



AI HANDBOOK 2026



Hamblen County Department of Education

OUR VISION

“

Shaping Hamblen County's future one student at a time.

”



OUR MISSION

“

The mission of the Hamblen County Department of Education is to educate all students so they can achieve their postsecondary and career goals while fostering a strong partnership with the community.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

[Welcome to the Future of Learning](#)

[Hamblen County AI Purpose Statement](#)

[What is AI Literacy?](#)

[Why Does Literacy Matter?](#)

[AI Basics](#)

GenAI Guidance

[GenAI Guidance for Students](#)

[GenAI Guidance for Parents and Guardians](#) [GenAI](#)

[Guidance for Educators, Administrators, and](#)

[Staff](#)

Approved Generative AI Tools

[Staff Productivity](#)

[Dealing with Hallucinations and Bias](#)

[Roles and Responsibility](#)

Appendix

[Hamblen County AI Integration Task](#)

[Force AI Glossary](#)

[FAQs](#)

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE OF LEARNING:

OUR AI HANDBOOK

As we navigate a rapidly evolving technological landscape, our district remains committed to providing an education that prepares students for the world of tomorrow. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a concept of the future—it is a powerful tool integrated into our daily lives.

This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide for **parents, teachers, and students** to understand how we are embracing AI to foster innovation while maintaining the highest standards of safety and ethics, outlining our rigorous protocols to **keep the information of teachers and students safe**. We approach AI not just as a technical shift, but as a moral one—teaching our community that learning to use AI ethically is both a necessity and a responsibility.

We believe that when used thoughtfully, AI can be a catalyst for extraordinary growth. Our commitment is to leverage these tools to **maximize teacher efficiency** and **personalize student learning**, ensuring that every child in our district has the opportunity to thrive.

AI allows us to differentiate instruction in new ways. By analyzing learning patterns, AI tools help teachers provide tailored support, meeting every student exactly where they are. These tools also empower teachers by reducing the burden of administrative tasks and lesson preparation. By maximizing efficiency, teachers can spend more high-quality time mentoring and instructing students. In addition, AI opens doors to new ways of creating, problem-solving, and researching. It equips students with the “AI Literacy” necessary for future care. We are committed to the **responsible use of AI**. This means prioritizing human judgment, critical thinking, and ethical considerations in every interaction with technology.

By working together, we can ensure that AI serves as a bridge to deeper understanding, greater creativity, and a more equitable learning environment for all.

Hamblen County AI Purpose Statement

The Hamblen County AI Integration Task Force is committed to ensuring that artificial intelligence supports effective teaching and meaningful student learning. We will research and evaluate AI tools and practices, develop policies and procedures that promote ethical and legal use, and design professional development that equips educators for equitable, safe, and innovative integration of AI into classrooms and district operations.



WHAT IS AI LITERACY?

AI Literacy is a comprehensive framework that combines foundational knowledge of core concepts with the practical skills needed to use AI tools responsibly. It also demands ethical awareness of issues like bias and privacy, the critical thinking necessary to analyze AI reliability, and a future-oriented perspective to adapt as education and society evolve.



FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Grasping the basic principles of artificial intelligence, including essential vocabulary and the various categories of AI systems.



PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Building the proficiency needed to use AI software efficiently and ethically, which involves assessing tools and incorporating them into daily tasks.



ETHICAL AWARENESS

Identifying moral dilemmas such as algorithmic prejudice, equity, openness, personal data protection, and the broader consequences for communities.



CRITICAL THINKING

Cultivating the capacity to scrutinize AI-produced content, judge its trustworthiness, acknowledge its flaws, and reduce possible dangers.



FUTURE-ORIENTED PERSPECTIVE

Comprehending how AI continues to change and its capacity to redefine learning and culture by maintaining an adaptable attitude and a commitment to lifelong learning.

WHY DOES AI LITERACY MATTER?

AI is no longer a "future technology"—it is the invisible engine powering our students' world, from the algorithms suggesting their next video to the tools they use for schoolwork.

Think of AI Literacy as the "new reading and writing." Just as children have been taught to look both ways before crossing the street, we now need to teach them how to navigate a world where software can think, create, and sometimes deceive.

Here is why AI Literacy is essential:

1. Safety and “Digital Self-Defense”

- **Deepfakes & Scams:** AI can now mimic voices and faces with terrifying accuracy. AI-literate kids are less likely to be fooled by a fake video of a celebrity or a “spoofed” call from a friend
- **Privacy Awareness:** Many AI tools “learn” from the data we give them. Kids need to understand that a “chat” with an AI isn’t private—it’s data that might be stored or used to train future models.
- **Ethical AI Use:** AI should be used responsibly inside and outside of school.

2. Career Readiness

- **Our goal:** Every student to leave Hamblen County schools as lifelong learners fully prepared to pursue their postsecondary or career pathways.
- **The Competitive Edge:** Companies are increasingly looking for people who know how to use AI to do a day’s work in an hour.

3. Protecting Critical Thinking

- **Fact-Checking:** AI frequently “hallucinates” (makes things up confidently). Literacy teaches kids to always verify the facts.
- **Originality:** AI Literacy helps them understand the difference between collaborating with AI to brainstorm and outsourcing their own thinking.

AI BASICS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human thinking—such as recognizing patterns, analyzing information, solving problems, and generating language. AI systems learn from large amounts of data and improve their performance over time.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is a type of AI that creates new content. This may include text, images, audio, video, or computer code. Users interact with GenAI tools by entering prompts—questions or instructions—and the system generates responses based on patterns learned during training.



AI tools used in education may fall into several categories. Public AI tools are freely available online to anyone, such as ChatGPT. Internal AI tools are secure, enterprise-level systems restricted to approved district users, such as Google Gemini Enterprise and Magic School AI. In addition, some instructional or operational platforms (curricula platforms) include vendor-embedded AI features that are governed by district contracts and data privacy agreements. Each category requires thoughtful implementation, responsible oversight, and adherence to district policies.

AI systems learn from data to analyze large datasets to identify patterns and trends. They produce responses based on probability, not independent reasoning or human understanding. Many AI systems continue to improve over time as they process additional information. While these capabilities make AI a powerful support tool, it is important to remember that AI does not replace professional judgment. Human oversight is required, and all AI-generated content must be reviewed carefully for accuracy, bias, and appropriateness.

AI systems may occasionally produce inaccurate or misleading information. Users are responsible for verifying outputs before sharing or implementing them. Because AI tools are trained on large collections of data, they can also reflect bias present in that data. Ethical use requires awareness, critical thinking, and a commitment to fairness and equity. In addition, student and staff data must always be protected. Only district-approved tools should be used when handling sensitive or confidential information to ensure compliance with privacy standards and policies.

Hamblen County Schools:

GenAI Guidance for Students

AI is a bicycle for your mind—it helps you go faster, but you still have to pedal.

The AI Traffic Light: Can I Use It?

Check your assignment instructions! Your teacher will use these colors to tell you when AI is acceptable to use.



RED: "The Solo Run"

Goal: To see what you know.

Rule: No AI at all. No chatbots, no AI grammar checkers, no "summarizers."

YELLOW: "The Brainstormer"

Goal: To help you get started or get unstuck.

Rule: Use AI to outline, generate ideas, or explain a concept you don't understand. You must do ALL the work.

GREEN: "The Co-Pilot"

Goal: To explore how AI can enhance your work.

Rule: Use AI to research, analyze data, or refine your writing. You are the editor-in-chief.

*If an assignment doesn't have a color assigned, the default is **Red Light**.

How to Give Credit

If you use AI for a Yellow or Green assignment, you must be transparent. Simply add an AI Disclosure at the bottom of your work:

AI Disclosure: I used [Tool Name, e.g., Gemini] to [what you did, e.g., brainstorm five themes for my essay]. I then wrote the essay myself and checked all the facts.



The “Reality Check”

AI doesn’t actually know things; it predicts patterns. This means:

It Hallucinates: AI will confidently tell you that George Washington invented the internet or give you a fake quote from a book. Always double-check facts.

It Has “Blind Spots”: AI can be biased or leave out important perspectives. Your unique voice is better.

It’s Not a Search Engine: Don’t trust it for current events or math without verifying the steps.



Stay Safe & Ethical

1. **Don’t Share Yourself:** Never put your real name, address, or private life stories into an AI. It “learns” from what you tell it.
2. **The “Vibe” Test:** If you turn in work that sounds like a robot wrote it, your teacher will know. Use AI to learn, not to “skip” the learning.
3. **Own the Work:** If the AI makes a mistake and you turn it in, it is your mistake. You are responsible for every word on the page.

The “Big No-No” List

- **Copy-Pasting:** Never take a block of AI text and claim you wrote it. That’s plagiarism.
- **Shortcutting:** Using AI to skip reading the book or doing the lab.
- **Fake Citations:** Never use a source or a quote the AI “made up.”



Hamblen County Schools:

GenAI Guidance for Parents and Guardians

In Hamblen County Schools, we believe AI is a powerful tool for learning, but it cannot replace the hard work of thinking. As a parent, you play a vital role in helping your child use these tools responsibly and safely.

Understanding the “Traffic Light” at Home

Your child’s teacher may assign a “color” to projects that are to be completed at home. When your child is doing homework, ask them: “Is this a Red, Yellow, or Green AI assignment?”



Light	Meaning	How to Support Your Child
RED	No AI Allowed	Ensure they are using their own brain. No chatbots or AI “summarizers.”
YELLOW	AI as a Tutor	They can use AI to explain a concept or brainstorm ideas, but the writing must be theirs.
GREEN	Full Partner	They can use AI to help draft, code, or create. Focus on how they edited the AI output.

*If an assignment doesn’t have a color assigned, the default is **Red Light**.

Safety and Privacy: Protect Your Child

Most public AI tools (like Gemini or ChatGPT) have age requirements (usually 13+ with parental consent); however, HCBOE recommends students only use their school-approved AI tools at home.

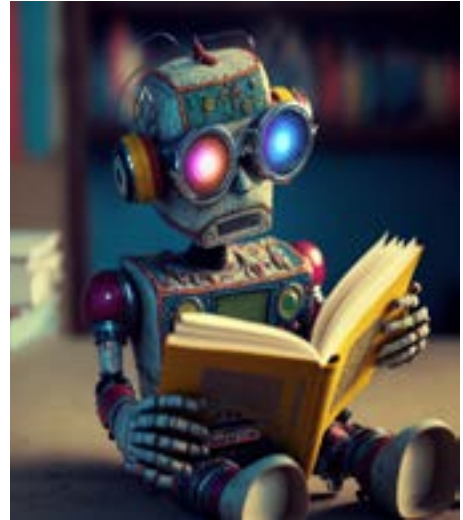
- **The “No-ID” Rule:** Remind your child never to tell an AI their full name, home address, school name, or private family stories.
- **Vetted Tools:** Our school uses specific, “walled-garden” AI tools that protect student data. Encourage your child to use school-approved platforms (Magic School AI) rather than random apps they find online.



How to Use AI With Your Child

Instead of using AI to get the answer, use it to improve the process. Here are three healthy ways to use AI at home:

1. **The “Socratic” Tutor:** Instead of asking for the answer, have your child prompt the AI: “I’m stuck on this math problem. Don’t give me the answer, but ask me a leading question to help me find it myself.”
2. **The Reading Buddy:** If your child is struggling with a complex text, ask the AI: “Explain the concept of ‘photosynthesis’ to a 4th grader using a sports analogy.”
3. **The Practice Quizzer:** Have the AI act as a flashcard: “I have a Spanish quiz tomorrow. Ask me five questions about kitchen vocabulary and tell me if I get them right.”



Red Flags for Parents

Keep an eye out for these “Shortcuts” that can hurt your child’s learning:

- **The “Copy-Paste” Trap:** If your child’s essay sounds significantly more “professional” than their usual speaking voice, they likely let the AI do the heavy lifting.
- **The “Hallucination” Error:** AI often makes up “facts.” If your child’s homework mentions a historical event that sounds strange, check it together!
- **The “Crip Note” Syndrome:** Using AI to summarize a book instead of reading it. This prevents the brain from building critical reading stamina.

The Golden Rule for Parents:

If you aren’t sure if your child should be using AI for a specific task, ask the teacher and assume it is a “red light” assignment unless told otherwise.

Hamblen County Schools:

GenAI Guidance for Educators, Administrators, and Staff

Artificial Intelligence is a co-pilot, not the pilot. In Hamblen County Schools, we use GenAI to supplement human creativity, reduce administrative workload, and personalize learning. However, the final responsibility for all content, grades, and communications rests solely with the human staff member.

The Traffic Light Framework

Teachers should use this system to clearly communicate AI expectations for every assignment.



Light	Meaning	Student Action
RED	No AI permitted. Focus is on foundational skill building.	"Put the tools away."
YELLOW	AI as a Tutor/Partner. Used for brainstorming or outlining.	"Cite your prompts."
GREEN	Full Integration. Encouraged for data analysis or media creation.	"Explain your process."

*If an assignment doesn't have a color assigned, the default is **Red Light**.

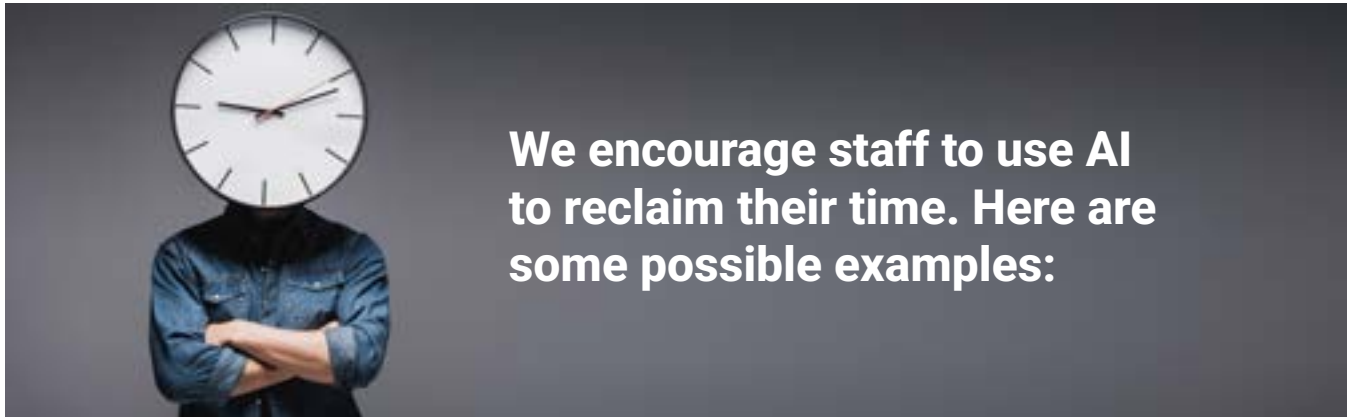
The "Wall of Privacy" (Security Protocol)



To protect our students and stay compliant with FERPA/COPPA, observe the following non-negotiables:

- **No PII (Personally Identifiable Information):** Never input student IDs, addresses, or specific health/disciplinary data into an AI prompt.
- **Approved Tools Only:** Only use tools listed in the District Approved Software on the HCBOS website. Free "experimental" tools found online are not vetted for data privacy.
- **Age Restrictions:** The only district-approved AI tools for students are Magic School AI and teacher-assigned Gemini tools.

Staff Productivity Guide



We encourage staff to use AI to reclaim their time. Here are some possible examples:

Approved for AI Assistance



- **Differentiating Instruction:** “These students have mastered the standard, but these students need more instruction. What can I do with each group of students to accelerate the students’ learning?”
- **Administrative Drafting:** “Draft an email or weekly newsletter for parents mentioning the upcoming field trip and the need for chaperones.”
- **Data Analysis:** “Analyze my benchmark data to help me create small groups for instruction.”
- **Unpack Standards:** “Help me create learning targets for TN State Standards [number].”

Prohibited for AI Assistance



- **Deciding Students’ Grades:** AI should never be the sole arbiter of a student’s grade.
- **Sensitive Discipline:** Drafting disciplinary reports involving sensitive legal or safety issues.
- **IEP/ILP/504 Creation:** IEPs and ILPs are created to personalize a student’s learning experience. AI is not capable of knowing each student’s personal needs.

Dealing with “Hallucinations” & Bias

AI models are statistically driven, not fact-driven.

- **Fact-Check Everything:** If the AI provides a date, a quote, or a scientific law, verify it against a trusted source.
- **Check for Bias:** AI often reflects stereotypical viewpoints. Review AI outputs to ensure they are culturally responsive and inclusive.



Roles and Responsibilities



- **Administrators:** Responsible for overseeing governance, enforcing guidelines, and responding to incidents of misuse.
- **Teachers:** Must monitor student use of approved technologies and communicate expectations clearly to families.
- **Ongoing Learning for Teachers:** All stakeholders can participate in AI training provided by the district or other online learning tools.

Hamblen County Schools

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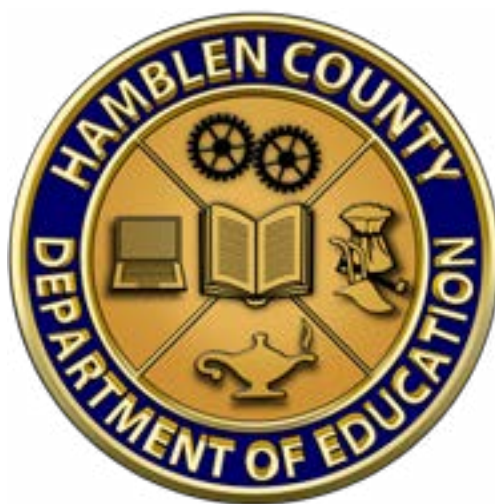
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Glossary

A

Algorithm: A specific set of step-by-step instructions that a computer follows to complete a task.

Algorithm Bias: The potential for AI systems to perpetuate or amplify existing prejudices due to biased training data or flawed algorithms, resulting in unfair outcomes.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): The ability of a computer or machine to mimic human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and solving problems.

AI Ethics: Guidelines for developing and using AI in a responsible way to ensure fairness, safety, and respect for everyone.

AI Literacy: The knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to interact with AI in a safe and effective way, including understanding how it works and evaluating it for bias.

AI Model: A computer program trained on a dataset to recognize patterns and perform specific tasks.

AI Safety: Measures taken to ensure AI systems are used in ways that prevent harm to individuals or society, such as bias mitigation and data privacy.

AI Tool: Software that uses AI to automate or assist with tasks, such as writing assistants, tutoring programs, or assessment tools.

B

Bias: When an AI system unfairly favors certain groups or produces prejudiced results, often due to incomplete or reflective training data.

C

Chain-of-Thought (COT) Prompting: A strategy that asks an AI tool to think step-by-step to produce better results for logical and mathematical reasoning.

D

Data: Information, such as facts, numbers, and text, used to train AI systems.

Data Privacy: Protecting the personally identifiable information (PII) of students, teachers, and families when using digital and AI tools.

Dataset: A large collection of organized information used to train an AI model.

Digital Citizenship: The responsible and ethical use of technology, encompassing online safety, privacy, and respectful interactions.

E

Explainable AI: AI systems designed so that users can understand how they work and how decisions are made, including the logic used in the process.

F

Few-Shot Prompting: A prompting strategy that includes two or more examples of the desired input and output.

G

Generative AI (GenAI): A type of AI that can create new content, such as text, images, music, or code.

H

Hallucination: Any inaccurate or misleading output from an AI tool that may be presented as a fact.

Human-in-the-Loop: The understanding that humans should always be involved in the AI process to provide guidance, feedback, and final decisions.

I

Internal AI: AI tools restricted for use within a specific organization or domain, such as Google's Gemini Enterprise.

L

Large Language Model (LLM): An AI model trained on massive amounts of text to identify patterns and generate responses to prompts.

M

Machine Learning (ML): A subset of AI focused on programs that can analyze data to make decisions or predictions.

N

Natural Language Processing (NLP): A field of AI that enables machines to understand, interpret, and generate human language.

O

One-Shot Prompting: A prompting strategy that includes exactly one example of the desired input and output.

Output: The information or creative work that an AI tool produces after it is prompted.

P

Prompt: The method for interacting with an AI tool, appearing as a request, question, snippet, or example

Public GenAI: Tools available for anyone to use on the Internet, such as Gemini Chat, ChatGPT, Claude, or Perplexity

R

Reinforcement Learning: A type of machine learning that provides feedback to a program to improve its decisions over time.

S

Supervised Learning: A type of machine learning that uses labeled datasets to train a program to recognize patterns.

T

Transparency: Being open and honest about how AI systems are trained and used in the classroom with students, families, and the community.

U

Unsupervised Learning: A type of machine learning that uses unlabeled datasets to allow a program to identify patterns without a specific output in mind.

V

Vendor GenAI: AI tools provided by third-party vendors that are vetted to ensure data handling aligns with district standards and values.

Z

Zero-Shot Prompting: A prompting strategy that does not include any examples of the desired input and output.

FAQs

What is this FAQ about?

This FAQ explains how the Hamblen County Department of Education uses artificial intelligence (AI) tools, what protections are in place for student data, and how families can learn more or raise concerns.

Why does the district use AI?

AI is used to support teaching, personalize learning, streamline administrative tasks, and improve services. AI is an assistive tool that helps staff work more efficiently; it does not replace teachers or administrators.

Privacy and Data

What laws protect my child's information?

The district follows federal and state privacy laws, including FERPA and COPPA, and will not sell student information or use it for marketing.

Who controls student data collected by AI tools?

Student data collected through district systems remains under the control of the Hamblen County Department of Education or their designated vendor(s). Vendors agree to limit how data is used.

What types of data do AI tools collect?

AI tools may collect information needed for the tool to work (for example, student responses, progress data, or usage logs). The district limits collection to what is necessary for educational purposes.

Security and Risk Management

How does the district keep data secure?

All AI tool requirements include encryption, access controls, data retention limits, and vendor incident notification procedures. The district monitors systems and requires staff to report suspected security issues immediately.

Classroom Use and Academic Integrity

Will AI grade my child or make decisions about discipline?

No. Teachers and administrators make final decisions about grading, discipline, and student supports. AI may provide recommendations or help with routine tasks, but human review and approval are required for decisions that affect students.

Are there rules about students using AI for assignments?

Yes. Teachers will explain acceptable use for each assignment.

How does the district handle AI-related plagiarism, bullying, or misinformation?
Schools will follow existing policies for academic dishonesty and bullying.

Contact and Next Steps

Who do I contact with questions or to request an opt out?
Start with your child's teacher or school principal.

We use AI to support learning and school operations. Your child's data is protected, not sold, and used only for approved educational purposes. Contact your school if you have questions or concerns.

