

BPS AI Policy: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



General AI Use and BPS Policy

What is the overall philosophy of Boston Public Schools regarding the use of AI?

BPS is committed to the thoughtful, strategic, and ethical integration of AI to support and enhance instruction and district operations, guided by core values of human-centric approach, equity and inclusion, and transparency.

Who will govern AI in the BPS?

We are actively designing a **roadmap around the implementation and governance of AI in BPS**. As part of this work, there will be a cross-functional Steering Committee composed of representatives from different departments including, but not limited to, teachers and instructional staff, technology staff, operational staff, school administrators, families, and students. The members of the Steering Committee will follow the BPS AI Policy and Guidelines and make recommendations on major initiatives around AI in BPS. The work of the Steering Committee will be supported by senior district leadership.

Where can I find the list of AI tools approved for use by BPS staff and students?

The current list of approved AI tools, along with age restrictions and guidance, is available on the [BPS AI Hub website](#) and on the [BPS Office of Technology Apps page](#).

How are AI tools vetted?

All technology tools, including those using AI, must meet our technology standards by having a safe and secure login, using BPS approved data systems (such as our Student Information System), and protecting student data. In the case of instructional tools, we also make sure that the tool aligns with our district's instructional priorities.

Our technology standards are listed on the [Apps page of our technology website](#).

What is the BPS app approval process?

1. Teachers and staff who want to use an AI tool must submit the tool to be reviewed by the technology department before it is purchased.
2. Vendors who have tools that require the sharing of student data must sign the Massachusetts Data Privacy Agreement (or DPA) with BPS.
3. Once approved, the tool will follow our procurement process.

4. Approved tools will be listed on our approved district technology apps list. Most of the AI tools on the list are for staff, not students. We are careful to list the purpose of the tool, who has access, and how to access it.

Are there age restrictions to AI tools?

In BPS, our network filter blocks AI tools for students unless we have vetted and approved them. Currently, there is a limited number of AI tools that students can access. ChatGPT is blocked for BPS student emails and on the BPS network for students. Gemini, Google's AI chatbot, is the only approved AI chatbot for students ages 13 and up. After review, we opened access to this tool because it is protected under the Google Workspace educational license. Our instance of Google uses a closed system that does not train Google's models on our student or staff data.

Why is BPS not banning the use of AI by students and/or staff?

A simple ban on AI is no longer a recommended practice due to AI's ubiquitous nature and nearly universal access to AI tools on personal devices. Instead, BPS focuses on promoting AI literacy and the responsible use of AI while preventing its misuse. A limited number of tools are approved for students based on age, and staff have access to approved tools that have been evaluated for safety.

What is "AI literacy" and why is it important for students, faculty, and staff?

AI literacy is the ability to understand, evaluate, and use AI technologies in a responsible, safe, and effective manner. It is a necessary skill for everyone, as all are exposed to AI-generated content and impacted by AI-driven decisions.

How will the district ensure the "annual review" process keeps pace with a technology that evolves monthly, not yearly?

We are aware that AI technology is rapidly evolving. Although policies are typically reviewed and updated annually, given the nature of AI technology, we will respond to any pressing need for updated guidance with other means of communication such as the AI guidelines and district newsletters.

Are BPS staff required to use AI? Are students required to use AI?

No, staff and students are not required to use AI. However, many may already be using it unknowingly. Everyone must develop AI literacy to understand the role of AI in their lives as more AI features find their ways into everyday applications.

Can schools or families request AI training from the district?

Yes. Schools can [request training through the BPS Office of Technology](#). Families should speak to their school leader or family liaison to have them reach out to the BPS Office of Technology.

What metrics will BPS be looking at in the 2026-2027 school year to measure success of AI implementation?

- 100% of staff members complete the AI Foundations course.
- Protected student information is not uploaded into unapproved AI tools.
- 100% of AI tools, or platforms with AI functionality, undergo appropriate privacy and security review by the Technology Department before implementation.
- Data privacy agreements and safeguards are established with 100% of AI vendors prior to use.
- Staff demonstrate an understanding of what information can and cannot be shared with AI tools.
- Access and age controls are in place to ensure AI access for students is configured using age and grade level restrictions for compliance.
- Availability and communication of AI Literacy guidance, lessons, and resources to help students understand responsible, ethical, and safe use of AI before using approved AI tools for school assignments.

How will BPS address concerns around the environmental impact of AI?

We encourage careful consideration of whether AI is truly needed for a task, especially for resource-intensive uses like complex image generation. We acknowledge that AI has an environmental impact due to the computing power it requires and believe this should be part of responsible decision-making and education. We also emphasize avoiding overreliance on AI, ensuring it supports rather than replaces human thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, and this guidance will be embedded in educator- and student-facing AI foundational lessons and courses. For more information on AI and environmental impact, [review a recent article from Scientific American](#).



Data Privacy and Security

Does the district have specific data privacy protocols for staff working with sensitive documents like IEPs or health records?

Yes, staff and educators working with sensitive documents and information must follow all appropriate data privacy protocols and use only tools that are approved for this purpose.

In a cybersecurity incident such as cyberattack or data breach, what is the specific communication plan for affected staff, faculty, students, and families?

The cybersecurity incident response plan will be used in which there are dedicated steps taken in order to ensure network confidentiality, integrity, and availability.

What specific controls do we have to ensure a vendor does not add unapproved AI functionalities into an existing non-AI tool without our knowledge?

Most AI features are blocked by default for students using BPS accounts and when on the BPS network. We are proactively filtering AI tools for students based on age restrictions and appropriateness of the tool, but some AI functionalities may pass this filter. In this case, the district will review each tool carefully and work with the vendor to adjust access to these features for students and staff. If a vendor adds a tool that becomes a privacy and security threat, we will consider contract termination and will block the tool for staff and students.

Guidance for Employees and Staff

Are teachers allowed to use AI detection software to check if a student used AI for an assignment?

Yes; however, BPS does not permit the use of AI detection tools as the sole determinant of academic dishonesty, as they are often unreliable and biased. Suspected dishonesty should be addressed through process reviews and student conversations.

If AI-related academic dishonesty is alleged under School-Based Rules, students must have access to a fair and consistent hearing process aligned with the BPS Code of Conduct.

AI detection tools may struggle to distinguish between generative AI use and legally required accommodations or modifications for students with disabilities, such as speech-to-text, predictive text, or other assistive technologies required through IEPs or 504 plans. Additionally, multilingual learners may appropriately use teacher-approved translation devices or language support tools to access instruction and demonstrate understanding, and schools must ensure that neither group is disproportionately impacted by false positives generated by AI detection systems.

Since AI detectors are not permitted as a "sole determinant" of dishonesty, what evidence is considered sufficient to prove a student bypassed their own "critical thinking"?

Evidence may include (but not limited to) comparing the student's prior work, having conversations with the student, examining the document history, and more. Schools are encouraged to have a procedure in place for verifying student work that is clearly communicated to educators, students, and families.

Can staff use AI to help with tasks like drafting emails, newsletters, or lesson plan adaptations?

Yes, potential uses of AI include drafting communications, summarizing documents, creating reports, and developing accommodations and modifications for High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM). However, users must be aware of limitations of AI and always apply human judgement to verify the generated content.

Is it appropriate to use AI to grade student assignments or make decisions about a student's standing?

Educators may use approved AI only to assist with grading and rubric-aligned feedback, but all outputs must be reviewed and verified by a human educator. Final grading decisions remain with the educator. It is also suggested that educators disclose the use of AI for feedback and/or grading to students and families. We ask all educators to heavily rely upon their professional judgement if they are using AI in this capacity.

If educators must "review and verify" all AI-assisted grading and outputs, does this actually save time, or does it add a new layer of administrative work?

Not all AI use will save you time, and sometimes AI use might increase the time spent on a task. AI should be used intentionally and purposefully in ways that enhance your work quality and/or productivity, and no assumption should be made that AI is a timesaver.

What type of professional development is being provided for BPS staff and educators?

BPS staff and educators have access to free professional development from BPS throughout the year to cater to quickly evolving AI tools. Topics vary from foundational AI PD to application-specific PD, and are offered in many modes including asynchronous PD, in-person workshops, webinars, and school-based PD.

How can BPS staff recommend an AI tool for approval? What are the criteria for approval?

Please see [BPS Office of Technology App Approval process](#).



Guidance for Students and Parents

How are BPS students being educated about AI literacy and the use of AI?

AI literacy lessons will be developed and released by Fall 2026 for grades 7-12, and subsequently for K-6. In the meantime, we have recommendations for lessons that have been developed by reputable organizations that have been vetted for content accuracy and engagement.

How will I know if my student is allowed to use AI for a specific school assignment?

Students must always follow classroom and/or school guidelines or policies regarding the use of Gen AI for schoolwork. Students should seek permission from their teacher if they are unsure.

What are the age requirements for using AI tools in school?

Age requirement depends on the tool and its Terms of Use. Please see [Approved Tools List](#) for more information.

How will the district monitor that students are following the "age restrictions" of GenAI tools, especially for younger learners?

There are network filters in place to block AI tools that are not approved from student devices while on the BPS network and on BPS devices outside of the schools. Tool approvals and availability vary by age group, and younger students do not have access to age-restricted AI tools.

How would families be provided with information about AI?

We will be releasing family-facing resources in Fall 2026. Information will be shared through school leaders, family liaisons, and the Office of Family and Community Advancement.