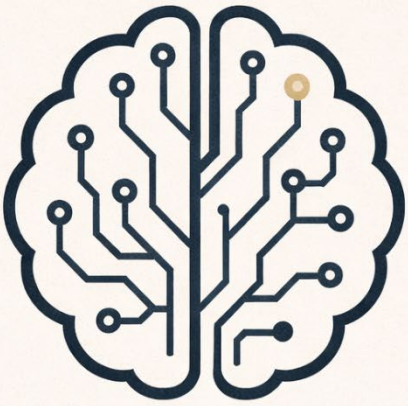
MARIN COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF USE



2026 EDITION

Guidelines Overview

Introduction

This guide provides staff with unified principles and practices for the safe, ethical, and effective use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in educational settings. AI is intended to support teaching, learning, and operations while preserving equity, privacy, and human oversight. These guidelines apply to all MCOE employees and are reviewed by MCOEs Community of Practice quarterly to reflect evolving laws, technologies, and practices.

Protected Data and Confidentiality

Protected Data includes:

- Personally Identifiable Information (PII) of staff and students.
- Student academic, health, or discipline records covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Marin County Board of Education policy 5125.
- Sensitive information such as HR, financial, or medical records or security records such as passwords.

Rules for Using AI with Data:

- Do not upload confidential, sensitive, or PII into AI systems because data that is uploaded into the unapproved AI system could be publicly accessible and violate data privacy laws.
    - If you are using AI with protected data, you are required to use the MCOE verified tool, Microsoft Copilot.
- Staff must not share confidential or personal information in AI tools without explicit approval by their supervisor.
- Public links or "anyone with the link" access should only be created when information is truly intended for public consumption.
- All systems used to store or process data, including student records, must comply with state and federal privacy laws.

Prohibited Uses:

To ensure responsible and ethical use, AI must **not** be used in the following ways:

- **Confidentiality**: Do not upload confidential, sensitive, personally identifiable information (PII), or protected data.
- **Advice**: Do not rely on AI for medical, legal, or financial advice.
- **Copyright**: Do not upload or share copyrighted materials without written permission.
- **Human Interaction**: Do not use AI as a replacement for authentic human interaction.
- **Decision Making**: Do not use AI for high-stakes decisions.
- **Student Use**: Do not allow students to use approved AI tools without guidance around responsible use outlined in these guidelines.

Understanding AI

AI refers to a range of technologies that can assist with tasks such as data analysis, translation, writing, media creation, and the personalization of learning.

- **AI as a Tool, Not a Replacement.** AI should be used to relieve repetitive tasks and enhance human thinking and creativity, not to replace professional judgment or authentic interaction.
- **Applications vs. Models.** Tools like ChatGPT or Copilot are applications (similar to car models), powered by underlying engines called AI models (such as GPT-4, Claude, etc.).
- **Licensed vs. Public AI Tools.** Licensed tools (e.g. Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT licensed account) require a subscription or paid license for use, while public tools are free and accessible to everyone (e.g., free versions of ChatGPT). Only district-approved and FERPA-compliant AI tools may be used with sensitive or student-related data. Public tools must never be used with Protected Data.

To learn more about FERPA-compliant AI tools, please contact MCOE's IT department.

Responsible AI Use Guidelines

AI should always be used with positive and ethical intent. The following guidelines outline **how staff can responsibly use AI tools** within educational settings.

Data Privacy and Confidentiality

Protected Data includes personally identifiable information (PII) of staff and students, student academic, health, or discipline records covered by FERPA, and other sensitive data such as HR, financial, or medical information. Staff must act with care and caution when accessing, using, or sharing data to ensure compliance with all federal and state privacy laws. Protected Data must never be uploaded to publicly available or non-approved AI systems, and staff and students must not share confidential or personal information in AI tools without explicit approval. Only Marin COE–approved AI tool, Microsoft Copilot, may be used with protected data. All systems used to store or process data, including student education records, must meet federal and state data privacy requirements.

AI Use in Student Meetings

In meetings involving student services or support, including but not limited to IEP meetings, Student Support Meetings, and similar planning or problem-solving meetings, AI tools may not be used for the purpose of creating live transcripts or meeting notes. Due to concerns regarding accuracy, reliability, and the status of meeting documentation as part of a student record, AI-generated notes should not be used as the official meeting record. If a meeting is recorded, the official record should be the audio recording, which may later be transcribed through approved processes consistent with student record requirements and applicable privacy laws.

Maintaining Media Integrity

For minors, including students, explicit parental or guardian consent must be obtained before using or sharing images, videos, or other media. In addition, staff must ensure copyright compliance by obtaining permission before sharing any copyrighted content created with or through an AI tool.

Human Oversight and Authorship

AI may assist with content creation, but human authorship and responsibility must always be maintained. Staff must carefully review AI outputs for accuracy, appropriateness, and bias before using or sharing them, ensuring that content is respectful, accurate, and does not distort its original meaning. Avoid over-trusting AI or assigning it responsibilities that require human expertise. The responsibility of using an AI's output still lies with the user of the AI, not the AI itself. AI is not responsible for mistakes in end products, the onus of accuracy lies with the user of the AI tool.

Acceptable Use Policy

AI use must align with organizational rules for responsible and appropriate technology usage. All staff are required to follow the Marin County Office of Education's **Acceptable Use Policy and Computer Use Agreements**, which provide guidance for safe and responsible technology practices.

Suggested Uses

AI can be a valuable tool to enhance teaching, streamline workflows, analyze data, and improve communication when used responsibly. Examples of appropriate use include:

- **Instruction**: Create rubrics and provide feedback; improve accessibility by adjusting reading levels or simplifying directions; personalize learning experiences; enhance lesson planning, assessments, prompts, and presentations; generate text-based images; brainstorm ideas for icebreakers or classroom activities; and develop lesson plan ideas.
- **Workflow Optimization**: Change the tone of writing; summarize lengthy documents; write or proofread code and documents; assist with content creation; and provide a starting point for research, including requesting citations.
- **Data Analysis**: Create spreadsheets from lists or tables; identify and analyze themes in datasets; generate functions and formulas; and develop data visualizations.
- **Communication**: Draft or revise emails, reports, and presentations; make writing more concise; and translate languages.