

How to develop an effective AI policy at your school

Guiding questions

- How will our stance on AI reflect of our mission, vision, and values?
- How has AI already impacted our community, and how useful are the policies we already have in responding to it?
- How will we ensure that our policy remains up-to-date in a rapidly changing technological landscape?
- What parts of our school life should remain unaffected by technological change?
- How will we ensure that our community shares a common understanding and commitment to authentic assessment?

Centering students

- Survey and assess student attitudes, priorities, usage, understanding, and concerns e.g. privacy, accessibility, bias.
- Co-develop norms with your students. Frame these as “dos” rather than “don’ts.”
- Allow students to have agency in creative AI projects and experiments. Create space to share those efforts with the community.
- Empower a diverse student committee to liaise between the student body and administration, offer feedback on AI policy.

Policy components

- Community feedback mechanism for continued iteration and improvement.
- Integrity standards defining what type of assessments can be AI-assisted.
- Data and privacy standards stating what kind of PII should not be inputted into an AI.
- Teacher training plan with resources and a clear rationale integrated into PD efforts.
- Standards for edtech vendor vetting, equity/access to AI, citation guidelines.
- AI literacy plan for students with the resources to solve real world problems and space to exhibit that learning.

Common mistakes

- Attempting to police AI usage with unreliable detection systems.
- Rushing to turn everyone in the school community into a “prompt engineer.”
- Copying the policy of another school and adopting it as your own.
- Depending on AI to grade student assignments.
- Neglecting to teach students about important concepts like hallucinations, bias, and ethical use before introducing AI tools into the classroom.

Key steps

- Start by surveying the entire school community with a mixed methods approach to gather information about attitudes, concerns, and their overall level of understanding. This ensures broad input, provides a baseline to measure against later, and improves buy-in when the policy is ultimately implemented. Leadership should speak directly with students and treat them as a resource for their own learning.
- Outline the objectives of incorporating AI in the school. This should include the scope of AI applications, such as in personalized learning, administrative processes, and security.
- Form a committee comprising faculty, IT staff, administrators, and possibly student and parent representatives. This committee will be responsible for conducting research, drafting policy, reviewing feedback, and making decisions.
- Communicate the policy wisely. Let the community know that this is a work in progress and what the best channels are for their feedback. Understand that AI literacy varies, so the language used to communicate this policy should be clear and accessible to a diverse group of stakeholders. Strike a balance between broad policy language designed to address unforeseen circumstances and the use of specific, clarifying examples.