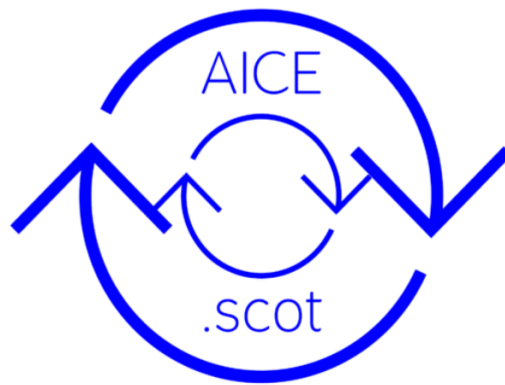




COMMITMENT . COOPERATION . COLLABORATION . COMMUNITY

Position Statement 2026

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This document reflects recent feedback from stakeholders across Scotland and emerging research on the impact of AI in education.

Purpose

As values-based professionals, we support the thoughtful, proportionate and evidence-informed use of AI to enhance learning, teaching and the wider educational experience. Our position is clear: **AI should serve education, not shape it.**

This position reflects priorities identified by AICE.scot members, the Scottish Government's *Artificial Intelligence (AI) in schools: guidelines and guardrails*, and wider global perspectives on AI in education. Together, these support a human-centred approach underpinned by robust governance, research, infrastructure and safeguards to ensure positive outcomes for learners, educators and society.

Our principles

1. Acceptable use: purpose before technology

AI should be used only where there is a clear educational purpose that enhances learning, teaching, inclusion or professional practice.

Learners, educators and leaders must have sufficient understanding of AI to evaluate whether its use is appropriate, proportionate and educationally justified.

Acceptable use should be determined by context rather than blanket permissions or prohibitions. Teachers must retain professional judgement over how AI is integrated within agreed local policies. Learners must understand when AI use is appropriate, when it must be declared, and when independent work is required.

Our test: *What educational need are we addressing, and is AI an appropriate way to address it?*

2. Equity: AI must not widen existing disadvantage

Access to AI-enabled education must not depend on postcode, household income, device ownership, connectivity, disability, language or differences in institutional policy and capacity.

Implementation should actively address accessibility and additional support needs. Where AI is incorporated into coursework or homework, equitable access must be ensured.

The potential of AI to remove barriers to learning should be pursued while actively identifying and mitigating any new barriers or risks it may create.

Our principle: *No learner should be disadvantaged because they cannot, should not or choose not to access a particular AI tool.*

3. Ethics, transparency and accountability

AI is not neutral. AI systems can reproduce bias, generate inaccurate information and affect privacy, agency and trust.

Educational institutions must be transparent about when, why and how AI is used. AI-generated outputs should be critically evaluated rather than treated as authoritative.

Decisions to adopt AI must consider fairness, inclusion, privacy, reliability, environmental impact and wider societal consequences.

Responsibility must remain with identifiable individuals and organisations. It cannot be delegated to algorithms or suppliers. This aligns with Scottish Government principles of fairness, transparency, accountability, reliability, privacy and human agency.

Our principle: *AI may inform a decision, but it must never become a substitute for accountability.*

4. Assessment and integrity

Responding to AI in education requires more than detecting plagiarism or unauthorised use. It requires us to reconsider what we assess, why we assess it, and how genuine learning can best be demonstrated.

Expectations for AI use in assessment must be clear, proportionate and consistent. Learners need to understand when AI assistance is permitted, how its use should be acknowledged, and when independent work is required.

Assessment design should increasingly emphasise reasoning, creativity, critical thinking, authentic application and the ability to explain or demonstrate understanding.

AI may support assessment, feedback and aspects of formative practice, but it must not replace professional judgement. Any AI tools used to monitor, assess or evaluate learner progress must operate under teacher oversight and form only part of a broader, holistic assessment process.

Approaches to assessment integrity should focus not only on detecting misuse, but also on designing assessment that promotes trust, transparency and meaningful evidence of learning.

Our principle: *Assessment should evolve alongside AI, with clear expectations that protect integrity while keeping the focus on genuine learning.*

5. AI literacy and future readiness

AI literacy is becoming an essential part of preparing learners for further education, employment and participation in society.

Learners should develop an age-appropriate understanding of how AI systems work, what they can and cannot do, how they may reproduce bias or generate inaccurate information, and how they can influence individuals and society.

AI literacy must go beyond knowing how to use particular tools. Learners should be able to question AI outputs, verify information, recognise limitations and risks, make informed choices about when AI is appropriate, and use it responsibly and transparently.

Education should also develop the human capabilities that become more important in an AI-integrated world, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, ethical reasoning and independent judgement.

Teachers and leaders require appropriate professional learning so that they can support learners confidently and ensure that AI literacy develops alongside wider digital, media and information literacy.

Our principle: *Every learner should be equipped to engage with AI critically, confidently and responsibly, while developing the human capabilities needed to thrive in an AI-integrated world.*

6. Safeguarding, privacy and data protection

The best interests, rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people must be a primary consideration.

Personal or sensitive learner data must not be entered into AI systems without explicit authorisation and appropriate data-protection safeguards.

Schools and authorities require clear processes covering privacy, inappropriate content, deepfakes, misinformation, data ownership and mechanisms for reporting concerns.

Local authorities remain legally responsible as data controllers for AI systems used in education and must comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Authorities and schools must also ensure that AI tools used by learners are age-appropriate, meet appropriate safety standards, and protect the rights, agency and development of children and young people.

Our principle: *Innovation never overrides safeguarding, children's rights or data protection.*

7. Human oversight and relationships

Education is fundamentally human and relational.

AI should enhance, not replace, teachers, professional judgement, peer interaction or meaningful relationships. It must not make consequential decisions about learners or substitute for professional accountability.

Teachers and learners should be equipped to evaluate AI outputs critically, understand the limitations of AI systems, and recognise situations in which AI should not be used.

In line with Scottish Government guidance, AI must not make decisions on behalf of educators or schools.

Our principle: *The more consequential the decision, the stronger the requirement for meaningful human judgement.*

Our whole-system position

Responsible AI adoption cannot be achieved through classroom guidance alone.

Scotland's digital and AI ecosystem must bring together learners, educators, parents and carers, leaders, local authorities, researchers and EdTech providers, supported by appropriate infrastructure and shared expectations for safety, accountability, ethics, governance and pedagogical quality.

We therefore support a coordinated Scottish approach in which:

- educational values drive technology choices;
- learners, teachers, parents and carers have a meaningful voice;
- teachers receive professional learning that enables informed professional judgement;

- schools and authorities receive consistent support for governance, procurement and data protection;
- AI tools are independently evaluated for safety, accessibility and educational value; and
- practice is continually reviewed and refined through evidence, research and feedback.

Members of AICE.scot are committed to engaging with global best practice and shared standards so that Scotland's approach remains secure, interoperable and informed by international developments.

AI should be used where it demonstrably strengthens education and operates within clear, safe and ethical boundaries. Equitable access, professional judgement and meaningful human oversight must remain central.

Achieving this will require sustained collaboration between learners, educators, families, government, local authorities, researchers and technology providers. A coordinated approach is essential if AI is to support better outcomes for every learner.

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