESCO Guidance sets an age limit of 13 for the use of AI tools in the classroom. (See *Appendix A*)
- 4.5 The below table sets out the guidance on the core individual AI tools available and their age limits. (See *Appendix A*)

AI Tool	Age Limit	Parental Consent
Microsoft Copilot	13+ using institutional education accounts	Not needed with institutional account
Google Gemini	All ages	Not needed with institutional account
Grammarly	16+	Not needed for those 16+.
Canva	13+	Not needed
ChatGPT	13+	Yes – needs consent
Perplexity	13+	Yes – needs consent
Snapchat	13+	Yes – needs consent

Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College will be solely using M365 Copilot, which is strictly enabled for staff use only.

5.0 Generative AI

- 5.1 Generative AI represents a transformative leap in technology, enabling machines to create text, images, audio, and video with remarkable accuracy and creativity. Emerging from advancements in machine learning, particularly deep learning, generative models such as GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) and DALL·E leverage vast datasets to understand and produce content that mimics human expression. Initially text-focused, these models have evolved to become multi-modal, integrating and processing various types of input, such as text and images, to generate cohesive outputs.

- 5.2 Since the debut of early systems like OpenAI's GPT-2 in 2019, the field has rapidly advanced, unlocking opportunities in education while raising critical considerations around ethics, data privacy, and equitable access.
- 5.3 AI technology is already widely used in commercial environments and is gaining greater use in education. ESCAT recognises that the technology has many benefits and the potential to enhance outcomes and educational experiences, with the opportunity to support staff in reducing workload.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 Effective oversight and accountability are essential to ensure AI is used appropriately and safely within the school. The following sections define the key responsibilities of school leadership, staff, students, and the IT Support team in managing AI systems.

6.2 Directors of ESCAT

Directors of ESCAT have a strategic responsibility to monitor and evaluate the use of AI, through the oversight of LGBs, so that it supports educational excellence while safeguarding pupils and staff. Directors will, in line with the renewal of this policy review the educational impact, risks, and cost-effectiveness of AI tools, holding senior leaders accountable for transparent implementation and staff training. In doing so, they provide ethical oversight.

6.3 Senior Leadership and Governance

School leadership plays a vital role in overseeing AI governance, ensuring policies align with national regulations, and implementing best practices for safe and ethical AI use.

- Ensure AI governance aligns with DfE, KCSIE, and GDPR regulations.
- Approve AI tools before they are used in teaching, learning, or administration.
- Conduct annual AI risk assessments and/or policy reviews.
- Ensure AI use is transparent, fair, and free from bias.
- Leadership and Governance teams must engage in annual update training to ensure compliance and risk mitigation for the latest risks.

6.4 Teaching and Support Staff

Teachers and support staff are responsible for ensuring AI is used as an educational aid while maintaining academic integrity, supporting student learning, and preventing misuse.

- Use AI as a teaching aid, not as a replacement for pedagogy.
- Verify AI-generated content for accuracy, appropriateness, and bias.
- Educate students on AI literacy, misinformation, and deepfakes.
- Ensure AI use does not compromise academic integrity or safeguarding.
- Teaching and Support staff must engage in annual update training to ensure compliance and risk mitigation for the latest risks.

6.5 Students

Students must develop an understanding of AI's capabilities and limitations while using AI tools ethically and responsibly within the guidelines set by the school. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that students are taught about AI in an age-appropriate manner, in particular:

- Use AI tools responsibly and in line with school policies.
- Declare AI use in homework/coursework, assignments, and assessments where required.
- Understand ethical considerations and avoid over-reliance on AI.
- Trust schools align with the JCQ guidelines *AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications*. The AI policy should be read in conjunction with this [document](#).

6.6 IT Support Teams and Data Protection Officer

The IT Support Team and Data Protection Officer are responsible for ensuring AI systems comply with data protection laws, cybersecurity standards, and safeguarding requirements.

- Implement security measures to ensure AI tools comply with data protection laws.
- Ensure that AI tools used in school settings do not process or store personal data without anonymisation.
- Ensure that all technologies undertake an annual (minimum) Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) process before use is permitted within Trust schools.
- Conduct regular cybersecurity audits to monitor AI-related risks.
- IT Support and Data Protection Officer must engage in annual update training to ensure compliance and risk mitigation for the latest risks.

7.0 Ethical AI Use

7.1 AI should be implemented in ways that are fair, transparent, and aligned with ethical considerations. This section outlines the key principles for ensuring AI use remains accountable, unbiased, and secure.

7.2 Transparency and Accountability

It is essential that AI use within the school remains transparent, and that decisions made using AI are documented and subject to human oversight.

- AI must not be used to make independent decisions affecting students or staff.
- The use of AI in assessment, recruitment, or administrative decision-making must be documented.
- AI-generated content must be identified where used.

7.3 Bias and Fairness

AI systems must be reviewed and monitored to minimise bias, ensuring fairness in learning, assessment, and administrative decision-making.

- AI tools must be vetted to ensure fairness and prevent bias.
- Training must be provided to recognise AI bias and hallucinations and mitigate its impact.
- Human checking is required for all AI output.
- All stakeholders are responsible for any output shared that has been generated by AI.

7.4 Data Protection and Anonymisation

To comply with data protection regulations, AI tools must not process personal data unless approved. Where possible, anonymisation techniques should be used to protect individual privacy.

- AI tools must not process or store personally identifiable student or staff data unless explicitly approved by the school IT Support team and Data Protection Officer.
- AI inputs should be anonymised where possible.
- A DPIA must be conducted before new AI tools are introduced.
- Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College colleagues are NOT permitted to use any new software without prior permission from the IT Support team and Data Protection Officer.
- Any current software that has been adapted/updated with AI features or add-ons must also be reported to the IT Support team for review.
- IT Support will assess the software for security, data protection, and compliance, and reserves the right to approve, restrict, or disable such features, where necessary.
- Be aware that some AI systems (especially freeware) may learn from inputted data, which could lead to unauthorised data processing or storage outside of school control.

7.5 Intellectual Property

The intellectual property (IP) of original creative work, including student work, belongs to the creator. ESCAT will not allow student original work to be used to train generative AI models unless specific permission is obtained from the student (and parent/guardian if a minor) or a copyright exception applies and this is discussed with the school. Permission must be obtained from copyright holders if using their material with an AI tool that trains on uploaded content.

8.0 AI in Education

- 8.1 ESCAT school's educational approach seeks to develop knowledge and understanding of emerging digital technologies, including AI.
- 8.2 This policy outlines our commitment to integrating AI responsibly and effectively within our school environment.
- 8.3 We will use AI responsibly, safely and purposefully to support these aims:
- Enhance academic outcomes: Improve educational experiences and performance for pupils.
 - Support teachers: Assist in managing workloads more efficiently and effectively.
 - Educate on AI use: Promote safe, responsible, and ethical AI practices among staff and learners.
 - Develop AI literacy: Incorporate AI as a teaching tool to build AI skills and understanding.
 - Prepare for the future: Equip staff and pupils for a future where AI is integral.
 - Promote educational equity: Use AI to address learning gaps and provide personalised support.
 - The Trust actively encourages school's is to deliver this knowledge and understanding wherever it is relevant within the curriculum. This will include:
 - Computing/ICT
 - PDC/PSHCE

9.0 AI in Assessments and Academic Integrity

- 9.1 AI must not compromise academic integrity. This section ensures that students and staff adhere to fair assessment practices while using AI tools appropriately.
- 9.2 **Preventing AI Misuse in Assessments**
- To maintain assessment integrity, students must declare AI-assisted work, and staff must monitor submissions for signs of unauthorised AI use.
- AI must not be used to generate homework/coursework, essays, or exam content.
 - Students must declare any AI-assisted work in line with school regulations.
 - Staff must monitor for sudden changes in student work that suggest AI misuse e.g. work that is suddenly better than previously seen, Americanisation of language, other hallmarks of AI-generated content.

10.0 Safeguarding and Online Safety

- 10.1 AI must be used safely within the school environment, preventing harm and ensuring students and staff understand the potential risks associated with AI-generated content.

10.2 Preventing AI-Generated Harm

AI-generated content, including deepfakes and misinformation, presents new safeguarding challenges. Staff and students in ESCAT schools must be aware of these risks and trained to respond appropriately (annually at a minimum).

- AI tools must not be used to create harmful, misleading, or inappropriate content.
- Students and staff must be trained to recognise AI-generated deepfakes, misinformation, and impersonation risks.
- The school's filtering and monitoring systems must detect and prevent AI-generated threats as per the Government's Filtering and Monitoring standards. (See *Appendix A*)

10.3 AI and Cybersecurity

As AI systems become more integrated into school operations, cybersecurity risks must be managed to prevent unauthorised access, phishing attempts, and data breaches.

- AI-related phishing scams, fraud, and cybersecurity risks must be monitored.
- The IT Support team must ensure AI tools do not introduce security vulnerabilities.

11.0 Responding to an Incident or Disclosure

- 11.1 ESCAT's response is always based on sound safeguarding principles and follows school safeguarding and disciplinary processes. All AI incidents (including data breaches and/or inappropriate outputs) must be reported promptly to the relevant internal teams. Effective reporting helps mitigate risks and facilitates a prompt response.
- 11.2 Where relevant / required incidents will be reported to external agencies e.g., Police, LADO, DPO, ICO. All AI related incidents will be recorded through the school's normal recording systems. In the case of misuse of AI by staff, the normal staff disciplinary processes will be followed.

Appendix A

Section		Page	Link
2.2	Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, or most recent update	Page 4	Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK
2.2	UK Data Protection and GDPR Act 2018	Page 4	Data protection: The UK's data protection legislation - GOV.UK
2.2	DfE Guidance on Generative AI in Education 2025	Page 4	Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK
2.2	Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), General ICT Policy, and Data Protection Policy	Page 4	Policies - Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College
4.1	Online Safety Act 2023	Page 5	Online Safety Act - GOV.UK
4.4	Age Limitations	Page 5	UNESCO: Governments must quickly regulate Generative AI in schools
4.5	Age Limitations Table	Page 5	Age Restrictions and Consent to use Generative AI - Artificial intelligence
10.2	Government's Filtering and Monitoring Standards	Page 9	Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring - core standard - Guidance - GOV.UK