AI Acceptable Use Policy

Approved by:
Audit and Risk Committee

Policy Responsibility:
Executive Director for Trust Development

Effective From:
November 2024

Review process:
This policy will be reviewed according to the Mercian Trust's Policy Schedule outlined in its Scheme of Delegation. If there are any changes in legislation or legal requirements, an earlier review will be conducted to ensure compliance and relevance.

THE MERCIAN TRUST

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In an era where technology continually reshapes the boundaries of education, the Mercian Trust proudly presents its AI Acceptable Use Policy, created to harness the transformative potentials of artificial intelligence while safeguarding our Trust's core values.

1.2 This policy reflects the Trust's commitment to enhancing educational outcomes through innovative tools, ensuring that every application of AI across our Trust, not only adheres to the highest standards of data protection and ethical practice, but also aligns with the Department for Education's guidelines.

1.3 By establishing clear principles and robust guidelines, the Trust aims to empower its staff and students to leverage AI responsibly, fostering an environment where technology advances learning without compromising integrity or equity.

2. BENEFITS AND RISKS

2.1 The Trust recognises the potential benefits and risks of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in our educational activities. AI tools are software applications that can perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as understanding natural language, generating text, images, or music, recognising patterns, or solving problems. Some examples of AI tools are Google Bard, Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, and OpenAI Codex.

2.2 We believe that AI tools can enhance the learning experience of our pupils and the teaching practice of our staff, by providing personalised feedback, creative inspiration, interactive engagement, and innovative solutions. However, we also acknowledge that AI tools can pose challenges to data privacy, intellectual property, academic integrity, ethical values, and social responsibility. Therefore, we have developed this policy to provide guidance on how to use AI tools responsibly and appropriately in our Trust.

3. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

3.1 This policy applies to all staff and pupils of the Mercian Trust who use AI tools for any purpose related to their work or study. It also applies to any third parties ie contractors/suppliers, who provide or access AI tools on behalf of the Trust.

3.2 The Trust will leverage the use of AI in educational leadership and administration, by utilising data analytics to make informed decisions, improving operational efficiencies, and enhancing communication and collaboration among staff and stakeholders. By employing AI-driven insights, leaders can identify trends, predict outcomes, and tailor strategies to optimise resource allocation and student performance. Moreover, AI can assist in streamlining administrative tasks, such as scheduling, reporting, and compliance, allowing leaders to focus more on strategic initiatives and educational improvement.

3.3 This policy does not cover the use of AI tools for personal or recreational purposes outside the Trust's premises or network.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 The following principles underpin the Trust's approach to using AI tools in the Mercian Trust:

- We use AI tools to support and enhance our educational objectives, not to replace or undermine them.
- We respect the rights and dignity of all individuals involved in or affected by our use of AI tools, including their privacy, intellectual property, and personal data.
- We ensure that our use of AI tools is transparent, accountable, and fair, and that we can explain and justify our decisions and actions based on AI outputs.
- We promote a culture of learning and curiosity among our staff and pupils and encourage them to explore the possibilities and limitations of AI tools in a safe and ethical manner.

- We monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of our use of AI tools and seek feedback from our stakeholders and experts to improve our practice.

4.2 To navigate the ethical complexities associated with the use of AI, the Trust will implement an internal review process. This will involve meetings of a designated group of staff members from diverse departments, who will discuss and evaluate the ethical implications of AI deployments. This group will ensure that our applications of AI uphold the dignity and rights of all individuals involved, prevent harmful biases, and maintain our commitment to ethical standards.

5. GUIDELINES OF USE

5.1 The following guidelines provide practical advice on how to use AI tools, in accordance with our principles.

5.2 **For staff**:

- You must only use AI tools that have clear and reliable data privacy policies and practices. You must not enter or share any personal or sensitive information of yourself or others into any AI tool without their consent. You must also ensure that any data you collect or generate from using an AI tool is stored securely and deleted when no longer needed. To further align with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, all AI tools used within the Trust must comply with GDPR principles, ensuring robust data protection and privacy safeguards. Regular audits will be conducted to verify compliance with these standards, enhancing the security and integrity of personal data.
- You must only use AI tools that are relevant and suitable for your work purpose. You must not use any AI tool that is misleading, inaccurate, biased, or unreliable for your work context. The Trust commits to continuous monitoring and regular testing of AI tools for potential biases, particularly those used in assessments and evaluations. Processes will be put in place to correct any identified biases, thereby ensuring fairness and objectivity in AI-facilitated decisions and maintaining the trustworthiness of our educational practices.
- You must always acknowledge the source and role of any AI tool you use in your work output. You must not claim or imply that any AI output is your own original work or that of your pupils. You must also respect the intellectual property rights of any third parties who own or provide the AI tool or its output.
- You must always exercise your professional judgement and critical thinking when using any AI tool. You must not rely solely on any AI output without verifying its validity, quality, and relevance. You must also be prepared to explain and justify your decisions and actions based on AI outputs to your colleagues, pupils, parents, or external parties.
- You must always use AI tools in a respectful and responsible manner. You must not use any AI tool to harm, deceive, manipulate, or discriminate against anyone. You must also be aware of the potential social and environmental impacts of your use of AI tools.
- You must always seek to learn from your experience of using AI tools. You must reflect on the benefits and challenges of using AI tools in your work context. You must also share your feedback and insights with your colleagues and managers to improve your practice.

5.3 **For pupils:**

- Before using any AI tool for your study, you must obtain permission from your teacher or tutor. You must also inform your teacher or tutor if you intend to use an AI tool in your learning or assessment activities.
- You must only use AI tools that are recommended by your teacher or tutor or provided by reputable sources. You must not use any AI tool that is illegal, harmful, offensive, or inappropriate for your study context.
- You must only use AI tools that have clear and reliable data privacy policies and practices. You must not enter or share any personal or sensitive information of yourself or others into any AI tool without their consent. You must also ensure that any data you collect or generate from using an AI tool is stored securely and deleted when no longer needed. To further align with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, all AI tools used within the Trust must comply with GDPR principles, ensuring robust data protection and privacy safeguards. Regular audits will be conducted to verify compliance with these standards, enhancing the security and integrity of personal data.

- You must only use AI tools that are relevant and suitable for your study purpose. You must not use any AI tool that is misleading, inaccurate, biased, or unreliable for your study context.
- You must always acknowledge the source and role of any AI tool you use in your study output. You must not claim or imply that any AI output is your own original work or that of your teacher or tutor. You must also respect the intellectual property rights of any third parties who own or provide the AI tool or its output.
- You must always exercise your academic judgement and critical thinking when using any AI tool. You must not rely solely on any AI output without verifying its validity, quality, and relevance. You must also be prepared to explain and justify your decisions and actions based on AI outputs to your teacher, tutor, peers, or external parties.
- You must always use AI tools in a respectful and responsible manner. You must not use any AI tool to harm, deceive, manipulate, or discriminate against anyone. You must also be aware of the potential social and environmental impacts of your use of AI tools.

6.   COMPLIANCE

6.1   The Mercian Trust expects all staff and pupils to comply with this policy and its guidelines. Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from school. The Trust also reserves the right to take legal action against anyone who violates this policy.

6.2   To keep pace with rapid technological advancements and legislative changes, this policy will be reviewed regularly. Furthermore, comprehensive training sessions on the latest AI developments and ethical practices will be provided to all staff and pupils annually, ensuring everyone is equipped to use these tools effectively and responsibly.

6.3   If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its implementation, please contact your line manager, headteacher, or the Trust's Data Protection Officer.

7.   REFERENCES

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications, JCQ (November. 2023)

- Generative AI in Education. DfE (October 2013)