

Scottish Guidelines and Guardrails for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Schools



Contents

Ministerial Foreword	3
EIS Guardrails Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Navigating this Guidance	8
Section 1: Core Principles of AI in Education (Guardrails)	9
Section 2: Frequently Asked Questions	15
Section 3: Checklist and Exemplification	24
Examples of Acceptable Pupil Use of Generative AI	27
Examples of Acceptable Teacher Use of Generative AI	29
Examples of Unacceptable AI Use	31
Section 4: Data Protection and AI in Schools	32
Section 5: Key Definitions	35
Section 6: Key Considerations within Ethical AI	40
Section 7: Resources	42



Ministerial Foreword

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and associated technologies is increasingly permeating all aspects of our lives; from how we solve problems, to how we work and communicate. Given the increasing role of this technology within our society, we have a responsibility to ensure that our children and young people, and the teachers and staff in our schools who support them, are equipped to grasp the opportunities, and navigate the challenges that it presents.

The issues we are facing in Scotland are not unique, with countries around the world grappling with similar questions. This is why Andrea Bradley, General Secretary of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) and I jointly committed to building on work already undertaken by the OECD in developing these guidelines and guardrails for schools.

We have been clear from the outset that AI can never and should never act as a replacement for human interaction within classrooms. The Scottish Government and the EIS share a view that teachers and local authorities should draw on the technology in a safe and ethical way, supporting teacher professional judgement to deliver excellent learning and teaching in our schools.

The guidelines and guardrails align with Scotland's wider ambition to become a leader in the development and use of trustworthy, ethical and inclusive AI, as set out in our national AI Strategy. They have also been developed within the wider context of work underway across education, including emerging plans for a vision which articulates the role of digital technologies in Education and the ongoing Curriculum Improvement Cycle. This will help to ensure

that our curriculum remains forward-looking and supports our children and young people to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to navigate a world in which AI is ubiquitous, while grasping the opportunities that it presents.

This publication comes at a significant moment for children's rights in Scotland, following the formal incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law. Children's rights are embedded throughout the guidelines and guardrails and this publication is accompanied by a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment, which is informed by the voices of children and young people themselves.

I am acutely aware that, with any emerging area of practice, teachers and school staff require support to build the required knowledge, skills and confidence. The guidelines and guardrails provide helpful links to available, free to access content, including curriculum resources that we have supported the University of Edinburgh to develop. The newly launched Centre for Teaching Excellence will also have a dedicated Digital Education and AI Hub which will support teachers to engage with the best research and evidence underpinning truly excellent learning and teaching.

I am grateful to our partners across the education system, particularly the EIS, for their constructive engagement throughout the development of the guidelines and guardrails. As the landscape and evidence continues to evolve, these will be updated to ensure that Scotland remains a place where innovation is embraced responsibly and where every child and young person benefits from a contemporary and responsive education system.

EIS Guardrails Foreword

The release of Chat GPT in November 2022 placed the issue of generative AI in education front and centre for teachers. Immediate concerns about how to confidently authenticate coursework were followed by more fundamental questions about the impact of AI use on children and young people's learning and wellbeing, and the impact of AI on teachers' professional role.

Since 2022, AI has advanced rapidly, with generative AI apps now integrated into mainstream platforms and devices. Until now, teachers and schools have largely had to work out AI for themselves. This has presented considerable risk and has also limited the scope for teachers and learners to engage with AI responsibly and with consistency. A rising tide of online misinformation, disinformation and 'deepfakes' has brought such risk into sharp focus.

The following guidance is, therefore, timely. The guardrails arise from a joint commitment made by the Scottish Government and the EIS at the International Summit of the Teaching Profession in Reykjavik in 2025. The guardrails are premised on the view that education in Scotland is, and must always be, a human enterprise based on social relationships, where the utmost value is placed on our children, young people and the adults and communities who care for them. Furthermore, the guardrails firmly assert that the presence of AI must not, in any way, diminish human-centred education; it must only strengthen it.

Scotland's teachers are highly trained professionals skilled in ethical practice, relational approaches and in exercising their professional judgement. They are not passive users of technology. As a trade union and a professional association, the EIS is clear that technology must support, and not replace teacher professionalism, and representative teacher voice must be at the heart of decisions around the design, ethical procurement and appropriate use of AI in education.

Whilst this guidance is aimed at teachers and education leaders, children and young people are at its heart. Scotland's teachers are committed to helping learners thrive by cultivating their creativity, their curiosity and their critical thinking, and to protecting them from harm. Our system is also committed to equity and to tackling the damaging impacts of inequality on our learners. These guardrails make clear that, where used, AI must reinforce, rather than erode our equitable approach to teaching and learning in Scotland.

We commend these guardrails to you in the interests of enabling quality education for equity, equality, democracy and peace, including through the use of appropriate digital tools.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing an increasing role across Scottish society, influencing industry, healthcare, public services, and education. In 2021, [Scotland's AI Strategy](#) launched with the ambition of making Scotland a leader in the development and adoption of trustworthy, ethical and inclusive AI.

AI, when applied in line with teacher professional standards and professional judgement, has the potential to help teachers identify and address learning gaps and further tailor their teaching to meet the diverse needs of their pupils. AI also has the potential to contribute to a reduction in teacher workload by quickly progressing routine and administrative tasks. This would allow teachers more time to focus on what they do best: planning, preparing, teaching and assessing high-quality lessons; while fostering empathy, intuition, and meaningful human connection. These are qualities that technology cannot replicate and within the context of an AI-enabled education system the role of teachers as leaders of learning, exercising professional judgement and skills in a human-centred system, will remain fundamentally unchanged.

Just as AI presents opportunities in education, it can also present significant risks for both educators and pupils. These risks include breaches of data protection, amplification of algorithmic bias, and over-reliance on AI that may undermine professional judgement or present with human-like traits (anthropomorphism). Moreover, the proliferation of AI applications in recent years means that children, young people and teachers have easy access to such technologies but may lack the understanding of if, when, and how it can be used responsibly and ethically in an educational context. A further consideration for schools and local authorities is that AI-enabled educational tools can be of variable efficacy. These products and tools, and the companies who develop them, must be evaluated to ensure they uphold the rights of pupils and staff and align with the ethical standards of schools. Local authorities, as the data controllers, also have legal responsibilities to ensure applications and technologies meet data protection requirements.

With evidence on the impact of AI in education continuing to emerge, it will be necessary for government at all levels and the education sector, including education trade unions, to work together to evaluate the benefits and risks of AI as they become clearer. Increasingly, it will be necessary for local authorities to support teachers, pupils and other users to become involved in the research and co-design of AI-enabled educational tools.

Context

This non-statutory guidance, which includes guidelines and guardrails, [hereafter referred to as guidance], originated in a joint commitment made by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills and the EIS teacher trade union at the International Summit on the Teaching Profession in Reykjavik, Iceland in March 2025. The commitment was to explore the opportunities and challenges presented by AI in education in an ethical context to inform the creation of guidelines and guardrails for the Scottish context, using the OECD publication [**'Opportunities, guidelines and guardrails for effective and equitable use of AI in education'**](#) as a starting point.

This guidance has been developed through collaboration between the Scottish Government, trade unions, local government, Education Scotland and other key education stakeholders. Going forward, ongoing collaboration between stakeholders, co-ordinated by the Scottish Government, where appropriate, will be critical as we navigate an AI-enabled education system.

We recognise that the effective use of digital technologies is significantly impacted by the quality and availability of infrastructure, including appropriate devices and access to digital resources in our schools. The Scottish Government acknowledge the challenges facing many schools in this regard and continues to advance a digital vision for education which will help to ensure all children and young people and educators can benefit from tools and technologies.

Given the rapid pace of change in AI, we must act quickly to ensure that children, young people, and the teachers and staff who support them gain the knowledge and skills needed to use, evaluate, and critique

new technologies safely, responsibly, and effectively. Crucially, our curriculum must continue to engage children and young people across a range of cross-cutting areas, including emerging technologies such as AI. The Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC), which is currently underway and being led by Education Scotland, will play a key role in ensuring that our children and young people develop the essential skills, knowledge, and understanding needed in a world where AI is ubiquitous.

This guidance has also been written in the context of Scotland's incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law in July 2024. [**The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment on Digital Technologies**](#) articulates that all rights under the Convention apply to online services and in relation to emerging technologies. Decisions taken on the use of AI in schools must respect children's rights to privacy, non-discrimination, safety and participation, with children being informed and consulted about how these technologies affect them. Conditions of service for teachers are the remit of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) with devolved matters the remit of Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT). This guidance does not alter existing agreements. Deployment of AI that impacts upon conditions of service is a matter for negotiation through the established mechanisms.

We want to ensure that this guidance remains relevant and useful and, as such, we commit to reviewing the guidance to ensure that it aligns with latest national and digital updates. We will also review on an ongoing basis as evidence emerges in collaboration with teacher trade unions, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders.



Who is this guidance for?

Everyone's experience and proficiency in using AI will be different, however, this guidance is designed to act as a starting point to help those delivering education in schools, including teachers, to consider if and when the use of AI is appropriate and how best to use AI to support practice. This guidance provides parameters for the use of AI in education but does not provide detailed advice on particular AI technologies or applications.

Whilst this guidance is primarily aimed at those delivering education in schools, it may also be of interest to others working within local authorities, as well as Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers, parents and carers, and children and young people themselves.

It is also worth noting that throughout this document, reference is made to local authorities as data controllers. In the case of grant-aided and independent schools, the school is the data controller and not the local authority.

We expect local authorities will develop their own AI policies aligned with their legal responsibilities as data controllers under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK-GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Local authorities will also need to consider their other legal responsibilities, including those under the UNCRC. Local authority policies should reflect this national guidance and consider local circumstances and local authorities should consider making this national guidance publicly available alongside their own local policies.

Within the context of this national guidance, and in line with local authorities' policies, schools should agree an approach to AI, with all parties being clear on the principles underpinning its use. Consideration should also be given by schools to ensure that parents and carers are made aware of how AI is being deployed, in line with their local authority's parental engagement strategy.

Navigating this Guidance

Section 1 outlines the key principles (guardrails) by which AI should be adopted, implemented and taught within our schools. These principles should be used to guide any decisions about the adoption, use and teaching of AI. Local authorities should consider these principles when developing their own AI policies to meet their legal requirements as data controllers.

Section 2 presents answers to some likely questions relating to AI in education, aiming to provide practical information and support.

Section 3 presents real-world examples and case studies illustrating effective uses of AI in educational settings.

Section 4 provides specific guidance and considerations for Local Authorities in their role as data controllers.

Section 5 provides definitions of key terms relating to AI. This is intended to support engagement with and understanding of this guidance.

Section 6 provides further information about the key considerations of Ethical AI.

Section 7 offers links to other resources, learning materials and support for teachers engaging with AI. There are many more AI-related resources available, however, those listed have been vetted as being safe to use.

Core Principles of AI in Education (Guardrails)

This section explores the essential considerations for integrating artificial intelligence into educational contexts. It sets out the foundational principles, or guardrails, that should guide the use of AI in schools. 'Guardrails' is a commonly used term in the context of AI and includes the rules, policies, guidance and frameworks that help to ensure the responsible use of artificial intelligence. The aim of this section is to outline how AI can be harnessed to enhance educational outcomes while prioritising inclusivity, human connection, and the wellbeing of all children and young people and educators.

This guidance emphasises that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in decisions about whether and how to implement AI in school education, in line with the requirements under UNCRC.

Section



1) AI use must ensure the safety and privacy of children and young people and staff by prioritising children's rights, teacher judgement, ethical standards, and data protection.



- Teachers, children and young people, and education leaders must be supported to develop an appropriate understanding of how AI works, its impacts, and its risks. This is important in developing an understanding of its capabilities, biases, and limitations to ensure responsible use.

- An ethical approach to AI, embedded within human-centred teaching and learning, is an approach designed to enhance learning experiences, foster human connection and support professional judgement.

- Teachers are able to decide whether, when, and how to use AI in their classrooms. Where they decide to use AI, this must be done in line with overarching local authority infrastructure, guidance and permissions.

- Local authorities have specific legal responsibilities under data protection law, which are detailed within **Section 4** of this guidance. Notwithstanding this, as a general principle all AI users should understand how to protect data and safeguard pupils' and teachers' sensitive and/or personal information; this is critical to maintaining their safety, rights, and confidence in digital tools.

- Schools and local authorities must update existing digital technology policies to reflect the ethical use of AI. This should be carried out in consultation with teacher trade unions, and other stakeholders, including children and young people and parents and carers. This is necessary to define and underpin the ethical, safe and professionally responsible use of AI in educational contexts.

2) The use of AI must be underpinned by equity and fairness.



- The use of AI in schools must recognise and address the fact that children and young people's access to digital learning tools, including AI, is variable and may be limited by a range of factors, including socio-economic disadvantage, geographical difference, and access to appropriate devices and connectivity.

- Where AI is used, it should support a human-centred approach to teaching and learning which values the diversity of children and young people and enhances different ways of learning and differentiated pedagogical approaches.

- When deployed effectively, some AI-enabled technologies have the potential to help overcome barriers to learning for some children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional support needs. The views of children and young people should always be sought and considered on the use of such technologies in their learning.

- Where AI is used in school learning, including homework, schools should aim to ensure equitable outcomes for all children and young people. This includes ensuring that all children and young people have the means to participate equitably. Consideration should be given to ensuring that, where AI is used, pupils in Gaelic Medium Education (GME) have access to AI through the medium of Gaelic language.

3) AI must support the aims of the Curriculum.



- Scotland's curriculum is designed to ensure that our children and young people are equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding to participate in the workforce and society of the future. Learning about AI can support this goal, assisting our children and young people by harnessing its advantages while ensuring that it neither deskills pupils nor disadvantages them in their development.

- Children and young people should learn about, understand and use AI, in appropriate contexts, as part of their entitlement to opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

- Whilst recognising the increasing importance of digital skills and learning, schools should seek an appropriate balance between digital and non-digital forms of learning that recognises the primacy of human-centred, relational and social experiences of learning.

- As Scotland's curriculum evolves through the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, learning about and using AI is expected to become more common and embedded across teaching and learning, requiring continuous evaluation of the role of AI in education.

4) AI must foster human connection and inclusivity.



- AI must support and enhance, rather than replace, human-centred teaching and learning in schools. It must not make decisions on behalf of teachers or schools.

- Educators and education leaders should be supported to ensure that the AI tools they utilise are accessible and support should be provided to ensure that the outputs resulting from the AI tools are unbiased and contribute to inclusive learning and teaching.

- The integration of AI should support learning and is not intended to replace peer-to-peer interaction or act as a substitute for teacher involvement.

- AI applications used in education to assess the progress of children and young people, or for other assessment purposes, should be applied with teacher oversight and used as part of a holistic approach.

5) AI must support teachers.



- Teachers, in line with their professional standards, local policies and wider statutory obligations, should be empowered to decide when and how to use AI tools to support learning and teaching, and adapt it to their specific classroom needs. They should also be aware of when AI has been integrated into existing digital products or platforms.

- Teachers should be supported to access high-quality professional learning and support so that they can make informed decisions about whether when, and how, to integrate AI into their practice confidently, safely, and effectively.

- Ongoing evaluation of AI tools, with teacher input, should be supported to explore potential benefits for teachers, such as freeing up more time for teachers to focus on direct engagement with pupils.

- AI systems, like all digital tools, should not be adopted or used uncritically and teachers and children and young people should be empowered to critique and challenge the outputs. Where adopted, AI should support educational goals, not define or control them.

- AI applications used in education, and the outputs thereof, must not be used to monitor or analyse teachers' performance.

Frequently Asked Questions

Section





Are children and young people allowed to use AI in Qualifications Scotland (formerly SQA) assessments?

Decisions on the use of AI in summative assessments for qualifications are a matter for the relevant awarding body. The current [Qualifications Scotland \(SQA\) guidance](#) states that GenAI tools can be used when the use of GenAI does not undermine pupils' ability to demonstrate that they have the required knowledge, understanding and skills to meet the assessment standards of the qualification and when the course or unit specifications explicitly allow such use. The guidance is clear that any use of AI in assessments should be acknowledged at submission.

Guidance on the use of AI in assessment must be adhered to and a complementary [exemplification resource](#) is available to provide teachers and practitioners with examples of potentially acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI.

What do children and young people think about using AI in schools?

Children and young people in Scotland have varied views on the use of AI in schools. Research undertaken by [Children's Parliament](#) and as part of the the ADES/ Staff College [Learning Beyond Boundaries](#) project have explored the views of children and young people across Scotland and includes specific calls to action around the use of AI in education.

Through the AHRC Bridging Responsible AI Divides (BRAID) Programme, researchers at the University of Edinburgh have also worked with pupils between the ages of 13 to18 to explore the future of responsible artificial intelligence in education, producing a Zine entitled, '[What's at stake? Young People's Take on AI and Education](#)'.

The available research shows that young people are interested in the potential for AI to assist with personalised learning and digital skills development, but express concerns about privacy, data security, the consequences for human interaction and for the environment. Overall, children and young people want more guidance and a say in how AI is used in education, ensuring it remains ethical, relevant to their needs, and adds value to their learning. Further analysis of available evidence of children and young people's views on AI in education is available in the Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) that accompanies this guidance.

Can I decide not to use AI in my practice?

Teachers are empowered to make professional decisions about whether, when, and how to use AI tools in their practice. Where decisions to use AI are made, this should be in the context of local authority

and schools' policies on AI. Teachers must be mindful of the increasing presence of AI in education and society more broadly. Understanding how AI is evolving allows teachers to make informed decisions, adapt to changing environments, and support children and young people to develop their digital skills.

Teachers in Scotland are entrusted with ownership of their professional standards and continuing professional learning. The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland) acknowledges teachers' responsibility to demonstrate proficiency in using digital technologies. In addition, the GTC Scotland professional values of social justice, trust, and respect and integrity, alongside professional actions, such as planning to meet the needs of children and young people, applying professional judgement, and curriculum design, hold relevance when considering the safe and ethical use of AI tools.





What are the potential benefits of AI in teaching and learning?

AI has the potential to offer benefits for teaching and learning. There are various promising potential uses of AI, so it would not be possible to list them all. However, as an example, AI with professional teacher oversight can help personalise learning experiences by adapting materials and activities to individual pupil needs. This means teachers can more easily design tasks tailored to individuals' learning requirements. Teachers may also be supported with tools that can automate time-consuming tasks. In turn, this presents potential benefits for children and young people in terms of receiving more personalised and tailored learning.

Additionally, alongside the application of teacher judgement, AI can analyse data on pupil progress, enabling educators to quickly identify areas where extra support is needed. However, maintaining privacy and security when utilising AI tools is of high importance. Personal details should only be used in instances where privacy and data security can be guaranteed through systems that have been approved by the local authority for this kind of use.

The Scottish AI Alliance offers a free to access, beginner friendly [‘Living with AI’](#) course which is designed to help anyone interested in understanding the impact of AI on daily life. Developing a basic understanding of how AI works is beneficial in being able to critically evaluate the use of AI in any context.

What do I need to be mindful of when it comes to AI?

We know that there are a range of risks when it comes to AI in our classrooms. These include threats to data security and privacy; concerns about pupils and educators becoming overly dependent on AI tools, potentially leading to a loss of critical skills; and the risk of AI spreading misinformation and reinforcing societal biases.

When using AI in education, it's essential to consider pupil privacy and data security by choosing tools with strong safeguards to protect sensitive information. Be aware that algorithms can sometimes reinforce societal biases or make decisions that affect children and young people differently, so it's important to assess these technologies critically and to ensure that usage of specific AI tools is approved by local authorities. Transparency is also

crucial; pupils, teachers, school staff, and families should know how AI is used, how decisions are made, and how their data will be protected; usually this will necessitate creating a privacy notice.

Given the rapid pace of AI development, we know that many AI enabled tools that are being used in education have not been developed with a children's rights perspective, as evidenced by [recent research](#) which highlights the risks that tools which do not align with the requirements of the UNCRC pose. We are mindful that evidence will continue to develop in this area and we will seek to update the guidance at appropriate junctures to reflect developments.

There is a growing need to design experiences that nurture authentic pupil development, beyond what rudimentary use of generative AI alone can achieve. This might involve crafting assignments and



projects that encourage pupils to engage in critical thinking, collaboration, or creative expression, with outcomes unattainable through AI-generated responses. Alternatively, teachers, supported by accessible and high-quality professional learning opportunities, can develop tasks that require children and young people to meaningfully interact with AI outputs, analysing, critiquing, or building upon them, ensuring that technology supports rather than supplants essential human skills. In doing so, education can remain adaptive and relevant, prioritising growth in the digital age.

It is crucial that AI should support rather than replace meaningful human interactions in the classroom. Consider opportunities for a balance where the human and social experience of education remains central but allows AI to enhance creativity, critical thinking, and personal connections. By staying informed about best practices and evolving ethical guidelines, educators can confidently make choices about integrating AI into your teaching practice.





What are some examples of AI tools that could, potentially, be used in education?

Examples of AI tools which can be utilised under the careful supervision and direction of teachers include apps offering individualised tasks and immediate feedback; for instance, AI-powered educational games and systems designed to reinforce prior learning and supplement teaching. Local authorities in Scotland are already utilising a range of commercially available AI tools and tools that are already in use should be reviewed in light of this guidance.

Generative AI capabilities, including Gemini and NotebookLM, are available to local authorities that have enabled Google Workspace through the Glow platform. However, it is only currently available to staff. Adobe Express is available to some children and young people within Glow on a

local authority opt-in basis, which includes several AI features that support the development of visual content. Companies, such as Google, are exploring options for adapting existing products for use with younger age groups by enhancing safety and security features.

What training and information is available for teachers to learn about AI?

There are many online courses, workshops, and professional development programmes available for teachers to learn about AI. Look for resources from reputable organisations and institutions that offer comprehensive training on AI in education and are in alignment with local authority policies. As a starting point, this webpage developed by Daydream Believers and Education Scotland can help identify learning resources and events that will develop your understanding of AI: [GenAI](#)

in Education Exploration Hub. The Scottish Government have also provided funding to the University of Edinburgh to develop free-to-access resources to support AI teaching and learning across a range of curriculum areas, which are available on [Trails.scot](https://trails.scot).

There are also a range of general resources available that provide information about AI, however, it is important to utilise resources from recognised and reputable sources. Educators should be supported in this through the advice and guidance of their local authority and practitioner discretion will always be required. As a starting point, **Section 3** outlines some key resources that have been endorsed or supported by the Scottish Government or the wider Scottish public sector.

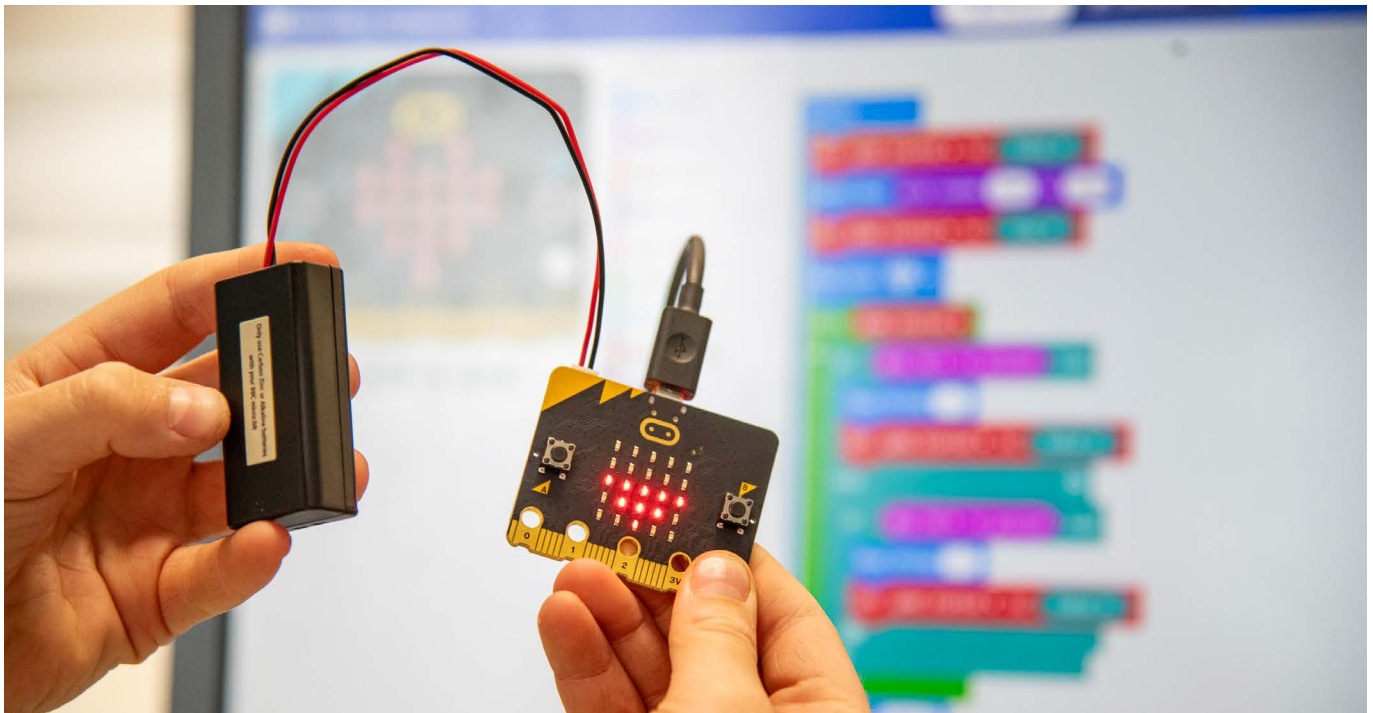
What if my school or local authority does not allow the use of AI tools in the classroom?

You should follow your local authority's policies. Consider discussing your needs with colleagues, school managers, or local authority officials to explore options and always seek clarification on what is permitted within your school.

Given the significant impact that AI is having on our society, the Scottish Government is supportive of teachers, schools, and local authorities taking an ethical approach to the use of AI in education in line with this guidance.

The Scottish Government will continue to engage with ADES, COSLA, individual





local authorities, and teacher trade union representatives on the ethical and effective use of AI in our schools.

What if a parent/carer objects to the use of AI in their child's education?

If a parent or carer raises concerns about the use of AI in their child's education, these concerns should be escalated, as required, in line with school's established complaints or escalation processes.

As a basic principle, policies on use of AI in schools should be written in plain English and made accessible to parents and carers alongside information on how they can raise concerns and express views about the use of AI in their children's education.

What if a child objects to using AI in their learning?

Under the UNCRC, children have the right to express their views on matters that affect them, including the use of AI in their education. As described in this guidance, children and young people should have an opportunity to learn about AI within their school experience. However, if a child or young person objects to the use of AI within their learning, it is important that these concerns are taken seriously and dealt with in line with schools' established policies on handling pupil concerns. Information on the use of AI in education should be available for children and young people in age-appropriate language to support a full understanding.

Checklist and Exemplification

In line with the guidance produced by SQA (now Qualifications Scotland) and the ethical approaches outlined in **Section 1**, this section provides examples of acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI within a school setting.

Section



Technology evolves rapidly and, as such, there is no set list of examples. AI suitability will largely depend on your context and the approach taken by your local authority.

However, some examples have been developed to help you think about how AI could help with teaching and learning, and when this may not be acceptable (see exemplification below). Furthermore, to help guide your decisions about possible use of AI in your work, and to ensure fairness for children and young people, you should consider the following questions.

Due to differing considerations, these have been divided into two categories, namely using AI for teaching and learning and using AI to assist with administrative tasks. If the answer is **NO or DON'T KNOW** to any of these questions, then you should not use AI for this purpose.

AI Use Checklist

All AI use within education should be considered within the context of the principles set out in **Section One** of this guidance.

Using AI for teaching and learning

Example: Utilising an AI tutoring system to assist with literacy skills in the classroom.

1. Will the AI output serve as an effective means for children and young people to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, or understanding?
2. Can I, or a responsible person in my school, provide appropriate supervision and guidance on the use of this tool?
3. Is the tool suitable for pupil use, including being age-appropriate for the intended users and stage of education?
4. Is the tool approved for use by my local authority, and does it align with your local authority and school's current policy on AI?
5. Will the use of this tool ensure the privacy and security of users, including compliance with data protection law, without requiring personal data to be shared with unverified or insecure sources?
6. Does this tool uphold children's rights and is information about the tool being used available to both children and parents and carers?

Using AI to assist with administrative tasks

Example: Producing a progress report for a pupil.

1. Will the use of this AI tool fully protect the privacy, including compliance with data protection law, and security of pupils and staff, ensuring that personal data is not shared with unverified or insecure sources?
2. Have pupils and parents and carers been made aware that an AI tool will be used for this purpose, and is this information available in child-friendly language?
3. Is the selected AI tool both suitable and secure for the intended administrative purpose?
4. Can I, or my colleagues, provide sufficient oversight and validation of the AI-generated output, guaranteeing accuracy and fairness?
5. Will the implementation of this tool help minimise errors and biases, supporting sound decision-making and reliable reporting?
6. Is it clear to all stakeholders how AI-generated content will be used and reviewed within our administrative processes and is there a clear route for pupils and parents and carers to express their views on the use of AI in this way?

Exemplification

The following examples of possible acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI in a school setting include those from both the perspective of a teacher and of a pupil.

Examples of Acceptable Pupil Use of Generative AI

Example	Description	Further Considerations
Generating practice questions or quizzes	Pupils use AI to create revision questions based on studied topics, supporting active recall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils should be supported to verify that questions are accurate and relevant at an appropriate stage of learning. Teachers may guide prompt-writing to focus learning.
Seeking help with understanding concepts	AI provides simplified explanations, used to support understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils should check explanations with a teacher or secondary source to avoid inaccurate or oversimplified content. AI is not a substitute for teaching.
Getting feedback on a draft	Pupils ask AI for general feedback on structure, tone, or clarity, then revise accordingly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI feedback must not replace teacher or peer review. Keep original drafts for reflection. Ensure that latest Qualifications Scotland guidance on summative assessment is adhered to.
Exploring different perspectives or styles	Pupils prompt AI to rewrite text in different voices or tones, e.g. in the style of a particular author.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils should be supported to reflect critically on differences. AI outputs are learning aids, not final submissions.
Exploring ideas for creative writing and other projects	Pupils use AI to generate initial ideas, prompts, or themes for stories, poems or presentations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use AI suggestions as inspiration only. Pupils should be supported to critique AI generated ideas. Ensure originality in final work and add personal creativity.

Example	Description	Further Considerations
Summarising complex texts or notes	AI helps pupils condense lengthy readings or notes into key points for easier review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils should verify summaries and engage with the full text for deeper understanding at an appropriate stage of their learning. • Avoid over-reliance that bypasses full reading.
Language practice and vocabulary building	Pupils interact with AI to translate phrases, learn new vocabulary, or practice foreign language sentences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-check AI translations and usage with teacher feedback or trusted dictionaries. • Use as a supplement, not the sole source.
Creating study timetables or organisation plans	AI assists pupils in planning revision schedules or organising project steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils should adjust plans based on their personal learning pace and deadlines. • Teachers can help verify feasibility.
Creating images or artwork using AI tools	Pupils use AI to generate initial concepts, backgrounds, or visual elements for creative projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure compliance with local Child Protection and Safeguarding policies within the school and / or local authority. • In line with age restrictions of products, AI-generated images should be used as inspiration or starting points, with pupils adding personal input or refinement. • Ethical use requires crediting AI tools where appropriate. • Pupils should be supported to develop an understanding of AI limitations.

Examples of Acceptable Teacher Use of Generative AI

Example	Description	Further Considerations
Generating differentiated resources	AI helps create texts or tasks at varying difficulty levels to support diverse literacy needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure AI-generated materials are accurate and age-appropriate. • Review and customise content to reflect curriculum goals and the needs of pupils. • Avoid over-reliance on AI that may reduce teacher creativity or understanding of pupil needs. • Consider accessibility and cultural relevance of generated materials.
Creating formative assessment tasks	Teachers use AI to produce quick quizzes or comprehension tasks, saving preparation time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify questions align with learning objectives and are free of bias. • Use AI-generated questions as a starting point, refining them to match pupils' abilities and needs. • Ensure tasks encourage critical thinking, not just recall.
Drafting lesson plans or starter activities	AI suggests warm-ups or creative ideas, which teachers tailor to suit their class context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always personalise AI suggestions to fit the class dynamics, pupil needs and the context of Curriculum for Excellence. • Maintain professional judgment. AI ideas should enhance, not replace, teacher planning. • Consider whether activities are inclusive and promote engagement. • Reflect on ethical implications if AI suggests culturally sensitive content.
Supporting EAL pupils	AI tools assist with translation or simplification of texts for pupils with English as an additional language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm translations are accurate and contextually appropriate. • Use AI as an aid alongside human support; avoid full dependency. • Be mindful of dialect and cultural nuances that AI may overlook.

Example	Description	Further Considerations
Analysing pupil progress and data	Process assessment data to identify learning gaps, trends, or patterns in pupil progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use AI insights as one part of a holistic approach, combining with teacher observations. • Avoid bias or overgeneralisation from AI outputs. • Maintain transparency with pupils and parents and carers about data use.
Creating personalised learning pathways	AI suggests tailored learning resources or activities based on individual pupil needs and progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review AI recommendations to ensure relevance and fairness. • Consider AI input in context of teacher judgment and pupil preferences. • Avoid reinforcing stereotypes. • Ensure accessibility for all children and young people.
Generating professional development resources	AI assists teachers in sourcing or creating training materials, lesson ideas, or research summaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify the accuracy, relevance and quality of AI-generated content. • Use AI to complement, not replace, collaborative professional learning. • Reflect critically on AI suggestions to suit local context.
Supporting administrative tasks	Automate routine tasks such as attendance tracking or scheduling, freeing time for teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain oversight to ensure AI accuracy. • Safeguard confidential data and respect pupil privacy. • Avoid over-reliance that might deskill staff. • Monitor for potential biases in automated systems.

Examples of Unacceptable AI Use

Unacceptable Pupil Use of AI	
Submitting AI-generated work as own*	Pupil copies AI-produced work and submits it without edits or acknowledgement.
Using AI in controlled assessments*	Using AI tools during exams or coursework where assistance is not permitted.
Bypassing learning	Regularly using AI to summarise texts or generate arguments without engaging in the material themselves.

* Please check [specific guidance](#) on acceptable and unacceptable use of AI in summative assessments for qualifications awarded by Qualifications Scotland.

Unacceptable Teacher Use of AI	
Using AI-generated feedback without personalisation and review	Copying generic AI feedback without reviewing pupils' work, which may result in irrelevant or inaccurate comments and risks damaging the teacher-pupil relationship.
Replacing professional judgement with AI	Overdependence on AI for pupil assessments or decisions without professional insight is inappropriate.
Sharing sensitive data with AI tools	Entering pupil names, assessment data, or safeguarding issues into non-compliant AI tools breaches data protection legislation.
Using AI without transparency	Failing to disclose the use of AI in lesson planning or feedback may undermine trust and clarity.

Data Protection and AI in Schools

Local Authorities are data controllers when they use AI tools in education. This means Local Authorities are legally responsible for how personal data is collected, used, and shared. This section explains what you need to do to comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Section



Data protection principles

When using AI, you must follow the core data protection principles:

- Identify the correct lawful basis for processing (e.g., public task). Consent is rarely appropriate for public authorities.

- Provide clear privacy notices explaining what data is collected, why, and how it is used.

- Collect only what you need (data minimisation).

- Keep data accurate and up to date (accuracy).

- Store data securely and delete it when no longer needed (storage limitation and security).

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

Before introducing any AI tool that processes personal data:

- Complete a DPIA – this is mandatory where there is a high risk to individuals' rights and freedoms.

- Consult your Data Protection Officer (DPO) for advice.

- Your DPIA should cover: what personal data the AI tool will process, risks of bias, profiling, or automated decisions, international transfers and safeguards, and vendor compliance checks.

Automated decision-making & children's data

- If AI makes decisions that significantly affect individuals (e.g., grading, progression), you must provide human oversight and explainability.

- Children's data requires extra care under UK GDPR. Use age-appropriate privacy notices and ensure transparency.

Controller - processor relationships

If you use a third-party AI provider: you are the controller, they are the processor.

- Put a Data Processing Agreement (DPA) in place that states the provider acts only on your instructions and includes security requirements.
- Check if the provider stores data outside the UK and apply legal safeguards (e.g., adequacy decision or contractual clauses).
- Document these checks in your DPIA.

Data subject rights requests

You need clear processes for handling rights requests involving personal data processed by AI tools:

- Ensure you can retrieve, correct, and delete personal data from AI systems.
- Be prepared to respond to subject access requests (SARs) within statutory deadlines.

Accountability and governance

- Maintain records of processing activities involving AI.
- Ensure staff are trained on data protection risks associated with AI.
- Regularly review AI systems for compliance and effectiveness.

Compliance checklist:	
Lawful basis identified	
Privacy notice provided	
DPIA completed and DPO consulted	
SAR and breach processes in place Data Processing Agreement signed	
International transfers checked	
Staff trained	
Records maintained	

Key Definitions

To navigate the evolving landscape of AI, it's important to become familiar with the terminology that surrounds these technologies. This section clarifies and explains essential terms, aiming to demystify AI and illustrate its relevance to modern education.

Section





Adaptive Learning

Adaptive learning refers to educational methods and technologies that personalise learning experiences in real time, responding to each pupil's strengths, weaknesses, pace, and preferences. Through the use of AI and data-driven insights, adaptive learning systems, overseen by teachers exercising professional judgement, continuously analyse pupils' interactions and outcomes, adjusting the content, support, and level of challenge to suit individual needs.

This approach aims to maximise engagement, promote mastery, and ensure that all children and young people have equitable opportunities to succeed, no matter their starting point or approach to learning.

Artificial Intelligence

The [Scottish AI Alliance](#) offer two possible definitions of Artificial Intelligence, while recognising the challenge of defining the term, as there is not a single agreed definition.

The first definition put forward describes artificial intelligence in the following way:

“Artificial Intelligence is the field of study within computer science that focuses on designing computer systems that can perform tasks that we would normally consider to need ‘human intelligence’, such as making decisions and producing natural language.

“The technologies that result from this field of study are known as ‘AI technologies.’”

While the second definition, which is based on the OECD definition, states:

“An AI system is a machine-based system that can for a given set of human-defined explicit or implicit objectives, draw conclusions, from the input it receives, how to generate results such as make predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical, real, or virtual environments.

“Different AI systems are designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy and adaptiveness after deployment.”

Both definitions have strengths and weaknesses, which the Scottish AI Alliance explore in detail.

Generative AI

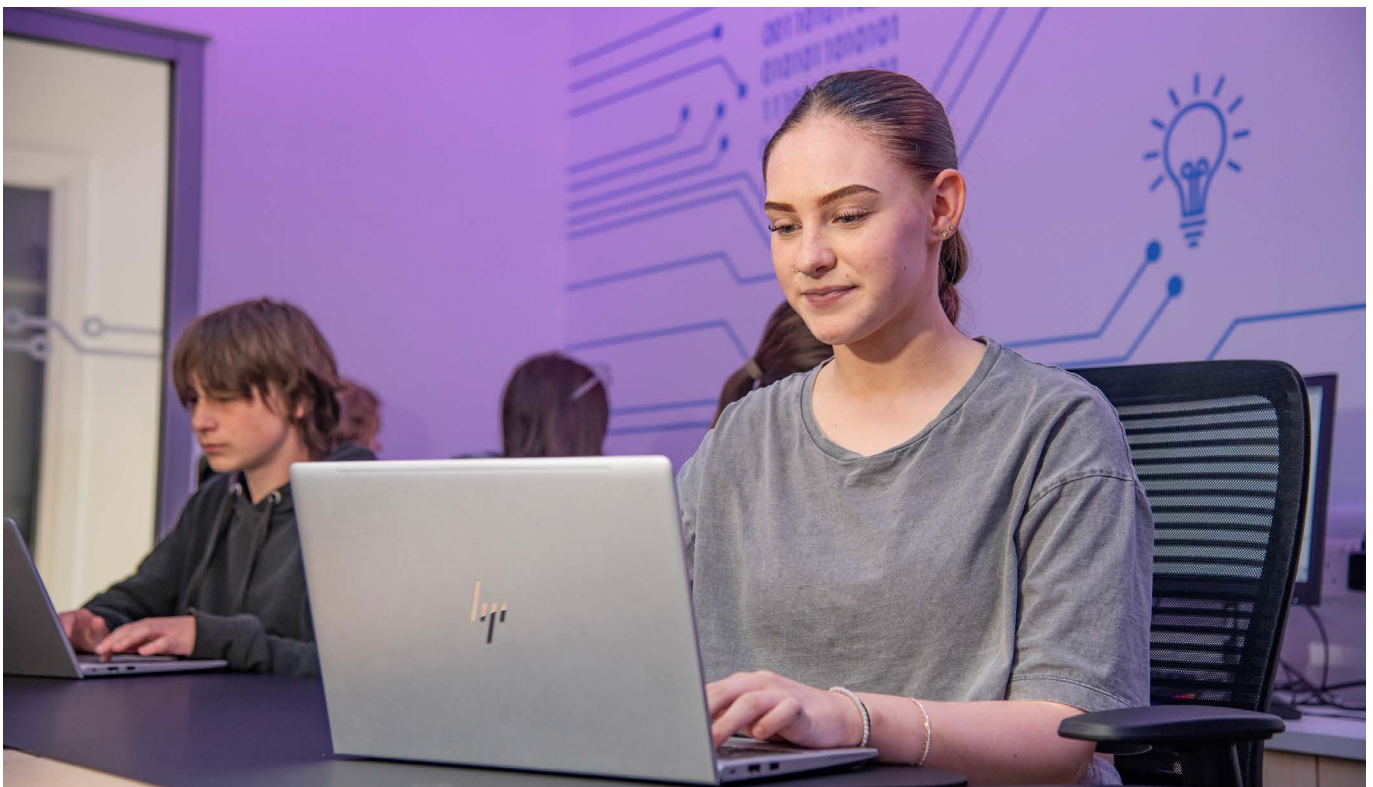
In recent years we have seen the growth of Generative AI systems, often referred

to as ‘GenAI’. Generative AI is an AI system that generates text, images, audio, video, or other media in response to user prompts. This includes systems like ChatGPT, Google Gemini or Microsoft Copilot.

Generative AI uses machine learning techniques to create new data that shares characteristics with its training data, often producing outputs that are nearly indistinguishable from human-created content, which can present ethical challenges.

Generative AI responds to user prompts to generate tailored outputs like text, images, or videos. It does this by using large amounts of data to find patterns and connections, with the help of advanced computer programs called neural networks.

When a prompt is given, the AI predicts and assembles the most likely sequence of words, pixels, or sounds based on





what it has learned from its training data. This process enables GenAI to produce content that often closely mirrors human-created material, continually developing as it processes more data and receives feedback.

As GenAI is essentially predicting the ask of the user based on previous data that it has been trained on, it can be significantly subject to bias. This is where the importance of ethics in relation to AI must be emphasised.

This [resource](#) by Education Scotland explains some of these key terms like ‘Generative AI’ and ‘Machine Learning’ in more detail.

Ethical AI

Ethical AI refers to the practice of designing and deploying artificial intelligence systems in a way that is fair, transparent, accountable, and respectful of human dignity, values and rights. It involves establishing principles and techniques to prevent potential harms like bias,

discrimination, and invasion of privacy, and to ensure that AI technologies benefit society while mitigating risks.

The [Scottish AI Alliance](#) defines Ethical AI as “aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Scotland’s National Performance Framework, respecting and supporting our human rights, our environment and our communities.

“Ethical AI is accountable to the people who are affected by it and respects the laws and rights of the people of Scotland as well as internationally.”

In an educational context, this means ensuring that AI tools and systems used within schools promote fairness, transparency, and inclusivity, and that they safeguard the rights, privacy, and well-being of all children and young people and teachers.

Further information on the key considerations underpinning Ethical AI can be found in **Section 5**.

AI Literacy

Learning about and learning with AI requires that teachers, children and young people develop their AI literacy skills.

The **OECD** defines AI literacy as: “the technical knowledge, durable skills, and future ready attitudes required to thrive in a world influenced by AI. AI literacy enables children and young people to engage, create with, manage, and design AI, while critically evaluating its benefits, risks, and ethical implications.”

While this guidance document uses the term ‘AI literacy’ to describe the emerging knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to AI, it should be noted that children and young people have expressed reservations

about using the term ‘literacy’ for other topics, arguing that it is confusing.

Therefore, the term AI literacy should be avoided in a classroom context and replaced with ‘Learning with and about AI’.

With the growth of AI across our society, being able to use and understand AI is fast becoming an essential facet of knowledge and skill. To ensure that children and young people can contribute to society, participate in the economy where AI and the need for digital skills are becoming increasingly prevalent and have their voices heard in societal debates about AI, there must be an attempt to appropriately integrate AI literacy across the curriculum.



Key Considerations within Ethical AI

Adopting an ethical approach to AI helps to prevent AI tools from causing social, environmental or political harm. Adhering to ethical guidelines in the adoption of AI tools is central to building and fostering trust among users, regulators and the public.

Section



Adopting an ethical approach to AI encourages the development of AI technologies for the collective good, ensuring that they benefit society and helps to address broader societal challenges that the rapid development of this technology presents, including the potential misuse of AI for discriminatory or manipulative purposes. An important consideration in the use and development of AI is considering whether it is required at all.

The ethical use of AI, in conjunction with a human-centred approach to education, ensures that it does not interfere with essential relational approaches. In summary, ethical AI is guided by several core principles:

Fairness, Inclusivity & Non-Discriminatory

AI systems should be equally accessible and provide equitable outcomes for all demographic groups (of pupils) including for those in Gaelic Medium Education.

Transparency & Explainability

It should be clear how AI systems produce outputs, allowing stakeholders (teachers,

pupils etc.) to understand their capabilities and limitations, and to be informed when interacting with AI.

Accountability

Schools and the national education system must be responsible for the impacts of their AI systems, establishing review processes and human oversight to address negative consequences.

Reliability & Safety

AI systems should be robust, both technically and in their social environment, designed to avoid harm and operate safely.

Privacy & Data Governance

The development and use of AI must respect individual privacy and ensure proper management of user data, including under Data Protection Law.

Human Agency & Oversight

Humans should maintain control over AI systems; in the educational context by teacher professional judgement being fundamental.



Resources

Given the fast-moving nature of the subject area, there are a multitude of resources available on AI. However, the resources in this section have been vetted as being safe to use and accurate at time of publication. The resources in this section will be reviewed and updated.

Section



Education Scotland: [Artificial Intelligence in Scottish Education: What you need to know - DigiLearn](#) and [Teaching and Learning with Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

This guide and webpage are designed to help Scottish educators understand the basics of AI, machine learning, and generative AI, and explore how these technologies might impact your practice. The guidance includes an AI Readiness Self Evaluation tool which has been designed to help schools understand where they currently are, and what they might want to prioritise in terms of AI use in their setting.

Daydream Believers: [GenAI in Education Exploration Hub](#)

This hub provides an evolving set of resources, guidance, and ethical frameworks to support project based learning and encourage ethical experimentation with modern machine learning tools. The hub aims to empower teachers and pupils to take an ethical approach to the use of AI while enhancing creativity, communication, and problem solving skills.

Glow: [Machine Learning and AI within Glow - Glow Connect](#)

This site provides links to resource pages that highlight the AI features available within Glow; useful documents around the use of AI in Education; training opportunities and academic research around the broader; global AI landscape.

Qualifications Scotland- Guidance in use of AI in assessment: [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in assessments - SQA](#)

This guidance produced by Qualifications Scotland, in collaboration with key stakeholders through ongoing consultation and research, details the appropriate use of AI in summative assessments for the qualifications they award. This guidance is reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains up to date with the current climate of AI use in Scotland.

University of Edinburgh: [Teach AI Literacy: A Guide for Teachers - University of Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

The 'Teach AI Literacy: A Guide for Teachers' framework, developed by the University of Edinburgh, is designed to support Scottish teachers in primary and secondary education. It focuses on AI literacy, critical thinking, responsible use to support learning, and children's rights and ethics. The framework provides practical examples, curriculum outcomes, and teacher guidance to help educators integrate AI literacy into their teaching practices. It emphasises the importance of ethical AI use, societal impact, and environmental considerations.

Children’s Parliament: [Resources for Primary Teachers: Children’s Rights & AI: Teaching Pack – Scottish AI Alliance](#)

Children’s Parliament, the Scottish AI Alliance and The Alan Turing Institute have shared a comprehensive resource pack to support children in primary school to learn about AI through a children’s human rights approach. These resources give educators a practical, ethical, and age-appropriate way to bring AI learning into the classroom that puts children and their rights at the centre of the conversation.

Robert Gordon University: [Maddie is Online Bookshelf, Series 5 Generative AI](#)

This is an online resource created by Robert Gordon University in partnership with the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals Scotland (CILIPS) aimed at teachers, parents and carers, librarians, children and young people, providing accessible information about the challenges and opportunities of using AI. Grounded in children’s rights, the resource promotes media and information literacy by examining global UN Sustainable Development challenges – poverty, inequality, and climate change – exploring how AI generates and influences content, both textual and visual, using cartoon video stories, lesson plans, activities and discussion prompts.

OECD/Education International: [Opportunities, guidelines and guardrails for effective and equitable use of AI in education | OECD](#)

The OECD’s guidelines on AI in education, developed in collaboration with Education International, provide principles and practical advice for using AI responsibly in learning environments.

University of Edinburgh: [Resources Archive - TRAILS.scot](#)

The University of Edinburgh’s TRAILS serves as a comprehensive digital collection of educational materials designed to support teachers, educators, and children and young people in understanding and integrating artificial intelligence into the classroom. Curated by leading experts, the archive features guides, lesson plans, case studies, and practical tools focused on AI literacy, ethical considerations, and innovative teaching strategies. The platform offers easy access to up-to-date resources that encourage responsible, inclusive, and forward-thinking approaches to AI education in Scotland and beyond.

Scottish AI Alliance: [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Course | Free, Online, Beginner-Friendly - Living with AI](#)

The Scottish AI Alliance’s Artificial Intelligence Course offers a free, beginner-friendly online introduction to AI, designed for anyone interested in understanding the impact of artificial intelligence on daily life. With easy-to-follow lessons, interactive examples, and real-world case studies, the course guides children and young people from the basics of AI to its applications across society, highlighting ethical considerations and encouraging responsible use. Flexible and accessible, it empowers educators, pupils, and the wider public to engage confidently with AI technologies at their own pace.



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