



AI & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN SCHOOLS

A Practical Guide for Teachers and School Leaders

TEA PRACTICAL GUIDE #02 | 2026

How to set clear expectations for student AI use, redesign assessment, protect authentic learning and respond proportionately when AI is involved.

Student AI use • assessment design • disclosure • authorship • process evidence
• feedback • school guidance

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About This Guide

Generative AI has made a familiar school question much harder: What does a student's submitted work actually demonstrate? A polished final product may now contain substantial machine assistance, while a student who uses AI transparently and thoughtfully may still be doing meaningful intellectual work.

This guide helps schools move beyond the simple equation 'AI use = cheating'. Academic integrity remains essential, but the practical response must distinguish between permitted assistance, excessive substitution, undisclosed use and deliberate misrepresentation.

CORE PRINCIPLE

The key question is not simply whether AI was used. Ask: What was the learning purpose, what did the student contribute, what assistance was permitted, what was disclosed, and what evidence shows the student can perform the intended learning?

This guide is designed for

- Teachers designing classroom and take-home assessment.
- School leaders developing shared expectations for student AI use.
- Departments reviewing homework, coursework and project practices.
- Educators discussing transparency, authorship and evidence of learning with students.

1. Academic Integrity Has Not Disappeared - The Context Has Changed

Schools have always dealt with inappropriate assistance, copied work, contract cheating, over-support and unclear authorship. Generative AI changes the scale and ease of assistance, but the underlying educational concern remains: the evidence submitted should validly represent the learning being assessed.

A useful shift

OLD QUESTION	BETTER QUESTION
Did the student use AI?	Was the AI use permitted, proportionate and transparent?
Can we detect AI text?	What evidence demonstrates the student's own learning and decision-making?
How do we stop AI?	Which tasks require independent performance, and where can AI be used responsibly?
Is the final answer good?	Can the student explain, defend, revise and apply the work?

DO NOT BUILD POLICY AROUND DETECTION ALONE

UNESCO guidance has noted limited evidence for the effectiveness of automated AI-detection approaches. A stronger long-term response is to rethink assessment and strengthen human verification of learning.

2. A Simple Three-Level Permission Model

Students should not have to guess whether AI is allowed. State the conditions at the beginning of the task.

ALLOW	ALLOW WITH CONDITIONS	DO NOT ALLOW
Examples Brainstorming possible topics Generating practice questions Language support where permitted Exploring alternative explanations	Examples Feedback on a draft Editing or restructuring Idea generation for projects Coding assistance Research support	Examples Independent diagnostic task Closed assessment Memorised performance Task specifically assessing unaided writing/calculation Any use explicitly prohibited for the task
Expectation: Tell students whether disclosure is required.	Expectation: Define what assistance is permitted, what must remain the student's work, and how use must be disclosed.	Expectation: Explain why independent performance is necessary and design conditions accordingly.

IMPORTANT

The same AI use can be acceptable in one task and inappropriate in another. Permission should follow the learning purpose, not a universal list of tools.

3. Student AI Use: Five Practical Categories

A school does not need dozens of labels. These five categories can help teachers discuss the degree of AI involvement.

CATEGORY	WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE	INTEGRITY QUESTION
1. No AI	Student completes the task independently.	Are conditions appropriate for demonstrating unaided performance?
2. AI for support	Vocabulary help, brainstorming, practice, clarification.	Does the student still perform the assessed thinking?
3. AI for feedback	AI comments on a student-created draft or approach.	Does the student evaluate and make the revisions?
4. AI co-creation	AI contributes material that becomes part of the final product.	Is the contribution permitted, disclosed and intellectually transformed?
5. AI substitution	AI performs the central task the student was expected to demonstrate.	Does the submitted work still provide valid evidence of the student's learning?

4. Write the AI Rule Into the Assignment

A one-sentence rule can prevent a large amount of confusion.

EXAMPLE - AI ALLOWED

You may use generative AI to brainstorm possible examples and to create practice questions. You remain responsible for the accuracy and final content of your submission. Record meaningful AI assistance in the disclosure section.

EXAMPLE - AI ALLOWED WITH CONDITIONS

You may use AI to comment on a draft you wrote yourself. You may not ask AI to rewrite the full response. Submit your first draft, a short description of the feedback you used, and your final version.

EXAMPLE - NO AI

This task is designed to assess your independent ability to [SKILL]. Generative AI assistance is therefore not permitted during this task. You may use the resources specifically listed by your teacher.

Before assigning work, clarify

- Whether AI is allowed.
- What kind of AI assistance is allowed.
- What part must be completed independently.
- Whether disclosure is required and what it should contain.
- What process evidence students must retain.
- What will happen if expectations are unclear or not followed.

5. Student AI Use Declaration - Keep It Simple

Disclosure should help make learning visible. It should not become a bureaucratic exercise.

STUDENT AI USE DECLARATION

Task: _____

Did you use a generative AI tool? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If yes, what did you use it for?

☐ Brainstorming ☐ Explanation/clarification ☐ Feedback on my draft ☐ Editing/language support ☐ Creating content ☐ Other: _____

Tool(s) used: _____

Briefly describe how AI influenced your final work:

What did you check, change, reject or add yourself?

I remain responsible for the final work I submit.

For younger learners, replace formal disclosure with a short teacher-led reflection such as: What help did you use? What did you decide yourself? What did you change?

6. Assessment Design in the Age of Generative AI

If a task can be completed convincingly by AI without the learner demonstrating the intended knowledge or skill, the problem may not be solved by stronger detection. The assessment may need additional evidence.

Strengthen assessment by combining evidence

- Product: the final essay, project, solution, presentation or artefact.
- Process: notes, drafts, planning, data, sources, revisions or decision logs.
- Performance: in-class writing, oral explanation, demonstration, problem solving or practical work.
- Reflection: why choices were made, what changed, what was difficult, what the student learned.
- Transfer: applying the same knowledge or skill to a new example or problem.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Do not add process evidence simply to police students. Use it when it gives better evidence of the learning you actually care about.

Example

Instead of: 'Write a 1,000-word report on renewable energy.'

Consider: source comparison + planning notes + report + 3-minute oral defence + one new scenario question. The final report still matters, but it is no longer the only evidence.

7. The Oral Verification Toolbox

A short conversation can reveal far more than an AI detector. It should be used proportionately and not as an interrogation.

Useful verification questions

- What is the main claim you are making here?
- Why did you choose this example or source?
- Explain this sentence/step in a different way.
- Which part of the task was most difficult and why?
- What did you change between your first and final version?
- What evidence would make you change your conclusion?
- If this condition changed, how would your answer change?
- Which part of the work are you least confident about?
- What did AI suggest that you decided not to use?
- Show me how you would apply the same idea to this new example.

KEEP IT EDUCATIONAL

Verification is strongest when it also creates a learning conversation. The goal is to establish understanding and authorship, not to catch students out.

8. What Counts as Evidence of Authentic Learning?

EVIDENCE	WHAT IT CAN SHOW	CAUTION
In-class performance	Independent application under known conditions.	One performance may not represent all learning.
Draft history	Development, revision and decision-making.	Do not demand excessive surveillance.
Oral explanation	Understanding, reasoning and ownership.	Account for language and accessibility needs.
Source notes	Research choices and evidence use.	Quality matters more than quantity.
Reflection	Awareness of process and decisions.	Reflections can also be AI-generated; combine evidence.
Transfer task	Ability to apply learning in a new context.	Keep it aligned with the original learning goal.

No single item proves authorship in every situation. Use evidence appropriate to the stakes of the assessment.

9. When You Suspect Undisclosed or Inappropriate AI Use

Avoid jumping from suspicion to accusation. AI-generated-text detectors, writing style changes and unusual vocabulary can be signals for a conversation, but they should not be treated as infallible proof.

A proportionate response

- 1. Check the task rule. Was the permitted AI use actually clear?
- 2. Review available process evidence. Drafts, notes, sources, classroom work and version history may help.
- 3. Speak with the student. Ask neutral questions about reasoning, choices and development.
- 4. Verify learning. Use a short oral, written or practical follow-up where appropriate.
- 5. Apply school procedures. If a breach is established, follow the same transparent principles used for other academic-integrity concerns.
- 6. Learn from the case. Did the assessment or instructions need improvement?

AVOID

Do not accuse a student solely because text 'sounds like AI' or because a detector returns a percentage. High-stakes decisions need stronger evidence and fair procedures.

10. Five Common School Scenarios

Scenario A - Brainstorming

A student uses AI to generate ten possible project topics, selects one and completes the project independently. If brainstorming was permitted, this can be legitimate support. The teacher may still request disclosure.

Scenario B - AI rewrites the essay

A student writes a weak first draft, asks AI to rewrite the entire essay and submits the rewritten version. If the assessment is intended to measure the student's writing, the AI has likely substituted for the assessed performance.

Scenario C - Language support

A multilingual learner uses AI to clarify vocabulary. Whether this is appropriate depends on what is being assessed. In a History task it may support access; in a vocabulary assessment it may invalidate the evidence.

Scenario D - Coding assistant

A student uses AI to debug code. If debugging support is permitted, require the student to explain the error, the suggested fix and why the final code works.

Scenario E - AI-generated presentation

AI creates slides and speaker notes. The student can barely explain them. A polished artefact is not sufficient evidence of learning. Add oral questioning, process evidence or a transfer task.

11. Redesign Examples: Before and After

BEFORE	MORE ROBUST DESIGN
Write a biography of a historical figure.	Compare two sources, create a short biography, annotate two contested claims, then answer an unseen follow-up question in class.
Write a persuasive essay at home.	Develop claims in class, submit planning + final essay, disclose permitted AI support, and complete a short oral/written defence of one argument.
Create a science presentation.	Submit the presentation plus data/source notes; each student explains one slide and responds to a new application question.
Solve 20 mathematics problems.	Use selected practice problems at home, then complete a shorter unseen set and explain two solution strategies in class.
Produce a group project report.	Keep a simple role/decision log and include individual reflection or questioning alongside the group product.

12. A One-Page Teacher Decision Guide

Before giving an assignment, ask these questions in order.

1. WHAT AM I ASSESSING?

Name the knowledge, skill or performance you need the student to demonstrate.

2. COULD AI PERFORM THE CENTRAL TASK?

If yes, decide whether AI assistance is part of the intended learning or would replace it.

3. WHAT AI USE WILL I ALLOW?

State: Allow / Allow with Conditions / Do Not Allow.

4. WHAT MUST THE STUDENT DO PERSONALLY?

Identify the non-delegable thinking, performance or decision-making.

5. WHAT EVIDENCE WILL I COLLECT?

Choose a proportionate mix of product, process, performance, reflection and transfer.

6. HOW WILL STUDENTS DISCLOSE AI USE?

Keep disclosure simple and appropriate to age and task.

7. HOW WILL I RESPOND TO UNCERTAINTY?

Plan fair verification rather than relying on automated detection alone.

13. School-Level Conversation: Minimum Shared Expectations

Schools do not need a 40-page AI policy before teachers can act consistently. A short shared framework can establish a useful baseline.

- A common language for when AI is allowed, conditional or not allowed.
- An expectation that task instructions state the AI rule clearly.
- A simple approach to student disclosure.
- Agreement that teachers retain responsibility for assessment decisions.
- A proportionate process for concerns about undisclosed/inappropriate AI use.
- Guidance on privacy, safeguarding and approved tools.
- Age-appropriate student education about AI literacy and academic integrity.
- Regular review as technology, evidence and regulation change.

KEEP THE PURPOSE VISIBLE

Academic integrity is not primarily about catching misconduct. It is about protecting the credibility of learning, assessment and student achievement.

14. Teacher Checklist Before the Next Assignment

CHECK	YES	NEEDS WORK
The learning outcome is clear.	☐	☐
I know whether AI would support or replace the assessed learning.	☐	☐
Students will be told explicitly what AI use is permitted.	☐	☐
The required disclosure, if any, is clear and proportionate.	☐	☐
I have enough evidence to judge learning, not just the final product.	☐	☐
I can verify understanding fairly if authorship is uncertain.	☐	☐
My approach considers accessibility and language needs.	☐	☐
I am not relying on an AI detector as sole evidence.	☐	☐
My expectations align with school procedures.	☐	☐

15. Student Conversation: Five Messages Worth Teaching

- AI assistance is not automatically dishonest. It depends on the task and the rules.
- Permission is specific. AI may be allowed for one part of a task and not another.
- Transparency matters. If meaningful AI assistance must be disclosed, say what you used and what you did with it.
- You remain responsible. 'The AI said it' is not a defence for inaccurate, biased or inappropriate content.
- Your learning must remain visible. You should be able to explain, apply and defend the work you submit.

A SIMPLE STUDENT QUESTION

Before using AI, ask: 'Will this help me learn, or will it do the learning task for me?'

Official References & Further Reading

OECD / European Commission (2026)

Empowering Learners for the Age of AI: An AI Literacy Framework for Primary and Secondary Education. OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: 10.1787/65cd27d4-en.

European Commission (2026)

Guidelines on the ethical use of artificial intelligence and data in teaching and learning. Updated 9 June 2026.

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Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research. UNESCO, Paris.

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Media and Artificial Intelligence Literacy (MAIL) assessment initiative.

REFERENCE NOTE

This is an independent professional resource prepared by Teachers Education Academy. References to the European Commission, OECD, UNESCO, the EU AI Act or other public frameworks do not imply endorsement, certification or institutional affiliation. This guide is educational guidance, not legal advice.

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