



THE BEECHES
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

The Beeches Independent School

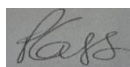
Safe Use of AI Policy

Signed by:



Headteacher

Date: 22.09.2026



COO

Date: 22.09.2026

Statement of intent

At The Beeches Independent School, we recognise that artificial intelligence (AI) can support teaching, learning, administration and preparation for adult life and employment. AI outputs may, however, be inaccurate, biased, unsafe, unsuitable for a pupil's age or needs, or involve the processing of personal data. AI may also undermine the validity of work intended to demonstrate a pupil's own knowledge and skills.

This policy sets out how AI may be used safely, lawfully, ethically and appropriately.

AI must support, and must not replace, professional judgement, direct teaching, human interaction, reasonable adjustments, safeguarding practice or assessment of a pupil's authentic skills.

As an independent special school, The Beeches will use a trauma-informed, relational and emotionally safe approach to AI. The school recognises that some pupils may misinterpret AI-generated content, become distressed by unexpected or inappropriate outputs, struggle to distinguish between real and AI-generated information, or be particularly vulnerable to online manipulation and persuasive technologies. AI use must therefore be supervised, purposeful, developmentally appropriate and grounded in trusted human relationships.

AI must support, and must never replace, human connection, empathy, professional responsibility, therapeutic support, direct teaching or safeguarding practice.

Definitions:

- AI means computer systems able to perform tasks associated with human intelligence.
- Generative AI means tools that generate text, images, audio, video, code or other content in response to prompts or data.
- AI misuse means using AI in a way that misrepresents a pupil's attainment, breaches an assessment rule, creates a safeguarding or data-protection risk, or otherwise breaches this policy.
- For the purposes of this policy, AI tools include generative text tools, image, video and audio generators, automated marking or feedback systems, predictive text and writing assistants, AI-powered educational platforms, voice assistants, chatbots, translation tools, recommendation systems and technologies that analyses data or simulate conversation.

1. Legal framework

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Keeping children safe in education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures
- DfE Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges
- DfE Generative artificial intelligence in education
- DfE Generative AI: product safety standards, where applicable
- DfE filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges
- The rules, instructions and malpractice requirements of each Functional Skills provider and awarding organisation

This policy operates alongside:

- Online Safety Policy,
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy,
- Data Protection Policy,
- Cyber-security Policy, , Device and Technology Policy, Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Curriculum Policy, Functional Skills procedures and Complaints Procedure.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Proprietor body

- Ensure this policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed.
- Ensure the school has appropriate safeguarding, data-protection, cyber-security and educational risk controls for AI.
- Ensure sufficient resources and training are available.

Headteacher/DSL

- Approve AI tools before school use, following educational, safeguarding, accessibility, data-protection and cyber-security checks.
- Ensure staff, pupils and parents/carers understand how AI is used in this school.
- Ensure AI use is audited, including online-platform use, incidents, complaints, data breaches and disproportionate impact on pupils with SEND.
- The Headteacher and DSL will ensure that AI use is appropriate for the school's special-school context, including pupils' developmental, communication, sensory and emotional needs, and will ensure that staff understand how to support pupils who become distressed or confused by AI-generated content.
- Ensure decisions affecting a pupil's education, assessment, safeguarding or wellbeing are made by a suitably trained member of staff, not solely by AI.
- Ensure Functional Skills providers' rules are available to relevant staff and pupils.

- Lead on safeguarding risks associated with AI, including deepfakes, manipulated media, harmful content, online exploitation, bullying, harassment, impersonation, self-harm content and the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes.
- Ensure concerns are recorded and managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Ensure staff know how to report AI-related concerns and preserve relevant evidence without unnecessarily viewing, copying or sharing harmful imagery.

DPO / data-protection lead

- Assess proposed tools, contracts, age limits, data processing, retention, security, international transfers, sub-processors and settings before approval.
- Ensure personal and special-category data are not entered into unapproved AI tools.
- Maintain an approved-tools register and respond to incidents, data breaches and access concerns.
- Ensure filtering, monitoring, access controls, updates and cyber-security arrangements are effective.

All staff

- Use only approved tools for school business and follow this policy and the Acceptable Use Agreement.
- Check AI outputs for accuracy, bias, accessibility, safeguarding risks and suitability before use.
- Never upload confidential, personal or special-category data to an unapproved tool.
- Report concerns, suspected misuse, harmful content and data incidents promptly.
- Make reasonable adjustments and avoid assuming that a pupil's difficulty using AI reflects a lack of understanding or effort.

Pupils

- Use AI only when a member of staff or the approved Functional Skills platform permits it.
- Protect passwords and personal information.
- Check information and ask for help when an AI response is confusing, upsetting or unsafe.
- Submit work that accurately reflects their own knowledge and skills.
- Report harmful content, bullying, impersonation, suspicious messages or other concerns to a trusted adult.

The school will maintain clear procedures for recording and responding to AI-related safeguarding concerns, including harmful content, deepfakes, impersonation, exploitation, bullying, harassment and other forms of abuse.

3. Approved AI tools and risk assessment

No staff member or pupil may use an AI tool for school-related activity unless it is approved or the use has been specifically authorised by the headteacher.

Before approval, the school will consider age restrictions, accessibility and SEND needs, safeguarding and content risks, filtering and monitoring, data protection, security, intellectual

property, accuracy, bias, retention, advertising, account requirements, cost and the provider's terms. Tools will be reviewed when their functionality or terms change.

Pupils will not be required to create an account or disclose personal information to an AI provider where an equivalent safe and accessible alternative is available.

Before a new AI tool is approved, the school will consider whether it is suitable for pupils with SEND and whether its design, language, interaction style or outputs could create emotional, sensory, communication or safeguarding risks. The school will not require a pupil to create an account or disclose personal information to an AI provider where an equivalent safe and accessible alternative is available.

4. Data protection and cyber-security

AI tools will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and Cyber-security Policy. Staff must use anonymised or fictional information wherever possible and must not enter a pupil's name, date of birth, address, contact details, health information, safeguarding information, SEND information, photographs, voice recordings, work identifying the pupil or other special-category data into an unapproved tool.

- Use strong passwords and multi-factor authentication where available.
- Do not upload confidential school documents, passwords, incident records, staff records or pupil records to public AI tools.
- Check outputs for accidental disclosure of personal or confidential information before sharing them.
- Report suspected data leakage, phishing, harmful output or unauthorised access immediately to the DPO and, where relevant, the DSL.
Maintain appropriate filtering, monitoring, access controls, backups, updates and device security.

AI output must not be treated as a reliable source of personal, medical, safeguarding, legal or educational information without human verification and appropriate professional advice.

Staff must not upload or enter EHCPs, pupil assessments, behaviour records, safeguarding records, CPOMS records, medical or therapy information, photographs, voice recordings, pupil names or initials, or any information that could identify a pupil into an AI tool unless the tool has been specifically approved for that purpose following appropriate data-protection checks.

Any new AI tool must undergo a Data Protection Impact Assessment where required by the DPO, including where the proposed processing is likely to result in a high risk to individuals. Approval must be recorded before the tool is used for school-related activity.

Pupils may only access AI tools through school-approved devices, accounts, networks and platforms, and only when a member of staff has authorised the activity.

5. Intellectual property and copyright

Staff and pupils must respect copyright, confidentiality and ownership of school, pupil, staff and third-party work. Content must not be uploaded to an AI service where this is prohibited by the

rights holder, provider terms or school rules. Public use of AI-generated text, images, audio or video must be checked for licensing, attribution, privacy and reputational risks.

AI-generated content must be reviewed for copied material, inaccurate references, discriminatory content and inappropriate representations. Staff remain responsible for the final resources, policies and communications they approve.

6. Using AI tools in teaching and learning

AI may be used by staff to support planning, differentiation, accessibility, idea generation, translation, administrative drafting and preparation of learning resources, provided the output is checked and adapted to the pupil's individual needs.

For pupils, AI may be used only as an explicitly taught and supervised learning tool. Permitted uses may include generating ideas, practising questions, receiving explanations, checking spelling or exploring alternative ways of presenting information. Staff will state clearly when AI is allowed, required, restricted or prohibited for each activity.

AI must not replace direct teaching, practical learning, communication practice, personal care, therapeutic support, staff assessment or the development of independent functional skills.

The school will consider that some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to persuasive or anthropomorphic AI interactions. Pupils will be taught not to treat an AI system as a friend, therapist, trusted adult or emergency service, and to seek human help when needed.

Staff will not use AI to replace communication practice, personal care, therapeutic support, relational work or the development of independent functional skills. AI-generated resources must be adapted to the individual pupil's needs and must not reduce opportunities for meaningful human interaction.

Pupils will be taught that AI is a tool and not a person, friend, therapist, trusted adult or emergency service. AI cannot provide reliable emotional, medical, safeguarding or crisis support. Pupils must speak to a trusted adult when they are worried, upset, confused or at risk.

7. Functional Skills and online-platform assessment

Pupils may complete Functional Skills learning and assessment through an approved online platform. The relevant platform instructions, assessment conditions and awarding organisation regulations take precedence over general permissions in this policy.

Before each Functional Skills assessment, staff will confirm whether internet access, assistive technology, spellcheck, translation tools, generative AI, calculators or other support is permitted. If AI is not expressly permitted, it must not be used.

Where a pupil uses approved access arrangements or assistive technology, these must be agreed and recorded in accordance with the provider's and awarding organisation's requirements. Staff must not confuse an approved adjustment with permission to generate answers or evidence of attainment.

During a controlled or externally moderated assessment, pupils must not use generative AI to produce, rewrite, translate, solve or submit answers unless the assessment rules expressly allow that use. Staff must not coach, edit or generate a pupil's assessed response beyond what the rules permit.

Where the platform or awarding organisation requires a declaration of independent work, the pupil will be supported to understand it in an accessible way. Concerns about authenticity or malpractice will be investigated fairly, recorded and referred to the relevant provider or awarding organisation where required.

Evidence of learning should be gathered through appropriate observation, questioning, supervised practice, platform records and other permitted methods. AI-detection tools will not be used as the sole basis for judging a pupil's attainment or alleging malpractice.

8. Misuse, authenticity and response

Misuse includes submitting AI-generated work as the pupil's own, using AI in a prohibited assessment, entering another person's personal data into an unapproved tool, creating harmful or deceptive content, bypassing filtering or monitoring, impersonating another person, or using AI to bully, harass, exploit or discriminate.

Where authenticity is uncertain, staff will speak with the pupil, consider the pupil's communication and SEND needs, review available work and platform records, and provide an opportunity to explain the work. A style difference or AI-detection result alone is not proof of misuse.

Responses will be proportionate, restorative and consistent with the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures. Staff will consider whether the pupil needs teaching, support, reasonable adjustments or protection from harm rather than treating every incident as deliberate misconduct.

Pupils must not use AI to bully, harass or target others; create harmful or inappropriate content; produce deepfakes or altered images of others; impersonate another person; cheat or avoid learning; access unsafe or unsupervised AI platforms; or share personal information.

Responses to AI misuse will be proportionate, educational, restorative and trauma-informed wherever appropriate. Staff will seek to understand what happened, how the pupil understood the situation, the impact on others, and whether communication, developmental, sensory, trauma-related or other additional needs affected the pupil's actions. Staff will provide teaching and support to develop safer strategies, alongside any proportionate consequences required under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Where misuse is persistent, serious or linked to wider vulnerability, the school may involve parents/carers, social workers, therapists, health professionals, the DSL, proprietor body or police, as appropriate and proportionate. Information will be shared lawfully and on a need-to-know basis

9. Safeguarding and online safety

AI can generate or amplify harmful, sexual, violent, discriminatory or misleading content, including deepfakes, manipulated images, impersonation, sextortion, cyberbullying, exploitation and

content encouraging self-harm. Such concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL and managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Online Safety Policy.

The school will use appropriate filtering and monitoring, review those arrangements at least annually, record reviews and respond to alerts in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. Filtering must not be relied upon as the only protection.

Staff must not view, copy, store or share suspected indecent images of children unnecessarily. Devices or content must be secured and referred to the DSL, who will seek appropriate advice.

Parents/carers will receive accessible information about the school's AI approach, relevant risks, the Functional Skills platform and how to report concerns.

Where a pupil is distressed by AI-generated content or an AI-related incident, staff will provide immediate reassurance and appropriate support, move the pupil away from harmful content, notify the DSL where appropriate and consider whether further support from parents/carers, social care, health or therapeutic professionals is required.

AI-related safeguarding concerns, incidents, disclosures and significant misuse will be recorded on the school's approved safeguarding recording system in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. The school should insert the name of its recording system in the main policy

10. Teaching pupils about safe AI use

Teaching will be adapted to pupils' age, development, communication, cognitive and sensory needs. It will use accessible language, modelling, repetition, visual supports and practical scenarios where appropriate.

- Recognising that AI can be wrong, biased, persuasive or unsafe.
- Checking important information with a trusted adult or reliable source.
- Protecting passwords, personal information, images, voice and location.
- Recognising deepfakes, impersonation, scams, misinformation and harmful content.
- Understanding when AI is permitted or prohibited in Functional Skills learning and assessment.
- Reporting upsetting, unsafe or suspicious content to a trusted adult.
- Using AI respectfully and not for bullying, discrimination, cheating or creating harmful content.

Teaching will include clear, accessible and repeated messages that AI is not a person and must not be used as a substitute for trusted adults or professional help. Teaching will be adapted using accessible language, visual support, modelling, repetition and practical scenarios where appropriate.

- Ask a trusted adult for help if AI is confusing, upsetting, unsafe or encourages the pupil to keep a secret.
- Do not use AI to be unkind, hurtful or discriminatory.
- Do not make fake images, videos or audio of other people.
- Do not share personal information, images, voice recordings or location details.
- Use AI only when a trusted adult says it is permitted.
- Use AI to support learning, not to avoid doing the pupil's own learning.

- Tell an adult if AI shows something harmful, sexual, violent, threatening or unkind.

11. Monitoring, incidents and review

The headteacher, DSL, DPO and proprietor body will monitor AI use, approved tools, training, safeguarding concerns, data incidents, assessment concerns, complaints, filtering and monitoring, accessibility and any disproportionate impact on pupils with SEND.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following significant changes to law, guidance, providers, the Functional Skills platform, assessment requirements or an AI-related incident. The school will communicate material changes to staff, pupils and parents/carers.