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The AI Use Policy Checklist

The twelve questions a working AI acceptable-use policy must answer, the eight red flags that mean your team's AI use is already ahead of your rules, and the do's and don'ts to circulate today.

For schools, charities and SMEs whose teams are already using AI — with or without permission.

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Eight red flags your AI use is ahead of your rules

If any of these are true in your organisation, AI is already in use without guardrails — the question is only whether you find out before or after something goes wrong.

- Staff use personal ChatGPT accounts for work tasks — Work data is leaving your control on consumer terms nobody has read.

- Client, pupil or donor information has been pasted into an AI tool — Personal data in a third-party tool without a lawful basis or a DPIA conversation is a live data-protection problem.

- Nobody can say which tools are approved — No list means every tool is implicitly approved, including the ones that train on your inputs.

- AI-written text goes out unlabelled and unchecked — Reports, bids and parent/donor communications carry your name; errors and inventions carry your liability.

- A tender or funder has asked about your AI use and you improvised — Buyers increasingly ask. 'We're looking into it' loses points a one-page policy would win.

- Recruitment, appraisal or safeguarding decisions touch AI — Higher-risk uses need explicit human review rules before, not after, a challenge.

- Nobody owns the question — No named person means no policy, no reviews, no answer when something leaks.

- Your insurance, contracts or funding terms haven't been checked — Some client contracts and funder terms already restrict AI use. Silence is not clearance.

The twelve questions your AI policy must answer

A working policy is one page your team actually follows, not a twenty-page PDF nobody opens. It must answer these twelve questions in plain English.

- 01** Which tools are approved, and which are banned? — Named tools, named tiers. 'Use common sense' is not a policy.

- 02** What data must never go into an AI tool? — Personal data, safeguarding information, client-confidential material, unpublished financials — listed explicitly.

- 03** Who approves a new tool? — One named role, one simple route to ask.

- 04** What must always have human review? — Anything published, sent to a client or funder, or feeding a decision about a person.

- 05** How do we label AI-assisted work? — When disclosure is required internally and externally, and the words to use.

- 06** What about free vs paid accounts? — Consumer free tiers often train on inputs. Say which account types are permitted.

- 07** How does this apply to bids, grants and reports? — Your highest-stakes documents deserve their own line — including what to say when a buyer asks.

- 08** What are the data-protection basics? — Where AI use touches personal data, who checks it against your UK GDPR obligations.

- 09** What happens when someone breaks the rules? — Proportionate, stated, and aimed at correction first.

- 10** How do staff report a concern or mistake? — A no-blame route. You want to hear about the leak on day one, not month six.

- 11** When is the policy reviewed? — A date and an owner. Tools change quarterly; annual reviews are the minimum.

- 12** Who signed it off? — Board, trustees or directors — the sign-off is what makes it answerable in a tender.

Do's and don'ts to circulate today

While the full policy is being written, this one-pager closes the riskiest gaps immediately.

DO	Use approved AI tools to draft, structure, summarise and check your own work — then review every word before it leaves you.
DO	Ask before pasting anything you wouldn't put in a public post.
DO	Tell your manager if work data has already gone into an unapproved tool. Early honesty fixes; silence compounds.
DON'T	Enter personal data about pupils, clients, donors or colleagues into any AI tool unless it has been explicitly approved for that.
DON'T	Let AI invent facts, statistics or references in anything sent outside the organisation.
DON'T	Use AI for decisions about individuals — recruitment, appraisal, safeguarding — without documented human review.

IF THE CHECKLIST JUST FOUND THE GAPS

Get the policy written

We turn this checklist into your organisation's own AI acceptable-use policy and team pack: the policy, the one-page staff guide, and the wording for when buyers and funders ask. Drafted for your context, in plain English, ready for sign-off.

AI Safe Team Pack — £2,500 fixed. Policy, staff one-pager, tool register and tender-ready wording, drafted for your organisation.

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