

# St. Columba's College Stranorlar



## Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

February 2026

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# 1. Introduction and Rationale

## 1.1 Mission Statement and Ethos

St. Columba's College is a Mercy Catholic Voluntary Secondary School under CEIST and is committed to *"the pursuit of excellence in a caring environment."* Guided by this ethos, the College seeks to provide a safe, respectful, and effective learning environment for all members of the school community. In line with national guidance on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in schools, the College recognises the importance of fostering **AI literacy** as a key competency for the 21st century.

## 1.2 Rationale for an AI Policy

The rapid development of generative AI tools presents both significant opportunities and challenges for teaching, learning, and assessment. While AI can support understanding and creativity, it also raises concerns regarding academic integrity, data protection, and the development of essential skills. This policy establishes clear expectations and boundaries for the appropriate use of AI in order to support learning while ensuring that student work remains authentic and reflective of individual effort.

## 1.3 Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- **Uphold Academic Integrity:** Ensure that all submitted work represents the student's own understanding and effort.
- **Promote Responsible Use:** Support ethical, critical, and secure engagement with AI tools as part of students' digital literacy.
- **Develop Core Skills:** Maintain a focus on independent thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and critical analysis.
- **Provide Clarity:** Clearly define when, where, and how AI tools may be used in learning and assessment under teacher direction.

## 2. Scope and Definitions

### 2.1 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled in St. Columba's College.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff.
- All school-owned and personal devices used on school grounds or for school-related work off-site.
- All forms of assessment, including homework, projects, continuous assessment, and coursework for State certification.

### 2.2 Definition of AI Tools

An AI tool refers to any software or online platform capable of generating, modifying, summarising, or analysing content (including text, images, audio, video, or code) in response to user input.

Examples include, but are not limited to: ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and image-generation tools such as DALL-E or Midjourney.

### 2.3 Student Responsibility

Students remain fully responsible for all work they submit. Where AI tools are used with permission, students are accountable for the accuracy, appropriateness, and authenticity of the final submission and must comply with the disclosure requirements outlined in Section 4.

## 3. Core Principles

### 3.1 Human-in-the-Loop

The College adopts a *human-in-the-loop* approach. AI tools may assist learning and preparation, but professional judgement, assessment, and decision-making remain the responsibility of teachers and school management.

### 3.2 Data Protection, Ethical Use, and Digital Kindness

All use of AI tools must align with the College's Bi Cineálta Policy and Data Protection obligations.

- **Protection of Personal Data:** Students and staff must not enter personally identifiable or sensitive information into public AI tools.
- **Age Compliance:** AI tools must only be used in accordance with the provider's stated age requirements.
- **Bias and Fairness:** AI-generated content must be critically evaluated for bias, stereotyping, or discriminatory material.
- **Approved Platforms:** Where possible, students should use AI tools provided or licensed by the school, which offer enhanced privacy protections.

### 3.3 AI Literacy and Critical Thinking

The College supports students in developing the skills required to:

- Evaluate the accuracy and reliability of AI outputs.
- Recognise bias, misinformation, and so-called "hallucinations."
- Understand the broader ethical and environmental implications of AI technologies.

## 4. Academic Integrity

### 4.1 Plagiarism and Authorship

Plagiarism is defined as presenting another person's work or ideas as one's own. For the purposes of this policy, this includes content generated by AI tools.

- Submitting work that has been wholly or substantially generated by AI without explicit teacher permission and acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism.
- Students must be the primary authors of their work. AI tools may support limited aspects of learning (e.g. brainstorming or clarification) where permitted, but the final work submitted must be the student's own.

## 4.2 Transparency and Disclosure

AI tools must not be used:

- During assessments where independent work is required.
- To input personal or confidential data.
- To generate content that breaches the Code of Behaviour.

Where a teacher permits AI use, students must:

- **Disclose all AI use**, regardless of scale.
- Include an **AI Acknowledgement Statement** specifying:
  1. The AI tool used.
  2. The prompt(s) provided.
  3. How the output was evaluated, modified, or verified by the student.

Failure to disclose permitted AI use will be treated as a breach of academic integrity.

## 4.3 State Examinations and Coursework Authentication

All coursework submitted for State certification must comply fully with the rules of the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

- Coursework must be the candidate's own, authentic, unaided work.
- Teachers are required to certify authenticity through the SEC P20 form.
- Where inappropriate or undisclosed AI use is suspected, teachers are professionally obliged to report this, which may affect authentication.

Detailed examples of inappropriate AI use for State coursework are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

## 5. Guidelines for Use

### 5.1 Students

- **Permitted (with direction):** Clarifying concepts, generating practice questions, supporting coding logic.
- **Prohibited:** Writing complete assignments, completing assessed tasks without demonstrating working, or creating deepfake content involving members of the school community.

## 5.2 Staff

- AI may be used to support lesson planning and resource development.
- All AI-generated materials must be reviewed for accuracy, suitability, and student needs.
- AI must not be used as the sole basis for grading or assessment decisions.

## 6. Relationship to Other Policies and Sanctions

### 6.1 Related Policies

This policy operates alongside the College's:

- Bi Cineálta Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Data Protection Policy

### 6.2 Breaches and Sanctions

Misuse of AI, particularly where it constitutes plagiarism or cheating, is a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.

<b>Offence</b>	<b>Disciplinary Action</b>
<b>First Offence</b> (e.g., unauthorized use/minor plagiarism)	The work will receive a grade of <b>zero</b> (or a comparable sanction). The incident will be formally recorded and parents/guardians will be notified.
<b>Second Offence</b> (e.g., unauthorized use/major plagiarism)	The work will receive a grade of <b>zero</b> . The student will be referred to the Principal. Formal disciplinary action, potentially leading to <b>Suspension</b> , will be taken in line with the Code of Behaviour.
<b>Subsequent or Severe Offences</b> (e.g., attempt to cheat in an exam)	Immediate referral to the Principal and Board of Management. Sanctions may include a period of <b>Suspension</b> .

## 7. Ratification and Review

### 7.1 Implementation of Policy

St. Columba's College Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy has been ratified by the Board of Management and formally adopted on **5<sup>th</sup> February 2026**.

We commit to ensuring its implementation in a manner that upholds the College's Catholic identity while fully respecting the rights and dignity of every student.

Signature: P. J. McGowan  
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 5/2/26

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]  
(Principal)

Date: 05/02/2026

### 7.2 Review of Policy

The school will monitor / review on a regular basis, and evaluate the policy and all related work and procedures to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

**Date for Review:** February 2028



# **St. Columba's College Stranorlar, Co. Donegal.**

**Phone (074) 9131246 Fax (074) 9132528**

We have read the St. Columba's College Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy for Students and understand and accept the terms and conditions outlined above, including the requirements for citation, the definition of plagiarism, and the sanctions for any breach of this policy.

## **Student Declaration**

I, the student, have read and understand the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, and I agree to use AI tools responsibly, ethically, and only as directed by my teachers, ensuring all submitted work reflects my own intellectual effort.

**Student's Name (Block Capitals):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## **Parent/Guardian Declaration**

I/We have read the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy and agree to support the school in its implementation, guiding my/our child to use these powerful tools ethically and to respect the College's academic integrity standards.

**Parent's / Guardian's Name (Block Capitals):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's / Guardian's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2 - Guidelines on Inappropriate Use of AI for Coursework

The following examples constitute "inappropriate use of AI" in relation to coursework submitted for State Certification (e.g., Junior Cycle CBAs, Leaving Certificate Projects) and will be treated as non-compliance under **SEC regulations**:

1. **Generation of Core Content:** Using AI to generate the central analytical, critical, or creative content of an assignment and submitting it without substantial personal modification, critique, or input.
2. **Improper Paraphrasing:** Using AI to heavily paraphrase or reword existing text (from the internet, books, or another student) to evade plagiarism detection, as this still results in non-authentic work.
3. **Simulation of Skills:** Using AI to perform skills that are the direct focus of the assessment (e.g., using an AI translator for a language test where human translation skill is assessed, or using AI to write code for a programming assessment).
4. **Lack of Oversight:** Failing to retain or provide evidence (e.g., planning documents, draft notes, dated versions) that demonstrates the work's progression and the student's intellectual ownership, thereby preventing the teacher from authenticating the final submission.
5. **Exceeding Authorised Use:** Using AI for tasks where the teacher has explicitly forbidden it or has limited the use to specific, minor tasks (e.g., generating only an abstract, but then using it to generate the main body paragraphs).

**Consequences of Non-Compliance (SEC Rules):** The SEC treats the use of unauthentic or non-original work as a breach of examination regulations. This can result in severe penalties, including: loss of marks for the coursework component, disallowance of the entire subject, or other serious sanctions as detailed in the SEC's official documentation.