



AI GUIDELINES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) offers great promise but also poses significant ethical challenges for Catholic education. As Pope Leo XIV reminds us in his apostolic letter *"Drawing New Maps of Hope"*, "no algorithm can substitute what makes education human: poetry, irony, love, art, imagination, the joy of discovery and even learning from mistakes as an opportunity for growth." Technology must serve the person, not replace them.

In Catholic schools, AI has the potential to revolutionize personalized learning, helping teachers meet the diverse needs of students more effectively while streamlining administrative tasks. However, AI should never replace the human relationships and community that are central to Catholic education. Instead, it must be a tool that assists teachers in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and moral discernment in their students, always placing the person before the algorithm.

CORE PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHY

The integration of AI into Catholic schools must be guided by the mission of Catholic education, which seeks the holistic development of students—spiritually, intellectually, morally, and socially. AI should serve as a tool that enhances the educational experience, always aligning with the values of the Church, the dignity of the human person, and the common good.

Core Principles:

Enhancing Student Learning	Supporting Teacher Effectiveness and Efficiency
AI adaptive software should support personalized learning pathways that engage and challenge each student to reach his/her potential, nurturing both academic success and spiritual and moral growth.	Generative AI can assist teachers in creating engaging lessons and differentiating instruction. AI assessment and proactive platforms can provide real-time insights into student progress, enabling just-in-time support.
Fostering Creativity and Critical Thinking	Protecting the Human Connection
AI should complement, not replace, human-led education. It should inspire creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking, ensuring students remain active participants in their learning journey.	AI must never undermine the essential relationships between teachers and students. Catholic education emphasizes community, personal relationships, and mentorship—none of which can be replaced by technology.
Ensuring Ethical Use of AI	Safeguarding Human Dignity
AI should always respect privacy, protect data, and mitigate biases and inequalities, aligning with the Church's commitment to justice, equity, and human dignity.	AI must honor the inherent dignity of every student, teacher, and staff member. Each person is made in the image of God and deserves to be treated with dignity.

GENERATIVE AI FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Generative AI can play a crucial role in supporting differentiated instruction, ensuring that all learners receive the appropriate level of challenge and support. Teachers must actively monitor student progress and provide direct instruction when engaging with AI-embedded platforms such as Freckle, i-Ready, and IXL.

→Applications of AI for Differentiated Instruction:

Personalized Learning Paths	AI analyzes individual student performance and suggests personalized materials—adjusting reading levels, generating practice problems, or recommending resources aligned with specific learning needs. Teachers must review student progress in purposeful practice platforms and support their progress toward mastery.
Multimodal Instruction	AI generates diverse learning materials (videos, texts, interactive exercises) that cater to different learning preferences, providing visual, auditory, and kinesthetic options.
Real-Time Feedback	AI offers instant, individualized feedback, helping students understand errors and guiding improvement while giving teachers insight into where additional support is needed.
Scaffolding and Supports for Special Needs	AI provides accommodations for students with learning disabilities, such as text-to-speech options, simplified summaries, or alternative explanations for complex concepts.

CLASSROOM IMPLEMENTATION

Teacher Guidelines	Classroom Best Practices
• Maintain Oversight : AI should supplement, not replace, the teacher's role. All AI-generated content and feedback must be reviewed and contextualized by the teacher. Stay current on school policies and AI advancements in education. • Encourage Critical Thinking: Use AI to develop challenging questions that encourage students to think critically and explore beyond generated answers. Guide students toward deeper understanding. • Promote Accountability: Require students to provide verbal or written explanations of how AI tools were used, encouraging transparency and active engagement. • Ensure Ethical Use: Align all AI applications with Catholic teachings, respecting privacy and human dignity while promoting inclusivity, fairness, and transparency. • Clearly Communicate AI Policies: Outline if and how AI is to be used in specific projects and assignments to avoid confusion. Ensure policies align with school guidance.	• Clearly post the acceptable use level of AI (if any) on all assignments • Create opinion-based responses when designing assignments and projects to promote student critical thinking • Include audio and video projects featuring students as part of assignments • Develop rubrics that clearly define the acceptable level of AI use • Educate students on proper citation of AI-generated content • Assign in-class work for new concepts; use homework for practice of skills learned in class • Use oral presentations and discussions to assess understanding

ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE USE OF AI

FOR TEACHERS	FOR STUDENTS
Acceptable Use: - Using AI tools to assist with grading (without student identifiers), lesson planning, and generating educational resources aligned with Catholic curriculum - Personalizing learning experiences through real-time insights into student performance - Creating personalized faith formation resources and lessons (e.g., using Magisterium AI)	Acceptable Use: - Using AI-powered tools with teacher guidance for homework assistance, research, or writing support as a supplement to active engagement - Using AI for ethical research and learning purposes aligned with academic and moral objectives - Properly citing any AI-generated assistance in assignments
Unacceptable Use: - Replacing direct teaching, mentoring, or spiritual guidance with AI - Using AI to gather or store personal data about students without appropriate consent - Using AI tools that support or strengthen biases and inequalities	Unacceptable Use: - Using AI to complete assignments, exams, or academic work without proper attribution (academic dishonesty) - Generating content that contradicts Catholic teachings, including offensive language or inappropriate images - Using AI for cyberbullying, harassment, or any malicious activity that violates the school's code of conduct

CONSEQUENCES FOR MISUSE

Violations of acceptable use guidelines will be handled according to the school's disciplinary policy. Consequences may include redoing assignments, loss of AI tool access, and other measures depending on the severity of the violation. Students must understand the importance of academic integrity and ethical behavior when using AI.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Teacher Support: Schools should provide professional development on the effective use of AI in multiple forms to support student learning. Consider promoting specific generative AI tools for defined tasks (e.g., lesson planning, image creation) to enable cohesive and directed PD opportunities. Focus on prompt engineering as a key skill for staff and students.

Parent Support: *Parents play a crucial role in supporting AI use in their children's education:*

- Encourage students to be transparent about AI use in assignments
- Help students understand and adhere to school and class-specific AI policies
- Honor the school's evaluation process when determining if AI has been misused

Schools and teachers must clearly communicate the parameters of AI use in general and for specific assignments.

CRITICAL REMINDERS

- **Privacy and Security:** *AI platforms do not disclose who has access to information provided to their systems or where it is stored. Never share personal or institutional identifiable information with generative AI platforms.*
 - **Accuracy and Bias:**
 - AI can provide inaccurate or biased information
 - Generative AI is susceptible to "hallucinations" (scenarios and information that are not real)
 - **Always review and fact-check** AI-generated information for correctness
 - **Use with Wisdom:** AI is a powerful tool with tremendous capabilities, but it should be used wisely and with caution, always in service of humanity and aligned with Catholic values.
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CONCLUSION

As Pope Leo XIV has said in **Drawing New Maps of Hope**, we must educate "in a judicious use of technology and of AI, placing the person before the algorithm and harmonizing technical, emotional, social, spiritual and ecological intelligence." Catholic schools must embrace AI responsibly, ensuring that its use always honors the dignity of the human person and fosters the spiritual and intellectual growth of students.

RESOURCES

- Continuum of AI Usage
- 7 Takeaways from BLiCSS 7.0
- A look at Pope Francis's views on AI
- AI Detection Tools:
 - <https://gptzero.me/>
 - <https://www.zerogpt.com/>
 - <https://quillbot.com/>
- Adapted from the Diocese of Orange