



AI PURPOSE, POLICY AND BELIEVE STATEMENTS

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

Padua Franciscan High School is committed to respecting and maintaining human dignity and upholding academic integrity and excellence through the responsible and ethical use of technology, including artificial intelligence. The purpose of this policy is to prepare students for success, support innovation in classroom instruction while establishing consistent expectations, standards, and approval processes for the safe and responsible implementation and integration of AI.

POLICY:

1. AI is a tool, not a thinker

We believe artificial intelligence can support learning but cannot replace critical thinking, human creativity, or personal judgment, essential skills required to ensure our students are college-ready. Students and staff are responsible for the thinking behind their work, not just the output.

2. Real research is not the same as an AI answer

We believe genuine research such as evaluating sources, following citations, and deciphering competing evidence builds a different and more durable kind of knowledge than accepting a generated summary. Committing to academic integrity means recognizing that AI can be a starting point for inquiry, but it cannot substitute for the practice of inquiry itself.

3. Human beings make human decisions

We believe AI should not be used to make personal, day-to-day, or life decisions on someone's behalf. Protecting human dignity requires keeping discernment, conscience, and relationships with trusted people, not algorithms, at the center of how our community makes choices.

4. AI is not a substitute for human care

We believe AI should never stand in for a counselor, mentor, spiritual director, or friend. Out of respect for human dignity, emotional and personal struggles deserve genuine human presence and, when needed, professional or pastoral support, not a chatbot.

5. Honesty about authorship is non-negotiable

We believe work must honestly reflect who produced it. Passing off AI-generated work as one's own violates academic integrity and fails to respect and protect intellectual property. Doing so undermines trust and the core purpose of learning itself, and will be dealt with on an individual basis.

6. AI can reflect and reinforce bias, but we must use it with discernment

We believe AI systems can amplify the biases of the people and data that shape them. Using AI well requires ongoing awareness of this risk, not blind trust in its neutrality.

7. Technology choices carry real-world consequences

We believe responsible AI use includes an active commitment to the care for creation. This means we must remain mindful of the significant environmental and social costs of training and running these systems, rather than looking only at their convenience.

8. Privacy is a form of respect

We believe personal information and data privacy must be rigorously protected. It is never appropriate to input sensitive, student, or institutional data into AI systems without deliberate care and explicit consent

9. Not all AI use is Equal

We recognize that AI applications vary greatly, spanning from entirely inappropriate uses to standard, transparent practices that require solid judgment. Effective guidelines should teach users how to navigate AI responsibly.

10. Literacy comes before restriction

We believe the best safeguard against AI misuse is education starting early (e.g., orientation), sustained over time, and built into habits rather than policy enforcement alone. Rules matter, but understanding why they exist is what actually changes behavior.

11. Transparency is part of integrity

We believe that when AI contributes to a piece of work, that contribution should be acknowledged through proper AI citation. This ensures we respect copyright laws and keep the technology's role visible rather than hidden.

12. Administrative permission guides institutional use

We believe that organizational safety and consistency require clear administrative boundaries regarding what tools employees can use. The administration, with the help of the IT Department, will establish and maintain a registry of approved AI platforms, ensuring that employee use aligns with our institutional data policies, security standards, and ethical commitments before deployment in the workplace.

BELIEVE STATEMENT:

Rooted in Franciscan Values: Technology, AI, and Human Dignity

At Padua Franciscan High School, our educational mission is centered on recognizing the divine dignity in every person and fostering a community of intellectual rigor, ethical leadership, and joyful service. As emerging technologies redefine the modern landscape, we look to the guidance of the Church, particularly Pope Leo's Encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* ("*The Splendor of Humanity*"), which calls educational communities to ensure that technological progress always serves, rather than replaces, the transcendent dignity of the human person. The following policy establishes our commitments, standards, and expectations for the responsible and ethical integration of artificial intelligence, ensuring that technology remains a tool to enhance human discernment, academic integrity, and authentic human connection.