READING BLUE COAT

Use of Generative AI in Academic Work Policy

Policy Statement

Reading Blue Coat is dedicated to harnessing the advantages of Generative AI in the form of Copilot and embedded AI technology such as Sparx Maths and LanguageNut to enrich teaching and learning for our students, whilst maintaining our ethical responsibilities as a school. We believe these technologies have the potential to support personalised learning, enhance educational outcomes and simplify administrative tasks. However, it is crucial that these technologies are used in a way that is safe, respects privacy, ensures fairness and prevents discrimination. Equally important is the expectation that students submit their own work, as this fosters academic integrity. This policy outlines the framework for achieving these objectives.

Purpose

At Reading Blue Coat, we have already set out our expectations regarding the importance of academic integrity in the *Student Manual*. Teachers spend a lot of time assessing students' work, and we believe that the feedback given by subject specialists is an essential part of our students' learning process and knowledge development. It is crucial, therefore, that teachers are marking work that is the students' own and their best effort.

Definitions

The Government's recent guidance on 'Generative AI in Education' (June 2025) offers the following helpful definitions:

Generative AI is one type of AI. It refers to technology that can be used to create new content based on large volumes of data that models have been trained on using variety of sources. ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot and Google Gemini are Generative AI tools, built on Large Language Models (LLMs). LLMs are a category of foundation models trained on large amounts of data, enabling them to understand and generate human-like content.

Tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot and Google Gemini can answer questions, complete written tasks, generate images, text or code and respond to prompts in a human-like way. Other forms of Generative AI can produce audio, simulations and videos.

Advances in technology mean that we can now use these tools to produce AI-generated content. This creates opportunities and challenges.

Ethical considerations

When utilising Generative AI and data technologies at Reading Blue Coat, we adhere to the following ethical principles:

- **Safety:** safe use is our priority when deciding whether our students and staff should use Generative AI at school. Our guidelines for safe use are set out in detail in the School's *AI Policy*. Our determining rule of thumb is that there must be a clear benefit for using Generative AI that outweighs the risks. Different considerations will apply depending on whether it is staff or students (especially those under age 13) using AI tools.
- **Data privacy:** we have taken steps to ensure that personal data is protected in accordance with data protection legislation, and that personal data is not used in Generative AI tools that operate outside the School's secure Microsoft system.
- **Intellectual property (IP):** we apply the understanding that materials protected by copyright can only be used to train AI tools if there is permission from the copyright holder, or a statutory exception applies
- **Fairness**: we are committed to using Generative AI in a fair manner that avoids discrimination and unfair outcomes including perpetuating existing biases or creating new ones
- **Transparency**: we are open about how we use Generative AI and how data is collected and utilised

Copilot as the Reading Blue Coat Generative AI default

At Reading Blue Coat we use Microsoft's Copilot as our default Generative AI tool for students who are over 13 years of age. We run the Windows operating system across our site and we use Office 365 as the default productivity application. Importantly, Microsoft Copilot is more secure than other Generative AI options because Microsoft guarantee to keep the School's data safe. **When students and staff log in with an RBC User Account,** none of their queries, prompts or data that are uploaded to Copilot will be used to train any AI models.

Copilot's existing age restrictions (minimum age of 13) mean that our Year 7 and 8 students will not have access to Copilot at school. However, they will be introduced to the ethical and safe use of AI tools through teacher-supervised activities in classrooms, the Year 7 IT curriculum and the Wellbeing curriculum.

Students aged 13 and over do not have permission to use alternatives to Microsoft Copilot at School. LLMs such as Google's Gemini and OpenAI's ChatGPT cannot ensure that their data remains secure in the same way that Copilot can.

Specific focus on Generative AI:

- **Acceptable Use:** Students may use Generative AI to support initial research, generate ideas, instigate a critical discussion/debate, and create brief quotations, provided these uses are clearly acknowledged and critically evaluated in their work
- **Unacceptable Use:** Submitting AI-generated content as one's own work without proper acknowledgement is considered academic malpractice. Extensive use of AI-generated content without critical engagement or citation is also prohibited.

Plagiarism and Academic Malpractice:
Plagiarism and academic malpractice are serious offences that undermine the integrity of our educational assessments.

Definitions and Examples:

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's work or ideas as one's own without proper acknowledgment. This includes copying text, ideas, images, or data from any source, including AI-generated content, without giving appropriate credit.

Examples of Plagiarism: submitting a piece of work copied from a book, website, or another student without citation, using AI tools to generate essays or assignments and presenting them as original work, failing to use quotation marks for direct quotes or not providing a bibliography for referenced works.

Academic Malpractice

Academic malpractice extends beyond plagiarism to include any behaviour that gives a student an unfair advantage or compromises the integrity of an assessment process.

Examples of Academic Malpractice: cheating during exams, such as using unauthorised materials or receiving help from others, fabricating data or citations in academic work, collaborating with others on assignments meant to be completed individually.

Preventing Plagiarism and Malpractice

To uphold academic integrity at Reading Blue Coat, we educate students and staff about the definitions and consequences of plagiarism and academic malpractice in the context of misuse of AI tools.

By clearly defining these terms and providing concrete examples, we aim to foster a culture of honesty and integrity within our educational community, ensuring that all assessments are fair, transparent, and reflective of each student's true abilities.

Acceptable Use of Generative AI

Educational Enhancement: Generative AI can be used to support personalised learning by augmenting the essential role of the teacher. For example, a student using AI-powered tutoring systems to provide additional practice and feedback on mathematics problems is considered acceptable use.

Academic Integrity: Generative AI tools should not be used to complete or contribute in a substantive way to teacher-assigned tasks, however, it is acceptable to use Generative AI for basic grammar and spell-checking in essays, but not for generating entire sections of essays or answers to exam questions. For example, it is acceptable to use Generative AI when directed by a teacher to research examples of iambic pentameter in poetry, but it is not acceptable to use the same AI tool to generate examples when the teacher instructs students to write their own examples of iambic pentameter. In this case, the instruction of the teacher is the golden rule.

Maintaining Originality: Generative AI can assist in the learning process by ~~offering explanations,~~ generating practice problems, or providing feedback, but students must ensure that their final submissions reflect their understanding and effort.

Documenting: Any AI-assisted learning activity must be documented, and the student's own analysis and insights should form the core of their work.

Example:
"A coding project was enhanced using AI to debug and optimise the code. The initial problem-solving approach and final implementation were carried out independently, with the AI tool providing suggestions for improvement (AI tool used: Copilot, accessed on [date])."
By adhering to these guidelines, our students can effectively and ethically incorporate AI into their academic work, enhancing their learning experience while maintaining the integrity and authenticity of their submissions.

Understanding AI Limitations and Capabilities
We help our students to understand both the impressive potential and the limitations of Generative AI tools:

Providing Resources and Training:

- Our School will provide the necessary resources and training to support AI literacy among students and staff
- We will offer professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding of Generative AI tools and their ethical use

Misuse of Generative AI
While the potential for student Generative AI misuse is relatively new, most of the ways to prevent its misuse and mitigate the associated risks are not.

At Reading Blue Coat we emphasise the following requirements for spotting and managing misuse:

- Teachers should only accept work for marking which is the students' own
- Students who misuse AI such that the work they submit is substantively not their own will be allocated to the next Homework Catch Up to repeat the work themselves and submit it again
- Students must make sure that work submitted for assessment is demonstrably their own. If any sections of their work are copied directly from AI generated responses, those elements must be referenced by the student (see instructions below).
- Where teachers have doubts about the authenticity of student work submitted (for example - they suspect that parts of it have been generated by AI but this has not been acknowledged), they should take appropriate action. Appropriate action may involve the teacher asking a student for a verbal explanation of content suspected to be AI generated.

At Reading Blue Coat students are expected to demonstrate their own knowledge, skills and understanding in independent learning tasks set by teachers. While Generative AI will become an established tool in the workplace, it's important for our students' critical thinking development that they do not rely on such tools to do the thinking for them.

Specific examples of Generative AI misuse:

- Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content, either typed or by hand, so that the work submitted for assessment is no longer the student's own
- Copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content
- Using AI to complete parts of an independent task so that the work does not reflect the student's own work, analysis, evaluation or calculations
- Failing to acknowledge use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information

Referencing AI Use
We strongly encourage our students to reference the Generative AI sources that they have used when producing work for teachers to assess. The teacher must also have authorised and explained

the extent to which AI tools can be used for a given task in advance. Appropriate referencing is important as a means of demonstrating academic integrity.

Where AI tools have been used as a source of information, we require our students to show the name of the AI source used and the date the content that it was generated. For example: **M365 Copilot https://copilot.microsoft.com (Accessed: 1 August 2025)**. The student must retain a copy of the prompting question(s) as a screenshot and be able to provide a brief explanation of how it has been used.

Example:
"A summary of key points on climate change was generated using Copilot, accessed on [date]. The prompt used was: 'What are the main causes of climate change?'"

Other actions which will be used at School when acknowledging Generative AI use are:

- Teachers will remind students that poor referencing, paraphrasing and copying sections of text generated by AI is not their own work. Submission of work that is not their own will result in a Homework Catch Up session.
- Simply referencing 'AI' or 'ChatGPT' is not sufficient, just as it would be unacceptable to state 'Google' rather than the specific website and webpages which have been consulted

Preventing AI misuse
While there may be benefits to using AI tools, there is the potential for it to be misused either accidentally or intentionally. To prevent misuse at Reading Blue Coat, we will take the following steps:

- We set reasonable deadlines for our students to submit work and provide reminders
- Where appropriate, we allocate time for portions of work to be completed in class under direct supervision to allow the teacher to authenticate completed work with confidence
- We examine intermediate stages in the production of longer pieces of work in order to ensure that what's submitted represents a natural continuation of earlier stages
- We design classroom activities that use the level of knowledge/understanding achieved thereby making the teacher confident that the student understands the material
- We will engage students in a short verbal discussion about their work to ascertain that they understand it and that it reflects their own independent work
- We do not expect teachers to accept, without further investigation, work which is suspected to be taken from Generative AI tools without proper acknowledgement – doing so encourages the spread of this practice
- We encourage teachers to create independent learning tasks which are, wherever possible, topical, specific, evaluative and require content which is less unlikely to be producible by AI models trained using historic data

Identifying AI misuse
Large Language Models (LLMs), produce content by 'guessing' the most likely next word. This means that Generative AI content uses the most common combinations of words, unlike humans who tend to use a variety of words (sometimes idiosyncratically) in their writing.

There are some digital tools that can be used to identify typical AI sequences in writing:

- Turnitin AI writing detection (**www.turnitin.com/solutions/topics/aiwriting/ai-detector/**)
- Copyleaks (**https://copyleaks.com/ai-content-detector**)

- GPTZero (**https://gptzero.me/**)
- Sapling (**https://sapling.ai/ai-content-detector**)

The tools listed above base their scores on the predictability of words. They will give lower scores for AI generated content which has been amended by students. We don't support the use of existing AI detection tools because their quality can vary significantly and Generative AI will evolve beyond their capacity to detect non-human content. It's an area of technology that we keep under review.

Identifying AI misuse requires the same skills and observation techniques that our teachers already use to assure themselves that student work is authentically their own. Comparison with previous work is essential. Where the work is made up of writing, we encourage our teachers to make note of the following characteristics:

1. Spelling - Americanised spelling (-ize endings, for example) are typical in AI generated content
2. Atypical vocabulary
3. Complexity and coherency
4. General understanding based on the expected working level
5. The mode of production – is the work word-processed when it should be hand written?

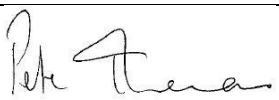
We advise that teachers compare students' newly submitted work with work completed by the student in the classroom, or under supervised conditions. Where newly submitted work is demonstrably different according to the criteria above, it is legitimate for the teacher to check for authenticity.

Summary

At the core of this policy is the belief that Reading Blue Coat students are capable of their own high level creative and critical thinking. Generative AI tools have a place alongside other digital and paper resources, which already make up the world in which our students invest in becoming life-long learners. However, such tools cannot replace the uniqueness, collaborative opportunities, careful scrutiny and ethical perspectives of human beings. It is these characteristics that will make our students responsible users of Generative AI rather than passive consumers of it.

Our students' own academic work, with its imperfections and brilliance, is all that teachers want to see because it sets out the next steps to deeper learning and opportunities for authentic praise.

Author(s):	Kevin Magill (Deputy Head [Education Development])
Date:	September 2026
Review Frequency:	Every 6 months
Next Review Date:	February 2027
References:	• Joint Council for Qualifications, *AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications*, Revision one: 2 February 2024 **AI-Use-in-Assessments_Feb24_v6.pdf** • Department of Education, Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education, updated 22 January 2025 **Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK** • Department of Education, Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education, updated 10 June 2025 **Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK**
Associated Policies:	• Acceptable Use • Artificial Intelligence • Behaviour, Rewards, and Sanctions • Child Protection and Safeguarding

	• E-Safety, Digital Communications, and Student Device Policy • Staff Code of Conduct • Student Manual
Agreed by:	 Pete Thomas (Headmaster)
Date of Agreement:	4th September 2026