

## **Responsible AI in Independent Schools: Privacy, Ethics, and Control**

Artificial intelligence is moving quickly into the daily workflows of independent schools. From drafting family communications to organizing financial reports, AI tools can save time and improve clarity. But in school communities—where trust is foundational—how we use AI matters just as much as what it produces.

In this course, we define “responsible AI” as three things working together: **privacy, ethics, and controls.**

### **1. Privacy: Protecting What Families Entrust to Us**

Independent schools steward sensitive information every day: tuition accounts, financial aid details, donor histories, student records, employee data. That responsibility does not disappear when we open an AI tool.

A simple rule of thumb: **If you wouldn’t email the content broadly, don’t paste it into a general AI chat.**

Instead:

- **Minimize:** Share the assignment, not the raw data.
- **De-identify:** Replace names with placeholders (Family A, Student B).
- **Summarize:** Convert detailed notes into high-level briefs.
- **Segment:** Share only the non-sensitive slice you need help with.
- **Approve and log:** Use school-approved accounts and follow retention policies.

Responsible use begins with protecting privacy by default.

### **2. Ethics: Fairness, Transparency, and Human Dignity**

AI systems learn from human-created content, which means they can reflect bias. If you ask for an “ideal donor profile” or a “typical parent persona,” the output may include assumptions about demographics or income.

Counter this by:

- Specifying inclusion goals.
- Avoiding demographic stereotypes.
- Reviewing outputs through an equity lens.

Transparency also matters. If AI meaningfully shapes a communication or internal decision, the responsibility still rests with you and your institution. Keep humans in the loop—especially for financial, legal, or sensitive matters.

Above all, remember: schools are relationship-centered communities. AI should enhance clarity and empathy, not replace meaningful conversations.

### **3. Controls: Building Safe Defaults**

Responsible AI is not about one-off caution. It's about building repeatable systems that make the safe path the easy path.

Examples include:

- A standard "house prompt" that includes privacy reminders.
- A checklist for reviewing AI-generated communications.
- A lightweight log noting when AI influenced official messaging.

Because AI tools can "hallucinate" (confidently present incorrect information), verification must be built into important tasks. Ask the model to:

- List its top assumptions.
- Flag uncertain claims with [confirm].
- Separate calculations from final answers for review.

Three questions can guide every use:

- **Is it private?**
- **Is it fair?**
- **Is it accountable?**

If you can confidently answer yes to each, you're practicing responsible AI.

Our goal is not to turn you into an AI expert overnight. It's to help you become a careful, confident leader who uses AI to support your school's mission—without compromising the trust that holds your community together.

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