Safeguarding to Combat the Harmful Effects of AI:

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A Best Practice Checklist

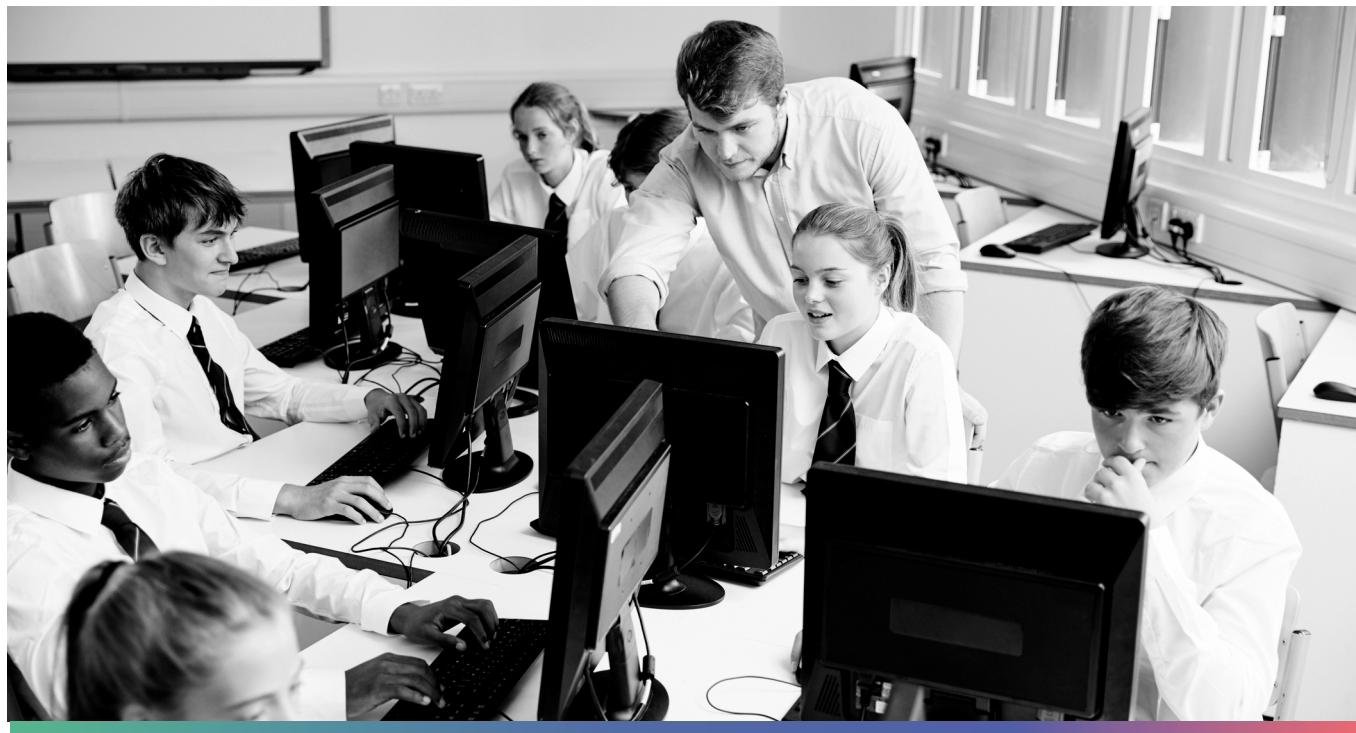smoothwall®
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Introduction

This checklist is designed to support school, college and MAT leaders in making informed decisions on artificial intelligence and its use in their settings. The following questions can help you to develop a rigorous AI policy that promotes the safe and responsible use of AI tools - prioritising the educational benefits of this technology, while mitigating the associated risks.

Essential reading for:
School, college and MAT leaders, DSLs, IT managers, governors, and anyone with a safeguarding responsibility in UK education.

A school/college/MAT approach

	Yes/no
Have you read the relevant materials from the DfE? For example, the Generative AI Policy Paper and Using AI in education settings: Support materials.	
Do you have a specific AI platform or platforms that are used across your setting? For example, CENTURY, ChatGPT, Google AI Tools (Gemini, Notebook LM, AI Studio), Learnt.ai, Olex.AI.	
Do you know whether your staff understand how to use AI?	
Have you set up an AI working party consisting of all stakeholders to support your strategy? Stakeholders include the SLT, DSLs, IT teams, and governors.	
If so, do you have regular check-ins to assess progress?	

Notes:

Policies

	Yes/no
Do you have an AI Policy?	
Has this been cross-referenced with other policies, such as your Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Conduct for Staff, Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection Policy, Homework Policy, Assessment Policy and IT Policy?	

Notes:

Risk assessments

	Yes/no
Have you assessed the risks of approved AI tools to understand how they may be used/misused?	
If so, are further risk assessments carried out every time a new AI tool is introduced?	

Notes:

Filtering

	Yes/no
Have you applied your AI policy to your web filtering?	
Does your web filtering currently block harmful AI content (including image and video) the moment it appears online?	
Can you control or restrict access to AI chatbots by age group or role?	
Do you have clear visibility on AI-related activity to support safeguarding decisions?	

Notes:

Monitoring

	Yes/no
Does your setting currently use digital monitoring to spot students at risk?	
Does your monitoring solution pick up AI-related safeguarding concerns?	
Can your monitoring identify subtle warning signs in the ways students interact with AI tools and chatbots?	
Does your monitoring minimise false positives so staff are alerted only when meaningful intervention is needed?	
Is your cloud storage regularly checked for inappropriate/harmful AI-generated content?	

Notes:

Staff training and expectations (COC)

	Yes/no
Have all staff received training relating to the code of conduct and expectations of the use of AI?	
Have staff received training on how to use AI tools effectively? AI tools can include adaptive learning platforms such as CENTURY, generative writing assistants like ChatGPT, automated feedback systems such as Gradescope, and AI-powered planning tools like TeacherMatic.	
Are all staff aware of your data protection policy and how this applies to the use of technology, including AI tools?	

Notes:

AI literacy for staff and students

	Yes/no
Do you have a clear assessment and homework policy that is communicated to students and staff regarding the use of AI tools?	
Have you considered how you will provide age-appropriate AI education for students?	
Do you know which tools you will use to talk to students about this topic?	
Do you understand how these tools are going to be used, and the awareness staff and students will need in order to use them?	

Notes:

Community engagement

	Yes/no
Have you delivered information, advice and guidance for parents and carers about the use of AI across your school and outside of school?	
Do you regularly share updates with parents regarding all aspects of digital safeguarding including AI?	

Notes:

Additional Notes:

Learn how to make AI safer for your students

Try the interactive version of this checklist to get tailored recommendations for your setting:
smoothwall.com/ai-checklist

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Smoothwall is the leading provider of digital safeguarding solutions in UK education. For more information, visit our website or get in touch with our team of experts.

Web: www.smoothwall.com
Tel: +44 (0)800 047 8191
Email: enquiries@smoothwall.com

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