

A Practical Guide for Teachers and Students

AI is in the classroom whether your school has a policy on it or not. This two-part checklist is a framework for training, policy development, and classroom practice. Use it to audit where your staff and students currently are, identify gaps, and build your AI policy from the ground up. Aligned with DfE guidance on generative AI in education and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Part 1: Teacher AI Literacy Checklist

Foundational Knowledge

- ☐ I can explain what AI is and what it is not, including the difference between generative AI (like chatbots) and analytical AI (like learner analytics dashboards).
- ☐ I understand that large language models are pattern-matching tools, not truth-seeking tools. They predict the next likely word. They do not know things.
- ☐ I can name at least three limitations of current AI: hallucination, bias in training data, and inability to reason.
- ☐ I understand that AI output quality depends on the quality of the input — vague prompts produce vague results.

Practical Classroom Use

- ☐ I can write a structured prompt that includes context, audience, format, and tone, and I know how to iterate on the output rather than accepting the first response.
- ☐ I have identified at least two specific tasks where AI saves me time: lesson planning, resource creation, differentiation, quiz generation, report drafting, or administrative paperwork.
- ☐ I know how to verify AI-generated content before using it with students — checking facts, spotting outdated references, and identifying bias.
- ☐ I can use AI to generate varied examples, alternative explanations, and scaffolded materials for learners who need additional support.

Evaluating AI Tools

- ☐ Before using any AI tool with students, I check: Where is the data stored? Is it GDPR-compliant? What is the minimum age requirement?
- ☐ I know the difference between an AI tutor built on pedagogical principles and a general-purpose chatbot, and I choose tools accordingly.
- ☐ I understand whether the AI tool I am using trains on user data. If it does, I do not input student work or personal data.
- ☐ I can assess whether an AI tool replaces student thinking or extends it — and I choose tools that extend.

Teaching AI Literacy to Students

- ☐ I have explicitly taught my students what AI is, how it works, and what its limits are — not as a one-off assembly but as part of regular practice.
- ☐ I model critical use of AI in front of students: checking outputs aloud, questioning sources, and discussing when AI got something wrong.
- ☐ I can explain to students why struggling with a problem before asking AI is valuable, not punitive.
- ☐ I have established clear classroom rules about when AI use is appropriate and when it is not, and these rules are shared with parents.

Safeguarding and Ethics

- ☐ I understand the specific safeguarding risks AI introduces: deepfake content, AI-generated misinformation, chatbot dependency, and data privacy breaches.
- ☐ I know my school's reporting procedure for AI-related safeguarding incidents.
- ☐ I can help students evaluate AI-generated content critically: Who made this? What data was it trained on? What perspective is missing?
- ☐ I am aware of algorithmic bias and can give students concrete examples — biased image generation, Western-centric knowledge gaps, and stereotyped outputs.

Part 2: Student AI Literacy Checklist

Key Stage 2 (Ages 7–11)

- ☐ I know that AI is a computer programme that learns from examples, not a person who thinks.
- ☐ I understand that AI can make mistakes and sometimes makes things up.
- ☐ I know never to share personal information with an AI tool.
- ☐ I can tell the difference between something I wrote myself and something AI helped with — and I know to tell my teacher which is which.
- ☐ If an AI says something that upsets or worries me, I know to tell a trusted adult.

Key Stage 3 (Ages 11–14)

- ☐ I can explain what a large language model is in simple terms.
- ☐ I understand that AI training data comes from the internet and reflects both its strengths and its biases.
- ☐ I know how to write a clear prompt and how to refine it if the output is not what I need.
- ☐ I treat AI output as a draft, not a final answer — I verify facts, question assumptions, and check for bias.
- ☐ I understand that using AI to do my thinking for me means I miss the learning. AI should support my effort, not replace it.
- ☐ I can identify three ways AI-generated content might be misleading: fake statistics, invented quotes, outdated information, or biased framing.
- ☐ I know my school's policy on AI use for homework and assessments, and I follow it.

Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form (Ages 14–18)

- ☐ I can evaluate an AI tool critically: Who built it? What is their business model? Where does my data go?
- ☐ I understand the concept of algorithmic bias and can give specific examples — such as image generators producing stereotypical outputs or language models defaulting to American cultural references.
- ☐ I use AI strategically: as a study partner for quizzing and retrieval practice, as a writing assistant for structure and feedback, and as an explainer for difficult concepts — not as a shortcut to skip the work.
- ☐ I know how to cite AI use appropriately in my academic work.
- ☐ I am aware of the environmental impact of large-scale AI and can discuss the trade-offs involved.
- ☐ I can have an informed conversation about AI ethics: job displacement, surveillance, deepfakes, and the concentration of AI power in a small number of companies.
- ☐ I understand that the skills most valued in an AI-saturated world are the ones AI cannot replicate — critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and ethical judgement — and I actively develop those skills.

About Discourse AI — Built by a former classroom teacher, Discourse AI pairs a Socratic tutor (it asks before it tells) with structured courses, learner analytics, and certification, so schools can build AI literacy by design rather than by accident. Book a demo at thediscourse.ai.

© Discourse AI. Free to share and adapt for use in your school.