

AI Policy Checklist for School Leaders

A practical self-check for secondary schools and assessment centres managing GCSEs, A-levels, and BTECs. Source-referenced to current DfE, JCQ, and ICO guidance.

AI use is already affecting schools across staff workload, pupil use, assessment integrity, safeguarding, and data protection. Published guidance continues to evolve across multiple bodies rather than through one single school policy document.

The DfE says safety should be the top priority and that staff must continue to use professional judgement over any AI-generated output. JCQ requires centres to have a malpractice policy that covers AI use, including what AI is, when it may be used, how it should be acknowledged, and how misuse will be treated.

Use this checklist as a quick self-assessment. Mark each item:

Yes In progress No

Governance

1. Leadership and ownership

- We have identified who owns AI policy and review at school or trust level. *(DfE generative AI in education, DfE product safety standards)*

- We have agreed whether AI use is currently staff-only, admin-only, or allowed in selected pupil-facing contexts. *(DfE generative AI in education)*

- We have a review point for AI-related policies and procedures, rather than treating them as one-off documents. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*

2. Policy coverage

- We have a staff-facing AI acceptable use policy or equivalent guidance. *(DfE generative AI in education)*

- We have assessment integrity / malpractice documentation that explicitly covers AI. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*

- We have identified which related policies also need AI references, such as safeguarding, homework, online safety, data protection, and filtering/monitoring. *(DfE generative AI in education)*

Staff use

3. Staff expectations

- Staff understand that AI can support work but does not replace professional judgement. *(DfE generative AI in education)*

- Staff know they remain responsible for the accuracy, tone, and suitability of anything they produce or send using AI. *(DfE generative AI in education)*

- Staff have clear examples of permitted and prohibited AI use. *(DfE generative AI in education)*

4. Approved tools

- We can say which AI tools or use cases are approved and which are not. *(DfE product safety standards)*

- We have a simple process for reviewing new tools before staff start using them. *(DfE product safety standards)*

- We consider intended purpose, security, privacy, permissions, and safeguarding before allowing a tool to be used. *(DfE product safety standards)*

Assessment integrity

5. Candidate work and authenticity

- We have clear rules on when candidates may and may not use AI in assessed work. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*

- Candidates are told that work submitted for assessment must be their own. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*

- Candidates are told how AI use should be acknowledged where relevant. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*

- Staff know what signs may indicate authenticity concerns and what process to follow next. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*

6. Staff assessment duties

- Teachers understand that they must not accept work for qualification assessment unless they are satisfied it is the student's own. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*
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- Teachers understand that AI must not be used as the sole marker of student work. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*
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- The Head of Centre understands the requirement to maintain annually reviewed malpractice policy coverage for AI. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*

Safeguarding and pupil use

7. Learner-facing safeguards

- We have decided whether pupils may use AI in school, and if so in which contexts, subjects, year groups, or tasks. *(DfE generative AI in education)*
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- Any pupil-facing AI use is supervised and risk-assessed. *(DfE generative AI in education)*
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- We have considered age restrictions, filtering, and monitoring for learner-facing tools. *(DfE generative AI in education, DfE product safety standards)*
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- Staff know how to escalate unsafe outputs, harmful content, or concerning pupil interactions involving AI. *(DfE product safety standards)*

Data protection

8. Privacy and DPIA awareness

- Staff know not to place personal or confidential data into open or unapproved AI tools. *(DfE generative AI in education)*
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- We know when AI use may require additional data protection review or a DPIA. *(ICO AI guidance, ICO high-risk processing examples)*
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- We understand that innovative use of technology, including AI, can trigger DPIA expectations in the right circumstances. *(ICO high-risk processing examples)*

- We know who should be consulted internally if a proposed AI use involves personal data or automated decision-making concerns. *(ICO AI guidance)*

Communication and review

9. Communication and training

- Staff have received at least basic guidance on safe and appropriate AI use. *(DfE safe use module 3)*
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- We have considered how we communicate our approach to pupils and parents/carers. *(DfE generative AI in education)*
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- We have a review cycle so our documents do not go stale as guidance changes. *(JCQ AI use in assessments)*

Quick score

Yes: _____ In progress: _____ No: _____

Mostly Yes: Main foundations likely in place – review whether documents are current.

Mixed: You have started, but there may be important gaps in consistency or ownership.

Several No: You may be relying on informal practice where clearer policy coverage is now needed.

What most schools discover

Many schools already have some relevant documents, but not a joined-up AI position across staff use, assessment integrity, safeguarding, and data protection. That gap matters because DfE guidance expects schools to assess risks and choose suitable use cases, while JCQ requires explicit AI coverage in malpractice policy arrangements.

Next step

If this checklist highlighted gaps, the practical next step is to put the essential documents in place:

- Staff AI Acceptable Use Policy
- Assessment Integrity / AI Malpractice Policy
- Linked safeguarding and data protection review points
- A simple review process so documents stay current

Our AI Policy Starter Pack brings all of these together — source-referenced, board-ready, delivered in 5 working days.

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This checklist reflects source guidance current as of June 2026. It is provided as informational guidance and does not constitute legal advice. Each school or trust is responsible for reviewing, adapting, and approving its own policies and procedures through its governance structures before adoption.