azimuth Professional development · One-pager

Building classroom tools with AI: a checklist for staff.

AI assistants now let any teacher turn a classroom problem into a working tool, often in under an hour once you've had some practice. These five rules let you have a go safely.

What teachers are making

- a vocabulary drill built around this week's words
- verb-ending practice for a language class
- practice on the equations a Year 9 class keeps getting wrong
- a checklist that walks pupils through planning a history essay
- a safety quiz pupils pass before using the bandsaw
- a helper that turns your marking codes into written comments
- a tracker that brings a class's marks into one view
- a helper that drafts report comments from your own notes

The last three hold pupil data, so rule 2 applies.

Where to build it

I use Claude Code. ChatGPT, Gemini and Copilot can all make a simple page in the chat window, and OpenAI's Codex, Replit and Lovable can build bigger tools. Check which your school already provides through its Google or Microsoft account.

First try. Ask for "a web page that tests Year 4 on the 7 times table, ten questions, with a score at the end". Open what it gives you and play with it.

Simple tools are low risk. If yours saves nothing pupils type, has no sign-in and doesn't use AI, rules 1, 3 and 5 cover you.

1 Start with made-up data.

Build and test with invented names, answers and scores. Don't paste real class lists, marks, reports, photos or pupils' work into an AI assistant, even to show it the format. Make up a pretend version instead.

2 Approve it before it holds real data.

You can build and try out tools on any account, including your own. Before a tool holds or collects real information about pupils or staff, photos and anything pupils type included, it must run on a service your school has approved, or one that has been through your school's data protection impact assessment.

3 Adapt by need, not by name.

Describe the need ("reading age about 9", "instructions in short steps"), not the pupil. Leave out names, initials, form groups and any mix of details that points to one child. Don't paste from EHCPs or support plans, even with the name removed. If a tool must hold SEN or health information about named pupils, agree it with your data protection lead and SENCo first.

4 Check it before pupils or colleagues use it.

Check every answer yourself. Keep answer keys out of the page, because pupils can read it. If the tool saves what pupils type, has a sign-in or uses an AI, ask your IT team to look at it before you share the link.

5 Tell someone it exists.

Let your subject or phase lead, or your IT lead, know about it. Add it to the school's list of tools with your name as owner and who takes over if you leave, or start a list if there isn't one.

⚠ If something goes wrong

If a pupil tells a tool something worrying, treat it as a disclosure. Tell your safeguarding lead straight away and follow your school's procedure. If pupils can type freely, decide before you start who reads what they write.

If personal information ends up somewhere it shouldn't, tell your data protection lead straight away.

Before real pupil data goes in, talk to your data protection lead

Tell them what the tool does and who will use it, what information it holds, where it is hosted, who can see what, and how long information is kept.

You don't need every answer before you go. They'll take you through the school's data protection impact assessment. Early is easier.

Our school

Data protection lead	Safeguarding lead	SENCo	Approved AI and hosting	List of tools

Based on UK GDPR, the Department for Education's guidance on generative AI and on data protection in schools, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, and Google Threat Intelligence Group's report of 30 October 2026. José Picardo, Azimuth · azimuth.org.uk · hello@azimuth.org.uk