

AI-safe UCAS support: a ready-to-adopt school policy

A complete, editable policy schools can adapt for the 2027 cycle. Covers permitted and prohibited AI use, a student declaration, staff controls, and parent-facing wording. Free to use and rebrand under your school's name.

How to use this document

This is a working policy template, not a finished policy. It is deliberately written so that a UCAS lead or senior leader can adapt it in an afternoon, take it through the school's normal governance route, and publish it before the 2027 cycle builds.

Three steps:

- Read it through and change anything that does not match your school's stance. The wording is a strong default, not a mandate.
- Add your school name, the named owner, and your internal dates where marked.
- Take it through your usual sign-off (SLT, governors, or DPO as appropriate) before publishing to staff, students, and families.

It is written to sit alongside — not replace — your existing acceptable-use, academic-integrity, and data-protection policies.

1. Why this policy exists

Every student now has free access to general-purpose AI tools. The question for schools is no longer whether students can use them, but how to keep the application honestly the student's own work while still letting AI help where it genuinely supports learning.

This policy sets a clear, defensible line. It assumes good intent from most students, gives staff a basis to act when the line is crossed, and gives families language they can understand.

The principle underneath it: AI may help a student think, plan, and understand. It may not think, decide, or write on the student's behalf.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students preparing UCAS applications, personal statements, references material, and related documents.
- All staff supporting the application process.
- All AI use connected to the application — whether a general public tool or a school-approved supervised tool.

3. Permitted AI use

The following uses are permitted because they support the student's own thinking and leave authorship with the student:

- Reflection prompts — generating questions that help a student recall and think about experiences they have actually had.
- Clarity checks — asking whether the student's own wording is clear, concise, and well-ordered.
- Structure suggestions — advice on order, balance, or which question an idea belongs under.
- Understanding feedback — rephrasing teacher or tool feedback into plainer language so the student knows what to do next.
- Subject exploration — finding wider reading, topics, or super-curricular ideas to then pursue genuinely.

In every permitted use, the student does the thinking and writes the words.

4. Prohibited AI use

The following uses are not permitted, because they move authorship away from the student or introduce claims the school cannot stand behind:

- Generating a draft answer, paragraph, or sentence for the student to submit as their own.
- Inventing or embellishing experiences, reading, work experience, achievements, or motivations.
- Producing "a personal statement for a student applying to study X" and editing it down.
- Using AI to write any part of a reference.
- Entering another student's work, safeguarding information, or sensitive personal data into any AI tool.
- Using AI output to bypass the school's review, feedback, or sign-off steps.

The test for any use: Are the final words the student's own, about things the student has genuinely done, that the student could discuss confidently in an interview? If not, it has crossed the line.

5. Student declaration

We recommend asking students to confirm the following before final submission. Adapt to your tone and process.

I confirm that the application I am submitting is my own work. It accurately reflects my own experiences, reading, and intentions, in my own words. Where I have used AI, I have used it only in the ways my school permits — to reflect, to check the clarity of my own writing, to understand feedback, or to find ideas to explore. I have not used AI to write my answers for me, and I have not included anything I could not talk about honestly. Signed: _____ Date: _____

6. Staff controls

Authorship stays with the student; judgement and release stay with the school. Staff retain final control over advice, escalation, and what is released to a student.

- A named member of staff owns final release of application feedback. (Add name/role.)
- Any AI-assisted feedback is treated as support for staff judgement, not a substitute for it.
- Claims affecting suitability, safeguarding, extenuating circumstances, or academic judgement are always reviewed by a person.
- Where wording becomes generic or unsupported, staff direct the student back to their own evidence.
- Parent or carer queries are answered with reference to this policy and to UCAS guidance, not to any tool's output.

If your school uses a supervised feedback tool, note that it keeps a member of staff in control of what students receive — which is materially different from a student pasting work into a public chatbot. Name your approved tool(s) here, if any.

7. A note for parents and carers

(This section is written to be lifted directly into a letter or newsletter.)

We allow our students to use AI in bounded ways that genuinely help them — to reflect on their own experiences, to check that their own writing is clear, and to understand the feedback their teachers give them. We do not allow AI to write applications, invent experiences, or replace the student's own voice.

The most useful support from home is the same as it has always been: encourage your child to use real examples, to keep to deadlines, and to make sure the application still sounds like them. A genuine, slightly rougher statement in your child's own voice is far stronger than a polished one that could have been written by anyone — or anything.

8. Review

This policy should be reviewed each application cycle, and whenever there is a significant change in available AI tools or in UCAS or DfE guidance.

- Policy owner: (name / role)
 - Last reviewed: (date)
 - Next review: (date)
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About this template

Provided free by Outleap, which builds school-led software for UCAS, references, feedback, and progression. Schools are welcome to adapt and publish it under their own name. This template is a starting point for your own governance process, not legal advice; confirm alignment with your existing policies and with current UCAS and DfE guidance before adoption.