

Introduction & Background

Generative AI (GenAI) tools and other machine-learning models are becoming increasingly accessible in educational settings. While these tools offer opportunities to enhance learning and streamline administrative tasks, they also present challenges related to academic integrity, ethical use, and data privacy.

These Generative AI - Staff & Student Use Guidelines establish clear expectations for students and staff regarding the appropriate use of GenAI in HDSB schools, aligning with Ontario's educational policies and Growing Success.

These Guidelines are a 'living document' that evolves as new technology emerges.

Teaching and learning in the HDSB is guided by the:

[2024-2028 Multi Year Strategic Plan](#), [HDSB Indigenous Education Policy](#), [HDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Policy](#), [HDSB Assessment and Evaluation Practices \(Grades 7-12\) Administrative Procedure](#) and the [HDSB Selection of Instructional and Library Resources Administrative Procedure](#).

With respect to assessment and evaluation, teachers will ensure that every student develops transferable skills and reaches their potential throughout their unique learning journey.

GenAI offers an additional means to meet this goal with speed and efficiency, but it can undermine the learning process by skipping important steps. In the HDSB, we believe AI should only be used when it actively supports learning, like enhancing creativity, problem-solving, or research skills.

Learning is less about memorizing facts and more about *how* you learn — solving problems, evaluating information, and constructing arguments. When Gen AI bypasses these critical thinking steps, it can undermine genuine learning.

While there are risks, AI has benefits. Teachers and students should develop their AI literacy skills through the thoughtful exploration of AI, using it to meet learning goals while understanding its limitations and ethical issues, such as privacy, bias, disinformation, and fairness. Students must learn the critical thinking skills associated with GenAI tools. This is essential for students to navigate an increasingly digital world. In addition, it is critical in our education system to ensure the presence of 'humanity' to counter the loss of 'human connection'.

Generative AI - Staff and Student Use Guidelines

Updated August 20, 2025

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Defining Generative AI

What is Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)?

AI is a computer system taught to mimic natural intelligence to help us understand and recommend information. AI helps power tools like Google Search and YouTube to suggest relevant content when you search. **GenAI**, is a type of AI that focuses on creating new content, such as text, images, music, and code, all by typing in a simple prompt.

GenAI enables powerful new ways to support educators and learners. In education, it can be used to do helpful things like make learning experiences more personal, provide immediate feedback, improve accessibility, enhance digital security, give educators precious time back and so much more. As GenAI becomes more common in schools and the workforce, it's becoming increasingly important that students learn to be proficient with AI-powered tools.

These systems are prone to false or misleading content and often reflect biases found in their training data. Currently, there's no reliable fix for these issues. Because of this, users are required to create and verify accurate, trustworthy information by applying their knowledge and critical thinking.

For educators and students, deciding how and when to use generative AI requires thoughtful planning to ensure it supports – rather than replaces – meaningful learning.

Additionally, there are ongoing concerns regarding the energy used to sustain AI use. Users should be aware of the sustainable use of GenAI.

Value of Generative AI

Generative AI can be a valuable educational tool when used responsibly. Key benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting student learning through assisting with research, aiding content development, facilitating differentiated learning styles, personalized learning assistance, and enhancing creativity, collaboration, brainstorming, feedback, and skill development.
- Assisting teachers with lesson planning, resource creation, and differentiation.
- Encouraging critical thinking about AI literacy, ethical dilemmas, and digital citizenship.

Guiding Principles for Generative AI Use

While using Generative AI, students and teachers will be guided by the HDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan to:

- Develop digital literacy and critical thinking skills
- Examine critically how the output of Gen AI is informed by a Western narrative and worldview that perpetuates and replicates a colonial bias which can lead to erasure and the extraction of data that negatively impacts Indigenous people's right to education without discrimination.
- AI systems may "hallucinate" or provide incorrect information or citations (especially given GenAI draws from large data sets and not all information on the internet is accurate)
- Deepen their understanding of human rights, equity, and inclusion to enhance their ability to identify biased, discriminatory, or oppressive content produced by the tool.
- Make learning more accessible by applying the principles of differentiation and Universal Design for Learning. In so doing, the use of AI will enhance accessibility by providing alternatives for diverse learners.
- Continue to prioritize the mental health and well-being of all students. Classroom practices should centre on human interactions and the nurturing of relationships to get to know learners. AI technologies are to be used to enrich humanized pedagogies.
- Empower students and staff to act responsibly, innovate and honour the connections among all living beings to contribute to a sustainable future by

leveraging technology mindfully to support and enhance intellectual and social development in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- Raise awareness on the impact on First Peoples, the environment and the need to uphold the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as per UNDRiP.
- Consider equity of access to AI and the means to benefit from the opportunities afforded others with access and the ability to utilize AI to its fullest extent

Student Use of Generative AI

Academic Integrity & Ethical Use

- Appropriate AI use (e.g., NOT using AI to complete assignments without citation) to ensure academic integrity and honesty is maintained.
- Students must be transparent in their uses of AI and properly cite AI-generated content if used in assignments, similar to traditional sources.
- AI tools must not be used to bypass learning objectives (e.g., generating essays, solving test questions).
- AI tools can be used to:
 - assist with research and writing (essays, reports, etc.)
 - assist with development of presentations
 - support speech and language development
 - support cognitive and executive functioning
 - support visual and hearing access / accommodations
 - translate text, create images or video
 - support application process for post secondary opportunities, employment, scholarships, etc.
 - AI tutoring supports
- Teachers must equip students with transferable skills that ready them to “navigate and shape their future successfully” in a digital age ([Ontario Ministry of Education, 2025](#)). This includes preparing students with AI literacy skills to use AI with integrity to support their learning. [Digital Literacy Continuum](#)
- All HDSB staff and students are expected to critically review and challenge content that reinforces negative stereotypes or promotes deficit-based thinking including the perpetuation of stereotypes, PanIndigenous content and anti-Indigenous racism and content that upholds racist ideologies, harmful representations, or other forms of discrimination.

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How to Cite Generative AI

When students use Generative AI in their work, they must:

- Follow a standard citation format such as:
 - **APA:** Google. (2025). Google Gemini (Version 1.0) [Large language model]. <https://gemini.google.com>
 - **MLA:** "Response generated using Google Gemini, Google, version 1.0, 2025, <https://gemini.google.com>."
 - Clearly disclose its use (e.g., "This response was generated with assistance from ChatGPT").

Teacher-Directed Student Use

Students may utilize approved GenAI tools in the classroom and on their own to produce, refine, and/or complete assigned tasks (e.g. research, writing):

1. with their teacher's approval;
2. within the parameters established by their teacher;
3. in accordance to the age limitations/restrictions as determined by the GenAI developer and the HDSB (where there is a discrepancy, the decision of the HDSB shall prevail);
4. in accordance with all HDSB administrative procedures and expectations of students including but not limited to assessment and evaluation, academic honesty, etc.; and
5. with meaningful, signed parental/guardian consent (unless over the age of 18 or 16 or 17 years of age and withdrawn from parental control) using the [letter template](#) developed by Information Services for such purposes.

Students are at risk of entering personally identifiable information, whether deliberately or inadvertently, into chatbots, resulting in the sharing of their personal information. Tools like ChatGPT record everything a user types into them. Once a student's data resides in a Generative AI environment such as ChatGPT, it is subject to OpenAI's policies with respect to the sharing or selling of that information to marketers, advertisers, vendors, service providers (including web hosting services, cloud services, other IT providers,

event managers, email services, and analytics services), affiliates, legal entities, other businesses, and AI trainers whose job it is to review conversations using the chatbot.

Teacher Use of Generative AI

Disclosure & Ethical Use

Teachers are free to utilize GenAI tools to assist with their own professional development and responsibilities so long as no student use is involved. Before incorporating GenAI into their classrooms, however, teachers should familiarize themselves with the benefits/opportunities associated with GenAI, as well the risks associated with these products.

From a teacher perspective, the benefits of GenAI include:

- developing lesson plans
- content development and differentiation
- assessment design
- providing timely, effective, personalized feedback
- tutoring and personalized learning assistance
- aiding creativity, collaboration, and skill development
- generating ideas for learning activities
- improving operational and administrative efficiency
- translating between languages including translating text
- developing formative and summative assessments
- generating ideas for accommodations that meet specific student needs
- generating ideas for accommodations related to accessibility for students with special needs
- generating drafts of communication to parents, colleagues, and administrators
- quickly analyze and consolidate information from various sources

Under no circumstances should a teacher enter a student's personal information into any AI/GenAI product, tool, or platform regardless of whether that tool is approved for student or staff use.

In Addition:

Teachers should disclose when AI-generated content is used in lesson plans or materials.

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- AI-generated feedback on student work or as an aid in generating report card comments should be used as a supplement, not a substitute for professional judgment.
 - Student work is ONLY to be assessed and/or evaluated by a teacher.
 - Teachers are expected to follow the guidelines of the Discriminatory Harmful Language Protocol, interrupting and responding to any use of hate-motivated, violent and discriminatory content.

Student Privacy & Safety

Users should be careful not to enter personal information into any technology application, including GenAI tools as the information entered by users is stored on the application's server. There is risk of compromised student privacy and/or unauthorized data collection (note that all student personal information is considered "sensitive" and that 99.8% of anonymized data may be re-identifiable with the proper resources).

The top priority of the HDSB is our students' safety. The HDSB is committed to innovation and developing global competencies while ensuring the responsible deployment of digital GenAI tools while safeguarding students' privacy and personal information. Parents/Guardians/Caregivers, students, and staff are invited to review the [Responsible Use Procedures of Information & Communication Technology \(ICT\)](#).

Our goal is to create a learning environment where AI technologies empower rather than replace the human aspects of education. We embrace these technologies cautiously to prepare students for a future where these technologies are ubiquitous.

GenAI Products Approved for Student Use in the HDSB -

Updated August 19, 2025

Information Services has conducted reviews of commonly used GenAI platforms in order to determine which tools are best suited to meet the needs of HDSB students. These assessments include technical, security, and privacy reviews and are conducted in collaboration with the HDSB School Programs Department.

Effective September 2025, (only) the following GenAI products have been approved for use by students in the HDSB and added to the [Software & Technology Catalogue](#):
Secondary Students (Grades 9 - 12)

- ChatGPT
- DALL-E
- Perplexity

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- MagicWrite
 - Magic School for Students
 - Gemini
 - NotebookLM

Elementary Students (Grades 7 & 8 only)

- Canva / CanvaEDU
- Curipod
- Magic School for Students
- Gemini
- NotebookLM

No GenAI tools are currently approved for use by students in the HDSB in grades K - 6.
This list is subject to change as the technology continues to evolve and new products are developed.

Only GenAI products that have been approved through the HDSB Software & Technology Catalogue review process may be permitted for use with students and/or on the board's infrastructure (including corporate applications or platforms).

Exceptions to the HDSB Software & Technology Catalogue review process must be approved by the Superintendent of Information Services in consultation with other departments as appropriate.

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Consent & Form

A teacher wishing to use GenAI in their classroom with students must send a consent letter home for parents/guardians/caregivers to review. This must be done for every class/course where GenAI is planning to be utilized. This consent letter includes the following information:

1. Class/grade/program
2. Outlines the nature of the activity/activities
3. Identifies the GenAI tool(s) to be used
4. Outlines, at a high level, the privacy and security risks (included on Form)
5. Provides links to:
 1. Technology & You (www.hdsb.ca)
 2. GenAI tool's privacy page(s)

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6. Provide contact information for both teacher and HDSB Privacy (privacy@hdsb.ca)

The approved [Generative Artificial Intelligence \(GenAI\) consent letter template](#) is available for teachers (USE TEMPLATE button to make a copy). This consent letter must be used in all cases where a teacher is seeking to have students use GenAI. This consent letter can be sent either digitally or as a hard copy.

Where a parent/guardian/caregiver does not provide their consent, an alternate assignment(s) must be provided by the classroom teacher.

Resources for Parents/Guardians/Caregivers/Students

[Common Sense Media](#) provides an overview of AI and reviews of several popular platforms including Bard, DALL-E, ChatGPT, and Stable Diffusion. Common Sense's [5 Tips for Talking to Your Kids About Generative AI](#) is a short, clear video guide for parents and guardians.

With respect to Google for Education, the following two resources are excellent places to begin:

- [Google for Education: A Guide to AI in Education](#)
- [Google for Education: Guardian's Guide to AI](#)

The following provide some further reading on the topic of AI and/or GenAI in teaching and learning:

- [Ethical AI for Teaching and Learning \(Cornell University\)](#)
- [The Promises and Perils of Generative AI in Education: TFA's Evolving Perspective \(Teach for America\)](#)
- [Generative Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning at McMaster University \(ecampusontario\)](#)
- [What are the Benefits and Risks of Artificial Intelligence in Education? \(eSchoolNews\)AI in Education \(Education Next\)](#)

For More Information

Please reach out with any questions or feedback as we navigate this rapidly changing digital environment together.

For questions or concerns about privacy and consent with respect to approved GenAI tools, please contact privacy@hdsb.ca

For questions or concerns about the approval of GenAI tools, security, data protection, and/or the responsible use of GenAI platforms, please contact IT@hdsb.ca

For questions about the use of AI and how it intersects with curriculum, assessment and evaluation, academic honesty, and other matters, please contact your school administration.

[GenAI Staff FAQs](#)

Connected Resources:

[Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, Transferable Skills](#)

[HDSB Indigenous Education Policy](#)

[HDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Policy](#)

[HDSB Assessment and Evaluation Practices \(Grades 7 -12\) Administrative Procedure A&E Expected Practices](#)

[HDSB Selection of Instructional and Library Resources Administrative Procedure.](#)

[HDSB Digital Literacy](#)

[HDSB MYSP 2024-28](#)