



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
BIRMINGHAM *in* **ALABAMA**

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Introduction

The mission of the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic Schools is “to educate our students to seek God in Truth and for loving service by teaching the message of the Gospel, forming a community of faith, providing the whole child with a Catholic and Christ-centered environment, and inspiring all to reach their full academic and spiritual potential.” And in order to carry out that mission, guidance for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) was needed given the potential and risks of this technology. AI’s impact is already felt in our daily lives, let alone in the classroom. Students are not only familiar with the technology, but they use it regularly, and so as educators, we at least have an obligation to demonstrate how to use it responsibly. AI also has tremendous potential to help us in our vocation as Catholic educators. With this in mind, these guidelines set out to provide schools with research-based AI resources and best practices meant to help administrators and teachers discern how best and to what degree they use AI in their schools to carry out our mission. In the words of Pope Francis, “Artificial Intelligence is, and must remain, a tool in human hands.”

Mission and Catholic Identity

Fully cognizant of the potential and risks that AI has in the realm of education, any integration or use of this technology must be consistent with the mission of Catholic education and our Catholic identity. AI should be viewed as a complementary tool for teaching and learning that promotes digital literacy among other things, while at the same time preserving human connection and student engagement. There are four core principles that should guide any use of AI in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Birmingham.

Core Ethical Principles

1. *Catholic education should form students for wisdom, virtue, and vocation (Gaudium et Spes 35).* When used, AI should support this mission and foster the pursuit of truth and formation in virtue.
 - AI can be used to develop critical thinking by pointing out hallucinations, deepfakes, and bias in the technology.

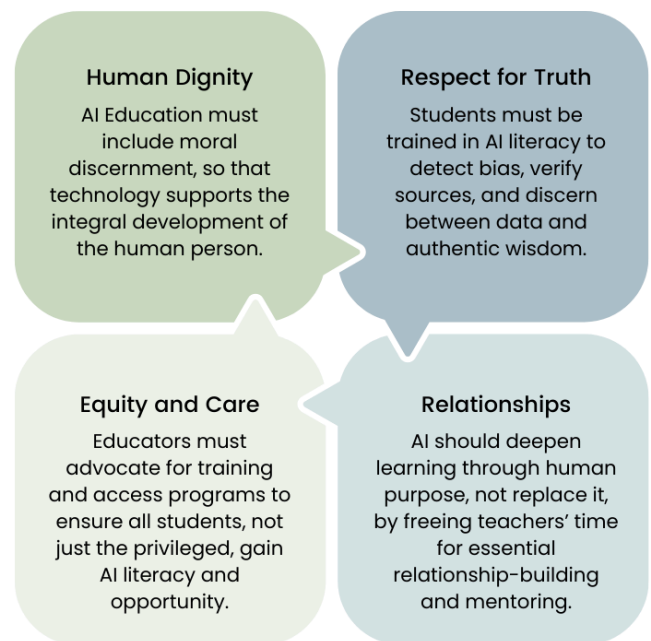
- AI can also assist educators in differentiated and individualized learning.
2. *Teaching is a relational act grounded in love and presence (Catechism 1878; Christus Vivit 170).* Technology must never undermine the essential human connection between teachers and students or between students. Rather, it should preserve, and when possible, deepen the communion of persons in the learning environment.
 - AI can assist teachers with certain tasks that will then give them more time to focus on instruction and human interaction.
 - Using AI for differentiated or individualized instruction can help a student feel loved and respected.
 3. *Catholic schools uphold justice, transparency, and care for the vulnerable (Catechism 1928–1933; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church 198).* AI use ought to reflect these commitments through responsible access, formation, and oversight.

School leadership should exercise prudent stewardship by conducting needs assessments to identify gaps in technology and financial resources, ensuring that AI investments demonstrate clear educational value and align with the Church's mission of forming the whole person in truth, goodness, and beauty.

4. *Every person is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; Antiqua et Nova 15, 29, 34).* AI must serve this truth by honoring the uniqueness, freedom, and moral agency of each individual as created in the image and likeness of God.

Technology tools must be implemented in ways that uplift the inherent dignity of each individual and support their growth to become the version of themselves God made them to be.

Core Ethical Principles of AI Use



Academic Excellence

AI Literacy

AI literacy is essential across all educational levels because it empowers students to understand what AI is, how it works, and how to use it responsibly, effectively, and ethically in various contexts. Starting in lower elementary (K-5), students, using relatable frameworks like the five senses, should gain a foundational understanding that AI is not a person but programmed by one and then explore

concepts, such as perception and societal impact, in relation to AI. As students progress into middle school (6-8), literacy shifts toward both collaborative and independent exploration with established guardrails; high schoolers (9-12) should continue this exploration, while deepening their critical analysis of AI-generated content. Ultimately, fostering AI literacy ensures that students at every stage can navigate the implications of these technologies with discernment, upholding human dignity and truth as they prepare for a future where AI is a complementary tool to human creativity and original thought.

Teacher Resources:

[Common Sense Education Digital Literacy and Well-Being Curriculum](#)

- Grade-level specific lessons from kindergarten through eighth grade
- All found online, free with an educator account
- Various implementation models are provided with options to incorporate lessons into core classes, health/wellness, STEM/technology, or advising courses
- Parent/caregiver outreach materials are also accessible online

[Google "Understanding AI" lessons](#)

- Tailored for grades two through eight
- An offshoot of Google's Be Internet Awesome program
- Three foundational AI lessons with vocabulary, engaging activities, and takeaways

[Crash Course: Artificial Intelligence](#)

- Video lessons designed for grades 9-12, created in conjunction with PBS LearningMedia
- Supplementary worksheets and hands-on labs are included

[Code.org Exploring Generative AI](#)

- Created for grades 8-12 as a foundational curriculum for understanding how generative AI models work
- 15 lessons with teacher resources and student-led activities

[Stanford Classroom-Ready Resources About AI for Teaching \(CRAFT\)](#)

- High school level resources ranging from discussion points to full analysis lessons
- Includes analysis of the ethical implications of AI, the computer science behind AI, and application of AI lessons

Acceptable and Unacceptable Use of AI

The following guidance is not intended to be exhaustive but rather a starting point for administrators and faculty to determine best practices in their schools when using AI. Any use, including uses beyond those mentioned in this document, should be consistent with the broader guidance in this document, especially our Catholic Identity expressed in the four core ethical principles above.

For Teachers

Acceptable Use: Teachers can use AI tools to engage learners, enhance instruction, and extend the learning process beyond their classrooms. School administrators can consult the AI Usage Flowchart (Appendix A) to determine if an AI tool is appropriate for their school. Some acceptable AI uses are:

1. Personalized Learning

- Teachers can ask AI tools for specific lesson or unit planning ideas with specific pedagogical frameworks and standards.
- AI tools can be used to scaffold or differentiate assignments, changing the cognitive demand or provide more interactive activities.
- Teachers can find multimodal representations of class content by utilizing AI tools to search curricular material.
- AI tools can suggest specific remediation strategies or activities for students based on their responses in tutor chatbots or teacher input.
- Teachers can utilize AI tools to identify learning gaps, monitor at-risk students, and identify stress or disengagement.

2. Adaptive Assessments

- Non-native English speakers can receive translations of assignments or webpages using AI assistant tools.
- AI-driven tutoring systems can provide support outside of the classroom and provide feedback to teachers regarding student misconceptions.
- AI tools can adjust learning materials to help students with special needs, such as text-to-speech, speech recognition tools, or content-specific changes tailored to cognitive, physical, or emotional disabilities.

3. Live Feedback

- Teachers can use AI tools to provide preliminary feedback on written work, based on teacher-made rubrics or specific guidelines based on standards.
- AI can assess writing quality, word choice, grammar, and coherence as a means of the editing process for students.
- AI chat bots that are aligned to specific standards can create dialogue opportunities for students to practice using content-specific vocabulary, create or analyze examples, and identify errors or misconceptions.

Unacceptable Use: While artificial intelligence offers transformative opportunities for education, its improper use presents significant risks that educators must navigate carefully. Some of these risks include:

1. **Misinformation:** relying too heavily on AI or relying on it without a critical-eye can lead to misinformation (e.g., hallucinations) or the reinforcement of inherent algorithmic biases that fail to capture human complexity.
2. **Student Data Privacy:** unguarded use of AI can potentially lead to the leak of students' personally identifiable information. This information should be safeguarded at all times. Therefore, teachers should take care when using any AI tool and not include information that might link their use to their students or school.
3. **Diminished Connections:** over-reliance on AI tools for teaching threatens to diminish human relationships and teacher ingenuity which are some of the foundations of effective teaching.

For Students

Acceptable Use: While school guidelines and policies regarding privacy, technology use, and plagiarism should be followed, teachers should have the autonomy to determine student use of AI in specific assignments and activities, based on the content and the teacher's comfort level with those tools. Just as the use of rubrics guides a student's understanding of the assignment, a similar breakdown of how AI tools should be used in specific cases will allow student creativity while also providing clear boundaries (see Appendix A: AI Usage Scale). Some acceptable uses include:

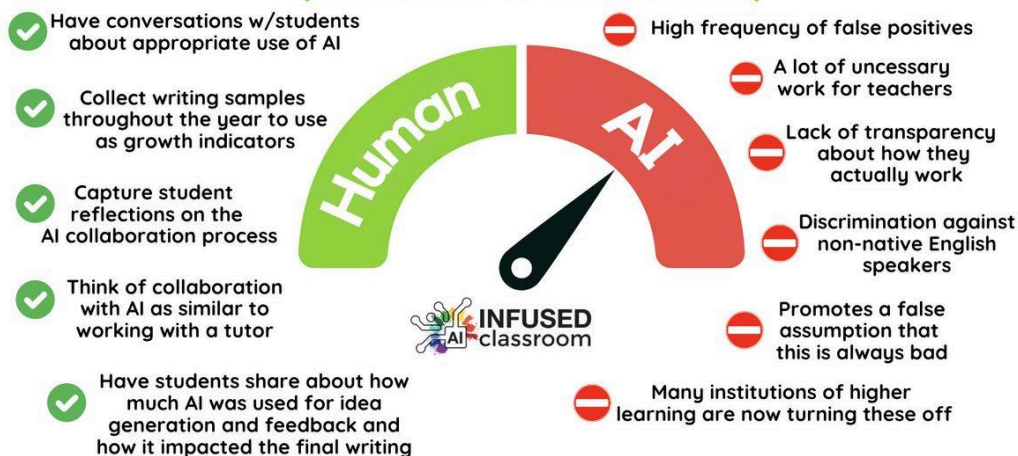
1. Generation of Ideas: students can use AI tools to brainstorm, create structures or ideas, and streamline their ideas. A disclosure should be made explaining how AI was used in the product. Brief lessons on prompt engineering should occur before students are able to utilize Generative AI tools (see Appendix B).
2. Editing: students can use AI to proof or edit their work. Using an AI tool to spell-check, edit for cohesiveness, or look for grammatical errors is a quick way for students to receive feedback in the drafting portion of their written work. A disclosure should be made explaining how AI was used in the product.
3. One-On-One Tutoring: AI tools can provide content-related dialogue and discussion in and out of the classroom, while also being monitored by the teacher. Students can utilize this as a study tool or a way to identify misconceptions.

Unacceptable Use: AI is a tool to enhance student thinking, creativity, and learning; it should not serve as a replacement for original thought and effort. Some unacceptable uses include:

1. Academic Dishonesty: using AI to complete assignments without prior authorization and proper citation (see AI Usage Scale) is considered cheating. Proper credit must be given if AI tools are used in any way.
2. Inappropriate Content Creation: AI must not be used to generate content that is offensive, inappropriate, or goes against our Catholic faith and values.
3. Misuse of Tools: Using AI tools for activities that could harm someone is not allowed. This includes cyberbullying, harassment, maliciousness, or any action that violates the school's code of conduct and behavior guidelines.

AI Detectors: For oversight, each school should use an AI detection tool (e.g., Turnitin, Grammarly) and should apply it consistently. Results, however, must always be reviewed with human discernment as these AI detection tools are not full-proof (see image below). No report alone will determine misconduct. Consequences for unacceptable use should be restorative and formative, ranging from assignment revisions to academic penalties, with an emphasis on conversations, reflection, and digital ethics lessons.

Why AI Detectors Are Problematic (and what to do instead)



Operational Vitality

The effective integration of AI into school operations requires a robust and disciplined School AI technology evaluation, procurement, and contracting process. School leaders are encouraged to leverage industry standards by joining [1EdTech](#) and utilizing its TrustEd Apps Directory. Applications already vetted by the Catholic Schools Office's AI Committee can be quickly adopted (see Appendix C). However, any unvetted apps must undergo thorough scrutiny. When choosing AI tools, ensure that the resources:

1. Are age and developmentally appropriate for the user of the technology.
2. Have clear terms of use and service-level agreements that are in full compliance with all applicable local, state, and national laws, including the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), the Family Educational Rights and Accountability Act (FERPA), and the Alabama Data Breach Notification Act of 2018, with policy changes that include proper notice to users.
3. Have data privacy and usage documents, verified by the school, that no student data is used for marketing or sale, especially personally identifiable information.
4. Have been vetted with certifications such as the ISTE Seal of Approval, a high Common Sense Privacy score (90% or above), and/or TrustEd Apps certification.

The following steps in adopting AI tools for a school should be followed:

1. Leadership develops a needs assessment to determine what type of tools would enhance teaching and learning.
 - This assessment should include feedback from faculty, parents, and even students when appropriate.
 - It should at minimum determine any gaps in understanding of AI, AI literacy, and the ethical use of AI tools.

2. After determining areas where AI would benefit the school community, select appropriate, vetted AI tools to assist. Before rolling out any new technology, be sure to do the following:
 - Create a small test group to explore the tool's advantages and disadvantages.
 - Get feedback from the test group to help determine if the school would like to move forward with implementation.
 - Identify any professional development required for proper use and implement training before the technology is accessed by all faculty and staff.
3. School leadership is required to conduct a thorough risk analysis of all AI tools and networked devices at least once per accreditation cycle to develop a plan that mitigates potential threats.

Governance and Leadership

Each school should develop a standing AI Committee with representation from administration, faculty, staff, parents, and even students when appropriate to oversee responsible adoption and use of AI technology. This committee should compose a clear mission or policy statement on AI that reflects the core principles of this document. The committee is also tasked with analyzing any current policies and practices, as well as developing a School AI Implementation Plan, which should follow these diocesan guidelines. It is important that leadership ensures that there is transparency with the entire school community in the use of AI. This transparency should include sharing the School AI Implementation Plan, a list of any approved AI platforms/tools, and any policies and practices.

Professional Development and Community Education

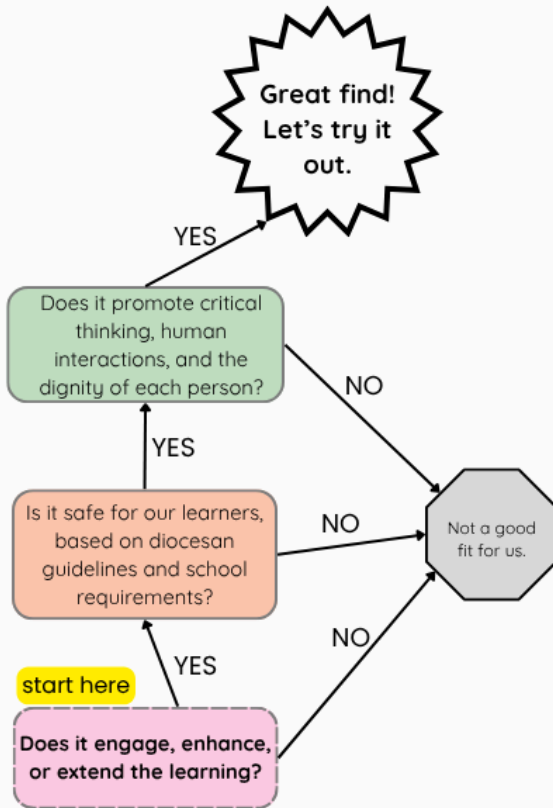
When implementing AI, the following should be maintained:

1. Schools should include AI training in their annual Professional Development (PD) plans. This training must cover any new technology, strategies for responsible integration, guidance on addressing student misuse, and instructional/assessment design.
2. Schools should incorporate the acceptable and unacceptable use guidance for faculty and students contained in this document (and any others developed at the local school level) into their family and employee handbooks.
3. Schools are also responsible for educating students and families on proper AI use. This education includes the ethical use of AI, emphasizing honesty and integrity; the disclosure of when and how AI is used in assignments; and the awareness of moral and social risks like deepfakes and misinformation.
4. The four core principles, mentioned above in the Mission and Catholic Identity section, should be integrated into any digital ethics education.
5. Parents should be encouraged to monitor AI use at home.

In all endeavors, Catholic schools should approach AI as a tool that must serve human flourishing, never replace it. Rooted in the belief that every person is made in the image and likeness of God, the school should affirm that technology must remain under human control, be directed toward the good, and be used to build up the community.

Appendix A AI Use Flow Chart & Usage Scale

AI Usage Flowchart



AI Usage Scale



Created for the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic Schools Office, 2025

CRAFT a Power Prompt



CONTEXT

CONTEXT

Add specific details to help the AI target your specific needs; these can be embedded throughout the prompt



ROLE

Role

Assign the AI a role for more targeted response
"You are an excellent 8th grade math teacher"



AUDIENCE

AUDIENCE

Provide specific details about the Audience
ESL students, 8th grade parent, CTE teachers



FORMAT

FORMAT

Output format, length, style, Rap, Song, HTML
Providing examples may help the model



TASK & TONE

TASK

What action you want the AI to do for you
(evaluate, create, edit, revise, brainstorm, etc)
TONE professional, friendly, caring, etc



The CRAFT framework was created by Vera Cubero

*See <https://bit.ly/CraftPromptEdu> for a full explanation and examples of this framework.

Appendix C
Tool Recommendations for Catholic Educators

Tool Name	Student Tool	Teacher Tool	Key Features/Notes	Cost
Brisk		✓	Works as a Chrome browser extension with a widget right on each workable page. Creates lesson plans, quizzes, and rubrics. Provides personalized feedback directly in Google Docs. Adjusts reading levels of any online text. Includes AI-detection features.	\$*
MagicSchool AI	✓	✓	Generates lesson plans, rubrics, report card comments, and assessments. Features an AI Tutor (Raina) and various student chatbots (Character Chatbot, Research Assistant).	\$*
Curipod	✓	✓	AI generates teacher-paced lessons complete with slides. Includes interactive activities like polls, word clouds, and open-ended questions. Provides real-time AI feedback to students.	\$\$*
Khanmigo	✓		Acts as an AI tutor for students, encouraging critical thinking through debates and writing coaching without giving direct answers.	\$\$\$*
Gemini	✓	✓	For Teachers: Drafts lesson plans, re-levels text, creates quizzes and rubrics. For Students: Guided Learning mode for step-by-step help, personalized practice quizzes, custom 'Gems' (AI experts).	\$\$\$\$*
NotebookLM	✓	✓	Users upload personal sources (notes, PDFs, videos, docs). Generates answers with citations from sources, Mind Maps, Flashcards, Quizzes, and podcast-style Audio Overviews from the material.	\$\$\$*
Slidesgo		✓	Provides high-quality, professional presentation templates for educators and students.	\$*
Canva AI Tools	✓	✓	Includes tools like Magic Write (AI writing assistant), an AI image generator, and Magic Activities to suggest educational projects. Generates instant quizzes and worksheets from designs.	Free with Canva Teams

\$ = least expensive; \$\$\$\$ = most expensive

* = free individual or teacher plan is available

Appendix D

Important AI Terms

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) - Technology that enables computers to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence—such as recognizing patterns, generating text, or making predictions.
- AI Literacy - The capacity to understand what AI is, how it works, and how to use it effectively, ethically, and safely within a range of contexts.
- Algorithmic bias - When an AI system produces unfair or harmful outcomes due to biased training data.
- Automation - Using AI to complete repetitive tasks, such as scheduling or documentation summarization.
- Bias (in AI) - Systematic errors or unfair assumptions in an AI model's output, often caused by skewed or unrepresentative information in the training data, which can lead to discriminatory or misleading results.
- Chatbots - AI systems that simulate conversation to answer questions or provide support.
- Deep fake - AI-generated images, video, or audio that convincingly imitates real people.
- Generative AI - AI that creates original content, including images, text, audio, video, and code, based on patterns learned from data.
- Hallucination - When AI confidently produces false, misleading, or fabricated information.
- Human oversight/Human-in-the-loop - The requirement for a human to actively monitor, intervene, and be accountable for the decisions and outputs of an AI system, especially when those outputs are used for critical tasks.
- Large language model (LLM) - A type of AI (like ChatGPT) trained on a large amount of text to generate human-like responses to prompts.
- Machine learning - A subset of AI where systems “learn” from data to improve performance over time without being directly programmed.
- Predictive analytics - AI that identifies trends in data.
- Prompt engineering - The skill of giving clear instructions to an AI model to get useful, accurate, and specific outcomes.
- Training Data - The massive collection of text, images, or code used to “teach” an AI model, which determines the model's capabilities and is the source of potential biases.
- Transparency - The ability to be open and honest about when and how AI is being used, especially in teaching, grading, or content creation.

Acknowledgments

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