

PROCEDURE TITLE: USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: 9/21/2026	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED:	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED:
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY:		

I. Purpose

This procedure outlines specific processes for appropriate technology use, required training, technical requirements, and monitoring to ensure consistent and appropriate execution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies while upholding the district's commitment to *Ethical & Responsible Use, Access, Accessibility, and Fairness, User Privacy & Data Security, Pedagogical Innovation and Academic Integrity, Professional Learning and AI Literacy, and Community Engagement*.

Artificial intelligence is not a standalone initiative. It affects instruction, operations, data systems, academic integrity, procurement, and professional learning. Effective implementation requires cross-functional leadership and clear decision-making structures.

This procedure aligns with the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) *K-12 Artificial Intelligence Guidance* (June 2026) and supports HCPS's broader strategic priorities and instructional goals. It is intended to enhance, and never replace, the professional judgment of educators, counselors, and school leaders; human relationships, professional expertise, and student well-being remain central to this work.

HCPS treats this procedure as a living document, subject to regular review and revision as technology, evidence, MSDE guidance, and applicable law evolve.

II. Definitions

1EdTech Certification: Industry-standard verification of educational technology integration features and interoperability capabilities.

Algorithmic Bias: Systematic and unfair discrimination in AI outputs that may disadvantage certain groups or individuals.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as understanding natural language, recognizing patterns, and generating content. This includes, but is not limited to, generative AI models, chatbots, and machine learning algorithms.

Assistive AI, Instructional AI, and Operational AI: Three categories of AI use governed by this procedure. Assistive AI tools support accessibility and instructional access. Instructional AI tools support teaching and learning directly. Operational AI tools support school and district functions such as scheduling, transportation, attendance, and communication.

Automated Decision-Making: The use of an AI system to produce a recommendation, score, classification, or decision that affects a student or employee, with or without human involvement.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA): A federal law that requires parental consent before collecting personal information from children under 13 online. It applies to websites and online services directed to children or that knowingly collect their data. COPPA mandates transparency about data collection practices for young students.

CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act): A federal law requiring schools and libraries receiving E-Rate funding to filter internet access to obscene or harmful content. It also requires monitoring of minors' online activities and education on appropriate online behavior.

Consequential Use: Any use of AI that affects student or employee access to programs, services, opportunities, discipline, evaluation, or the protection of civil rights. Consequential uses require documented human oversight before any output affects a student or employee.

Digital Citizenship: The responsible and ethical use of technology, including demonstrating respect for intellectual property, managing digital identity, and practicing online safety.

Emerging Technologies: New and developing technologies that function similarly to AI or work in conjunction with AI to enhance learning and professional activities. These include technologies that can learn from data, adapt to user needs, or perform complex tasks autonomously. As technology advances, anticipated developments may include brain-computer interfaces, advanced virtual reality learning environments, quantum-powered educational systems, or other technologies not yet developed. In essence, any technology that demonstrates thinking, learning, or human-like behavior falls under the scope of this procedure.

Extended Reality (XR): The spectrum of experiences that blends the physical and digital worlds, including Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Mixed Reality (MR) technologies.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. It gives parents the right to access and request amendment of their child's records, with these rights transferring to the student at age 18.

Generative AI: Artificial intelligence systems capable of generating text, images, audio, video, code, or other content based on patterns learned from training data.

Human-in-the-Loop: A model where human oversight and decision-making remain central to technology-assisted processes, ensuring that technology augments rather than replaces human judgment and expertise.

Human Oversight: Meaningful review by a qualified employee who has the authority and information needed to interpret, contextualize, override, or reject an AI output before it affects a student or employee. Human-in-the-Loop describes the general model; Human Oversight is the specific standard required for Consequential Uses.

Large Language Model (LLM): A type of generative AI that produces text based on statistical patterns in training data and does not possess understanding or intent.

Machine Learning: A subset of AI in which systems improve performance by identifying patterns in data.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII): Information that, alone or in combination, can be used to identify a specific student or employee, as defined under applicable federal and Maryland law.

Synthetic Media: Content (including images, audio, video, or text) that has been artificially generated or significantly altered using AI tools, including but not limited to deepfakes, voice cloning, or AI-generated impersonations.

III. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all HCPS students, staff, educators, and administrators using AI and related emerging technologies.

This procedure governs Assistive AI, Instructional AI, and Operational AI tools, as defined in Section II. It applies regardless of how a tool is accessed or provided, including:

- AI tools adopted or purchased specifically for instructional, assistive, or operational purposes;
- AI features embedded within already-approved platforms (e.g., AI functionality added to an existing learning management system, productivity suite, or operational software after that platform's initial approval); and
- AI tools accessed by students, staff, contractors, vendors, or volunteers in connection with HCPS instruction, operations, or data.

This procedure governs both student use and staff use of AI and applies to any AI tool that interacts with HCPS students, staff, or data.

IV. APPROVED RESOURCES

This section operationalizes the HCPS commitment to Ethical and Responsible Use, Access, Accessibility, and Fairness, and User Privacy and Data Security through comprehensive evaluation processes that ensure all approved technologies meet educational, accessibility, and security standards while providing access to all users.

Technology Approval Process

Only AI and emerging technologies evaluated through the district's formal vetting process may be used by students. The approval process includes a comprehensive technical and security review, in addition to assessments of instructional value, bias, and accessibility performed by the Digital Resource Committee. Approved tools are maintained in the TrustEd Apps Dashboard for district-wide access.

Core Evaluation Criteria:

1. Educational Value Assessment: Tools must demonstrate clear alignment with learning objectives and instructional value
2. Technical and Security Review: All tools must pass comprehensive data privacy and security assessments
3. Bias Testing: All tools must be vetted for algorithmic bias to ensure fairness for all student groups (Access, Accessibility, and Fairness)
4. Accessibility Compliance: Tools must meet Maryland COMAR 13A.05.08 equivalent access requirements.
5. Interoperability Standards: 1EdTech certification status and system integration capabilities must be verified with existing HCPS infrastructure (Ethical and Responsible Use).
6. Approved Tool Registry: Current approved tools are maintained on the TrustEd Apps Dashboard for district-wide access.

V. STUDENT USE PROCEDURES

This section supports Pedagogical Innovation and Academic Integrity by ensuring technology enhances rather than replaces human learning, maintains teacher oversight through the human-in-the-loop model, and requires transparent documentation that demonstrates critical thinking skills and ethical reasoning.

Teacher Authorization and Human-in-the-Loop Model

Teachers serve as the critical bridge between technology capabilities and educational objectives, ensuring that all AI and emerging technology use enhances rather than replaces human learning and instruction. The human-in-the-loop model requires teachers to explicitly indicate when technology use is permitted for assignments, always maintaining direct oversight of the learning process (Ethical and Responsible Use). Teachers must use the TrustEd Apps Dashboard to ensure that technology use is age-appropriate for students and complies with the terms of service for each approved resource, making informed decisions about which tools are suitable for specific grade levels and learning contexts. This approach acknowledges that while technology can offer valuable support and perspectives, the teacher's professional judgment remains crucial for determining the appropriate scope, evaluating student understanding, and ensuring that technology use aligns with specific educational objectives. Teachers are responsible for guiding students in developing critical thinking skills that extend beyond what any technology can provide.

AI Usage Scale Summaries by Grade Band

AI usage scales provide a framework for integrating Artificial Intelligence into curriculum and instruction. The guidelines progress in complexity, shifting from teacher-led instruction in early grades to advanced student-led collaboration in high school, ensuring that students build foundational skills before engaging with more sophisticated applications.

Grades K–3: The AI Traffic Light Scale

- Focus: Foundational Concepts & Digital Citizenship
- Description: This scale uses a simple and visual traffic light metaphor (Red, Yellow, Green) to introduce the youngest learners to AI in a highly structured and safe environment. The approach is almost entirely teacher-led, with students acting as observers or guided participants. The primary goals are to establish basic digital safety habits, introduce AI as a potential classroom “helper,” and build an initial understanding of technology’s role in learning without any expectation of independent use.

Grades 4–7: Responsible AI Guidelines

- Focus: Task-Specific Use & Ethical Practices
- Description: This four-level scale transitions students from passive observation to active, independent use of AI for specific, in-classroom approved tasks. The focus shifts to using AI as a tool to support distinct stages of a project, such as idea generation or revision of student-created work. This band introduces the foundational skills of critical evaluation and the crucial requirement of

documenting AI use, helping students develop an ethical framework for technology-assisted learning.

Grades 8–12: Advanced AI Usage Scale

- Focus: Advanced Collaboration & Critical Evaluation
- Description: This five-level scale treats AI as a powerful tool for advanced academic work. It prepares high school students for post-secondary and workplace environments by introducing complex applications like AI-supported modeling and co-creation. The framework demands a high level of student autonomy, requiring them to critically evaluate AI-generated content, provide a clear rationale for collaborative choices, and maintain full intellectual ownership and control over final products.

Required Student Documentation and Citation

When using any AI or emerging technology, students must demonstrate transparency and accountability through comprehensive documentation that supports academic integrity. This may include:

1. Technology Use Declaration: Include a clear statement of technology use in all submitted work
2. Specific Description: Detail exactly how technology was used, including prompts and extent of assistance
3. Source Verification: Confirm accuracy of technology-generated information through reliable, human-verified sources
4. Original Analysis: Apply human in the loop practices by identifying individual thinking, analysis, and conclusions
5. Learning Reflection: Explain what was learned through the technology-assisted process
6. Bias Assessment: Document any observed biases or limitations in AI-generated content and explain how these were addressed (Access, Accessibility, and Fairness)
7. Generative AI Attribution: For generative AI tools, provide specific attribution including tool name, version, prompts used, and output of content generated

VI. STAFF USE PROCEDURES

This section ensures Ethical and Responsible Use and Professional Learning and AI Literacy by requiring human oversight of all AI-generated content, maintaining educational quality standards, and supporting staff growth through responsible technology integration that enhances rather than replaces professional expertise.

Professional Use Authorization and Best Practices

Staff may apply AI tools across professional responsibilities, including instructional content development, administrative efficiency, professional learning, student accommodations, operational planning, and community engagement. All applications

require the same standards of human oversight, quality review, and ethical use outlined in this procedure.

As part of professional practice, staff should verify the accuracy, appropriateness, and educational alignment of all technology-assisted work. Staff must properly reference, cite, and verify any AI-generated content, ensuring transparency about how technology was used and what human oversight was applied (Ethical and Responsible Use). Additionally, staff should monitor for any observed algorithmic biases.

Limitations on Staff Use of AI

Staff members are prohibited from using AI tools to make final decisions regarding:

- Student grading
- Student placement
- Student disciplinary actions
- Personnel evaluations
- Other matters requiring human judgment and accountability

All staff are responsible for maintaining academic and professional integrity, protecting confidential information, using approved technologies only for designated purposes, ensuring human oversight of all AI-assisted work, and participating in required training programs.

VII. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND AI LITERACY

This section addresses Professional Learning and AI Literacy and Access, Accessibility, and Fairness by providing age-appropriate technology literacy education from K–12, equipping all educators with necessary skills for responsible integration, and building ethical reasoning capabilities that prepare students and staff for lifelong technology use.

K–12 Student Technology Literacy

- Elementary Level (K–2) builds foundational understanding of technology as a learning tool while establishing digital citizenship habits. Students recognize that emerging technologies can assist with learning tasks and develop appropriate, safe technology behavior through modeling.
- Elementary Level (3–5) expands understanding of AI and emerging technologies as learning partners while building critical thinking about technology-generated content. Students learn to distinguish between human-created and technology-generated content, developing analytical skills and understanding their responsibilities as digital citizens.
- Middle School Level (6–8) provides comprehensive AI literacy education balancing technological understanding with ethical awareness and practical application. Students engage with educational AI tools while developing understanding of capabilities and limitations (Ethical & Responsible Use), emphasizing bias awareness, ethical decision-making, and academic integrity requirements.

- High School Level (9–12) prepares students for leadership in a technology-integrated world through advanced understanding of AI and emerging technology concepts, applications, and implications. Students explore societal and ethical impacts while developing skills for higher education and technology-enhanced workplaces (Community Engagement), emphasizing leadership in ethical technology use and digital citizenship.

Staff Professional Development

- Annual Requirements ensure all educators develop knowledge and skills for responsible technology integration, including technology integration best practices and pedagogical approaches, detection techniques and academic integrity monitoring, privacy and security compliance requirements, and bias recognition with equitable implementation strategies (Access, Accessibility, and Fairness).
- Ongoing Professional Growth supports continuous adaptation as technologies evolve through advanced pedagogical applications and innovative practices, updates on new tools and emerging technologies, community of practice participation and best practice sharing, and leadership development in ethical technology integration.

VIII. USER RESPONSIBILITIES

This section ensures User Privacy & Data Security, Ethical & Responsible Use, and Pedagogical Innovation and Academic Integrity by establishing data protection protocols, preventing misuse of AI-generated content, and requiring transparency and accountability from all users of AI and emerging technologies.

Data Protection Protocol

All users of AI and emerging technologies within HCPS, including staff, students, and any individual accessing district systems, must comply with FERPA, COPPA, CIPA, and other applicable federal, state, and local privacy regulations. Users must not use AI tools to transcribe, record, or process meetings, conversations, or communications that contain personal, sensitive, or confidential information.

Data Protection Protocol

1. **Pre-Use Verification:** Confirm no personal/confidential information in any input
2. **Approved Platforms Only:** Use only district-approved AI and emerging technology tools
3. **Secure Authentication:** Access through HCPS credentials and secure networks only
4. **Session Management:** Properly log out.

Prohibited Information Input

The following restrictions support compliance with FERPA, COPPA, CIPA, and other applicable privacy regulations. Users must never input the following into any AI or emerging technology tool:

- Student names, IDs, addresses, photographs, or any identifying information
- Employee personal information or personnel records
- Social Security Numbers, financial information, or government IDs
- Medical, health, or disability information
- Family, financial, or personal circumstances
- School security procedures or sensitive operational information
- Internal communications, emails, or confidential documents
- District assessment content, test questions, or grading information
- Biometric data (unique behavioral or measurable physical characteristics) or any personally identifiable information
- Copyrighted materials without proper authorization
- Content that could generate harmful, discriminatory, or inappropriate outputs
- Information that could compromise individual privacy in Extended Reality environments

Prohibited Content Creation

Users are strictly prohibited from creating, sharing, or distributing:

- AI-generated fake videos, audio, or images (deepfakes/synthetic media) that impersonate individuals without explicit consent
- Content designed for harassment, defamation, or deception
- False or misleading content that could damage reputations or spread misinformation
- Content that violates the dignity and rights of students, staff, or community members
- Any manipulated media that misrepresents individuals or events

Documentation and Transparency Requirements

For all AI-assisted work, users must:

- Clearly identify when AI tools have been used in academic or professional work
- Maintain final responsibility for all decisions, communications, and work products
- Ensure all AI-generated content aligns with district policies and standards
- Use AI tools only for approved purposes as outlined in this procedure

- Participate in required AI literacy training and professional development

IX. VIOLATION RESPONSE AND SUPPORT PROCEDURES

HCPS approaches technology misuse through Professional Learning and AI Literacy and Access, Accessibility, and Fairness. The district's initial response is educational, focusing on understanding and skill-building rather than punishment. For serious or repeated violations, interventions may include disciplinary action as outlined in the student handbook.

Student Violation Response

HCPS approaches technology misuse as an educational opportunity rather than simply a disciplinary matter, recognizing that students are learning to navigate complex ethical and academic challenges in an evolving technological landscape. Students will use district-approved AI technologies for assignments and assessments in accordance with the specific level of assistance authorized by the teacher on the AI Usage Scale, ensuring all use directly supports and does not circumvent the intended learning objectives. While the District may use AI detection software to aid in investigations of academic misconduct, its findings will not be the sole basis for disciplinary action due to concerns about accuracy and potential bias. When violations occur, the district's primary focus is on understanding the student's reasoning, addressing knowledge gaps, and building stronger ethical decision-making skills for future situations. This educational approach acknowledges that appropriate technology use requires ongoing learning and support, particularly as technologies continue to evolve and present new ethical considerations.

Depending on the severity of the violation, possible responses include:

- an individual conference with teacher,
- work resubmission when appropriate;
- parent/guardian conference,
- additional technology literacy training, and
- educational intervention to support patterns of misuse
- disciplinary action per school handbook for academic dishonesty.

X. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Trust and collaboration are fostered through open communication about AI practices, maintaining transparency through updates on the HCPS website and school communication methods.

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Superintendent of Schools

Date

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LEGAL REFERENCES¹

References are set forth in the Procedure.

¹ All references are to specific federal or Maryland statutes or regulations. References are provided for convenience and informational purposes only and are not to be considered as exhaustive or as precluding Harford County Public Schools from relying upon any other statutes or regulations in support of a policy.