AI Use in Learning: Positional Statement: A Living Approach

At ICHK Secondary, we believe that real learning changes a person from the inside out. Learning is not just the accumulation of information, but the slow, meaningful growth of understanding, discernment, confidence, curiosity, and capability. True learning touches the whole student — their thinking, their feeling, their values, their judgment, their relationships, their encounters, their *sense of who they are*.

With this in mind, we take a careful, developmentally-grounded approach to artificial intelligence (AI) in education.

AI can be a helpful tool. It can retrieve and organise information, synthesise material, suggest ideas, and offer reminders or explanations. Used well, it can support older, more experienced students as they refine their thinking and extend their understanding.

But AI cannot learn for a young person.

A simple analogy captures our concern: teaching students to "learn" through AI alone is akin to teaching apprentice chefs to become cooks by showing them clever ways to pierce the plastic on microwave meals. The result may be quick, effortless, clean, and tidy; it may even be superficially ‘impressive’, but it does nothing to build the taste, judgment, invention, craft, or confidence essential in a functioning kitchen. Real chefs need to handle real ingredients, becoming intimate with their shape and form, their texture and flavour; they need to make a mess and make mistakes; to practise, taste, combine and recombine; and, through trial and error, through inspired and spontaneous innovation, to gradually develop their own palate and vision and skill.

In the same way, individually and collectively, students must wrestle with ideas, prise them apart, test them out, try them for size, mix and match them; they must practise thinking, encounter difficulty, explore connections, discern patterns, weigh meaning, and develop understanding that *truly belongs to them*. This inner work cannot be bypassed. It is, by definition, personal, incremental, and often arduous. The job of school is to make the arduous not just bearable, but fun.

Because young adolescents are still developing the more sophisticated sense of self that makes long-term, life-informing learning possible, our policy recognises clear differences between age groups.

For younger students (Years 7–8):

- AI use for academic work is strongly discouraged.
- At this stage, students are still forming core habits of attention, persistence, curiosity, and self-trust. They need to experience learning directly: reading, writing, solving, imagining, combining, discussing, synthesising, and reflecting for themselves.
- Early reliance on AI risks replacing the slow work through which students become versatile, confident, capable and resilient learners.
- We recognise that students this age encounter AI outside school. Teachers will help students understand *why* certain uses of AI interfere with their learning, not simply that AI is forbidden. Adopting the Human Technologies lens, our aim is that students

develop their own judgment about how their personal growth can be promoted and, in this context, when tools help and when they hinder.
- Should a student submit work that appears AI-generated, their teacher will have a conversation to understand what happened and to take steps to promote future learning.

For middle years (Years 9–10):

- AI may be introduced cautiously, with explicit guidance and clear boundaries.
- In this phase of their school career, students begin experimenting with more abstract ideas and can start learning how AI might assist them — not replacing their thinking, but helping to organise, expand, diversify, or review it.
- Teachers will model and discuss specific appropriate uses, which may include:
    - Generating practice problems or quiz questions to test understanding
    - Exploring initial ideas or getting unstuck when genuinely confused (followed by independent work)
    - Checking grammar or clarity in later drafting stages (not initial composition)
    - Comparing their own analysis with AI-generated perspectives to deepen critical thinking
- Inappropriate uses—which bypass essential learning work—include:
    - Generating first drafts, arguments, or analyses
    - Completing problem sets or exercises intended to build fluency and automaticity
    - Summarising texts the student has not read
    - Producing work that the student cannot explain or defend
- For any learning opportunity, the teacher will specify whether and how AI may be used. When in doubt, students should ask first.
- Students must be able to explain and defend any work they submit. If asked, they should be prepared to recreate their thinking process.

For senior students (Years 11–13):

- AI can serve as a supplementary tool within clear boundaries established by both teachers and external authorities such as examination boards.
- Students may use it for planning, revision, comparison of ideas, exploring counterarguments, or as a sounding board — always with transparency.
- The essential intellectual work still belongs to the student: forming arguments, making judgments, weighing options, creating meaning, assessing values.
- Appropriate uses include:
    - Brainstorming or outlining ideas (which the student then develops independently)
    - Testing the strength of their arguments by examining AI-generated counterpoints
    - Refining expression or checking for clarity in late-stage revision
    - Exploring topics before deciding on a research direction
    - Generating practice materials for exam preparation
- Students must cite when AI has contributed to their work, just as they would cite a human source. The specific citation format to be provided by individual teachers.

- Students are expected to develop metacognitive awareness: knowing when AI helps their learning and when it substitutes for it. This judgment is itself part of what we are teaching and they are learning.
- Work submitted must represent the student's own thinking. If substantial elements come from AI, the student must acknowledge this and explain how they engaged critically with AI outputs.

Across all years, several principles guide our approach:

- AI is a supplement, not a substitute, for a student's own reasoning and creativity.
- Authentic learning remains central — the kind that strengthens judgement, memory, imagination, creativity, collaboration, and independence.
- When developmentally appropriate, teachers support students in learning when and how AI can help, and when it must be put aside.
- Selfhood comes first. Tools can assist growth only when a learner has developed enough inner structure for the assistance to make sense.
- AI's impact depends on *how* it is used, not simply *whether* it is used. Our goal is to help students develop the judgment to know when this technology supports their learning (by helping them practice, explore, or refine) and when it substitutes for it (by doing the thinking they need to do themselves). This discernment is itself an essential learning outcome.

Assessment and Academic Integrity
Our approach to assessment recognises that AI is now part of the learning environment:

- Teachers design assessments that emphasise authentic demonstration of understanding—tasks that require personal judgment, synthesis, application to new contexts, or creative work that AI cannot simply generate.
- For work outside of the classroom, teachers specify AI boundaries clearly. Some assignments may explicitly invite AI use (with citation); others will prohibit it entirely.
- In-class assessments, oral presentations, practical demonstrations, and portfolio work that shows thinking development over time all provide windows into genuine student understanding.
- When there is concern about whether work represents a student's own thinking, the response is always educational, not punitive. The teacher will:
    - Have a conversation with the student
    - Ask the student to explain their work and thinking process
    - Typically require the student to redo the work with appropriate support
    - Help the student understand what was lost by outsourcing the learning
    - Patterns of inappropriate AI use will be addressed through conversations with students, parents, and pastoral staff, focusing on rebuilding learning habits and understanding.

Supporting This Approach
Making this vision work requires:

- **Teacher development:** Regular professional learning to help staff model AI use appropriately, design AI-aware assessments, and have productive conversations with students about learning and tools.

- **Parent partnership:** Ongoing communication about our approach and how families can support it at home.
- **Student voice:** Regular check-ins with students about their experiences, challenges, and questions regarding AI and learning.
- **Living revision:** Our approach will be reviewed periodically and regularly. As we learn from practice and as AI tools evolve, our approach will adapt where needed, while maintaining our core commitment to authentic, developmental, growth-oriented learning.

Our goal is simple: that every young person becomes a thoughtful, open-minded, discerning, capable, self-directed learner who can use tools wisely — not a passive or complacent recipient of ready-made outputs.

To return to the analogy above, we aspire for our students to become chefs in their own right, not consumers of ready meals.

AI has a place in modern education, but only within a living, human process that recognises and respects the developmental realities of childhood and adolescence, and protects the slow, meaningful work through which understanding — and selfhood — are truly formed.