

# Educational Use of Generative AI in Schools: Opportunities, Risks, and Finding the Right Balance

Generative AI can create text, images, audio and video that resemble human work. It works by recognising patterns in existing data and generating new content based on those patterns.<sup>1</sup>

The **Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools** (2023) guides the ethical and responsible use of AI in education. It emphasises principles including transparency, accountability, privacy, safety, human wellbeing, and supporting teaching and learning. The Framework also identifies risks such as inaccurate or biased outputs, misuse of personal information, academic dishonesty, and discrimination.

The Framework states that AI should enhance—not replace—teaching and learning. Students should learn how AI works, including its limitations and risks, while teachers remain the subject experts who guide learning. Schools should provide clear expectations for appropriate AI use and ensure assessment remains fair and academically rigorous.

A 2024 review found the Framework continues to address current and emerging challenges.<sup>2</sup>

Research from consulting group **Learning First**, based on surveys of around 3,400 teachers and 750 school leaders in New South Wales, found

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government, Department of Education. *Australian Framework for Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Schools*. (2023). <https://www.education.gov.au/download/17416/australian-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-schools/pdf> Also refer to the Framework Poster, downloadable here:

<https://www.education.gov.au/download/17416/australian-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-schools/36510/framework-resource-poster/pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Government, Department of Education. *2024 Review of the Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools*. <https://www.education.gov.au/download/17416/australian-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-schools/41436/2024-review-australian-framework-generative-ai-schools/pdf>

widespread concern about AI's impact on education.<sup>3</sup> Many educators reported uncertainty about preventing AI-assisted plagiarism and observed students relying on AI to avoid doing their own thinking. While AI can improve learning when used appropriately, concerns remain that overreliance may weaken critical thinking, increase cheating, and widen inequalities if better AI tools are available only to well-resourced schools.<sup>4</sup>

## Questions

1. How have generative AI tools improved learning or teaching in your experience? Where have they fallen short?
2. As a student, what do you understand as the line between using AI as a learning tool and using it to think for you?
3. Is "cognitive offloading"—letting AI think for us—a genuine concern? Why or why not?
4. Could AI worsen educational inequalities? If so, how, and what could be done to reduce this risk?
5. What other principles, not mentioned in the AI Framework discussed in this brief would help schools use generative AI responsibly while protecting learning and academic integrity?

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<sup>3</sup> Emily Pearson and Dr Ben Jensen. Learning First. (2026) *AI use in schools: Taking action now*. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/69eb06ed32609f5453be14f1/t/6a12dc02f311fb77c819c4e9/1779620943586/Learning+First\\_AI+use+in+schools-Taking+action+now\\_FINAL.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/69eb06ed32609f5453be14f1/t/6a12dc02f311fb77c819c4e9/1779620943586/Learning+First_AI+use+in+schools-Taking+action+now_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Tom Williams. *Australian students using AI to complete assessments: Teachers fear pupils are bypassing learning*. Australian Computer Society (ACS). 26 May 2026. <https://ia.acs.org.au/article/2026/australian-students-using-ai-to-complete-assessments.html>

## Sources

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2. Australian Government, Department of Education. 2024 Review of the Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools. <https://www.education.gov.au/download/17416/australian-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-schools/41436/2024-review-australian-framework-generative-ai-schools/pdf>
3. Emily Pearson and Dr Ben Jensen. Learning First. (2026) AI use in schools: Taking action now. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/69eb06ed32609f5453be14f1/t/6a12dc02f311fb77c819c4e9/1779620943586/Learning+First\\_AI+use+in+schools-Taking+action+now\\_FINAL.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/69eb06ed32609f5453be14f1/t/6a12dc02f311fb77c819c4e9/1779620943586/Learning+First_AI+use+in+schools-Taking+action+now_FINAL.pdf)
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