AI Use Policy

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly advancing tool that can enhance learning, productivity, and efficiency. However, its use must align with ethical guidelines, academic integrity, and responsible digital citizenship. This policy sets clear expectations for the appropriate use of AI in all aspects of schoolwork, including tests, homework, quizzes, projects, research, communication, and administrative tasks.

Section 1: Teachers

1.1 AI in Instruction and Curriculum Development

- Teachers may use AI tools to assist in developing lesson plans, quizzes, assignments, and study materials. Still, all AI-generated content must be reviewed and modified to ensure accuracy, fairness, and alignment with educational objectives.
- AI-generated resources should not replace teacher-driven instruction but may be used to enhance personalized learning experiences.

1.2 AI in Grading and Feedback

- AI tools may assist in grading objective assignments (e.g., multiple-choice tests), but teachers must manually review subjective work (e.g., essays, projects) to ensure accurate and fair evaluations.
- AI-generated feedback should be personalized and verified before being shared with students.

1.3 AI and Student Learning

- Teachers should guide students on ethical AI use and encourage critical thinking rather than reliance on AI-generated content.
- Teachers may incorporate AI literacy into their instruction, helping students understand AI's benefits, limitations, and ethical concerns.

1.4 AI Use Transparency

- If AI is used to develop instructional content, teachers should disclose its role in the creation process.
- Teachers should remain informed about AI developments and seek professional development opportunities to use AI responsibly.

Section 2: Students

2.1 AI in Schoolwork

- Students must complete all assignments, including tests, quizzes, homework, and projects, using their own knowledge and effort unless their instructor explicitly permits AI use.
- If AI tools are allowed, students must disclose how AI was used (e.g., research assistance, brainstorming, grammar suggestions, etc.) and ensure that their final submission represents their work.

2.2 Academic Integrity

- Submitting AI-generated content as one's work without permission or disclosure is considered academic dishonesty.
- Misuse of AI may result in consequences such as:
    - A required rewrite/rework of the assignment
    - A reduced or failing grade
    - Further disciplinary action for repeated offenses

2.3 Responsible Use of AI

- Students may use AI tools (if permitted by the teacher) as learning aids, such as for summarizing content, generating ideas, or improving writing. However, AI should not replace original thinking and critical analysis.
    - **Summarizing content** should be used only to enhance understanding of complex material (e.g., breaking down complicated concepts or providing overviews of dense texts). AI must not be used to rewrite or condense a student's original thoughts, ideas, or arguments for submission.
    - **Improving writing** should be limited to assistance with grammar, spelling, structure, and clarity. AI may be used to identify errors, suggest rewording, or enhance readability, but students must ensure that the final work remains their own and reflects their authentic voice and effort.
- AI-generated content must be verified for accuracy, as AI tools may produce incorrect or biased information.

Section 3: Staff

3.1 AI in Administrative Work

- Staff may use AI to streamline workflows, generate reports, analyze data, and assist with communication, but all AI-generated content must be reviewed and verified before use.
- AI should not be used to make final decisions on student performance, enrollment, or disciplinary matters without human review.

3.2 Data Privacy and Security

- **AI tools handling student data must comply with privacy regulations (e.g., FERPA).** Staff should not input personally identifiable student information into AI systems that do not meet security standards.
- Sensitive data, including student records and confidential school information, must not be processed using unauthorized AI tools.

3.3 AI Use Transparency and Training

- Staff should receive periodic training on AI best practices, ethical considerations, and limitations to ensure informed and responsible use.
- Any concerns about AI misuse or ethical violations should be reported to school leadership.

Section 4: Restriction on AI Tools That Send Student Information to External Servers

4.1 Protection of Student Data

- Before use, any AI tool that transmits student-identifiable information (e.g., names, grades, personal details, or written work) to external servers must be reviewed and approved by the IT department.
- AI tools that store, analyze, or process student data externally must comply with **FERPA, COPPA, and school privacy policies** to protect student confidentiality.

4.2 Prohibited Use of AI Tools

- Teachers, students, and staff **must not** enter personally identifiable student information into public AI tools such as ChatGPT, Bard, or any other AI systems that process data on external servers.
- AI-powered chatbots, grammar checkers, and educational tools must be verified to **ensure that data is not stored, shared, or used by third parties for model training**.
- Any AI software integrated into school systems must have **explicit security and data protection agreements** before use.

4.3 Exceptions and Approved Use

- AI tools specifically approved by the school and hosted on **secure, school-managed servers** may be used for instructional and administrative purposes.
- Any AI application requiring student data for functionality **must undergo a data security review** by the IT department before implementation.
- Teachers and staff may request approval for AI tools by submitting an application to the **IT department for review and compliance verification**.

4.4 Consequences for Unauthorized Use

- The use of unapproved AI tools that expose student data to external entities may result in:
  - **Immediate suspension** of the tool's use.
  - **Formal review and disciplinary action** for individuals involved.
  - **Reporting violations** to relevant authorities if data privacy laws have been breached.

Conclusion

AI is a powerful tool that, when used responsibly, enhances learning and efficiency. However, human oversight, ethical considerations, and academic integrity must always take priority. This policy ensures that AI is used as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for original thinking, creativity, and effort while safeguarding student data.

For questions or clarifications regarding AI use, please contact Technology@BranchesLearning.org.