



U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Indian Education



Digital Wellness & Student AI Policies

Tribal Consultation

Part 1: Personal Wireless Devices

Establishing a "Disconnected to Reconnect" framework to safeguard student focus and mental health.

Disconnected to Reconnect

- **The Challenge:** Unrestricted access to personal devices during the school day is linked to anxiety, cyberbullying, and reduced academic focus.
- **The Goal:** Build a culture of responsible use—allowing students to engage deeply with peers, teachers, and cultural heritage without interference.

Scope: Mandatory for Bureau-Operated Schools (BOS); serves as a flexible Model Policy for Tribally Controlled Schools (TCS).



Rules During School Hours

- **Prohibited Use:** Device use is strictly prohibited from the moment students enter the building until academic programming is complete.
- **Storage Protocol:** Devices must be powered off and stored completely out of sight in a backpack or locker.
- **Smartwatches:** Permitted *only* in "Do Not Disturb" mode for passive safety/GPS tracking.
- **Laptops & Tablets:** Students must use school-issued devices to ensure CIPA filtering and network security.



Structured Residential Schedules

Philosophy: Dormitories are homes; students need time to decompress, connect with family, and rest. Schedules reflect age, staffing, and local conditions.



Afternoon Leisure

Upon returning from the academic day, devices are permitted in designated common areas to relax and communicate with family.



Mandatory Study Hall

Personal wireless devices are **strictly prohibited** during study hall. Students must rely on school-issued devices for assignments.



Digital Curfew

Devices are collected prior to a "digital curfew" (e.g., 30 mins before lights out) and are not permitted in sleeping quarters overnight.

Safeguarding Student Health

💰 Medical Exemptions

Devices needed for ongoing medical care (e.g., paired continuous glucose monitors) or IEP/504 Assistive Technology are completely exempt from restrictions.

Approved students receive a formal "**Device Pass**" and alerts are logged in NASIS to notify substitute teachers and protect student dignity without unnecessary confiscation.

⚠️ Emergency Access

During a school-wide lockdown or crisis, students may use phones to contact family *immediately following* safety directions from staff.

For daily emergencies, parents must contact the Front Office; staff will relay messages promptly to avoid classroom disruption.

Protecting Cultural Assets

Cultural Projects

Teachers may grant specific, time-bound permission to use personal devices for cultural projects (e.g., recording an Elder's story or language preservation apps) if no other school-issued technology is available.

Data Sovereignty Rule

Students are **strictly prohibited** from uploading recordings of sacred ceremonies, traditional dances, or sensitive cultural practices to public social media platforms while on school grounds.

Seeking Tribal Input: Devices



DEVICE POLICY

- How can BIE best support Tribal School Boards in adapting this framework to local needs?
- Are the proposed dormitory schedules flexible enough for local realities and staffing capacities?
- Does the de-escalation protocol balance accountability with student dignity?
- Are the boundaries regarding the protection of sacred ceremonies clear and respectful of sovereignty?

Part 2: Student Artificial Intelligence Policy

Integrating AI as a tool that fosters critical thinking while strictly protecting Tribal data sovereignty.

Vision & Philosophy

- **Present Reality:** AI has transitioned from a theoretical future to a present reality in education.
- **Strategic Integration:** BIE seeks to integrate AI as a tool that fosters critical thinking and career readiness.
- **Core Protections:** Unwavering commitment to protecting Tribal sovereignty, cultural assets, and student data privacy.
- **Scope:** Applies universally to K-12 students. Mandatory for BOS; serves as a model for TCS.



The Human-AI-Human Workflow



1. Human Inquiry

You Start It. The student acts as the director, deciding what question to ask, setting the learning goal, and defining the problem to solve.



2. AI Processing

AI Helps Out. The tool acts as a "scaffold" or teammate to help build the structure of the work or brainstorm concepts.



3. Human Reflection

You Finish It. The student checks for accuracy, removes bias, edits the work, and takes final responsibility for the submission.

The 5-Level Scaffolding Matrix

Level	Designation	Student Role	AI Role
Level 1	No AI (The "Red" Zone)	100% Creator	None / Blocked
Level 2	AI Assisted (Ideas)	Creator & Editor	Idea Partner
Level 3	AI Scaffolding (Structure)	Writer & Editor	Architect
Level 4	AI Co-Creator (Teamwork)	Editor & Synthesizer	Co-Author (Citation Req.)
Level 5	AI Produced (Critique)	Critical Auditor	Content Generator

**All assignments default to Level 1 unless explicitly designated otherwise by the instructor.*

Tribal Data Sovereignty & Prohibitions



Zero PII Mandate: Strict prohibition against entering Personally Identifiable Information into public AI models, complying with 25 C.F.R. Part 43 and the Privacy Act of 1974.



Protecting Sacred Knowledge: Absolute restriction against inputting protected Tribal cultural knowledge or assets into third-party systems.



Special Education Data: Prohibition on using Generative AI to draft or process IEPs, 504 Plans, or psychological evaluations.



Official Assessments: Generative AI use is strictly prohibited during official benchmark, interim, or summative assessments.

Integrity & Privacy Protections

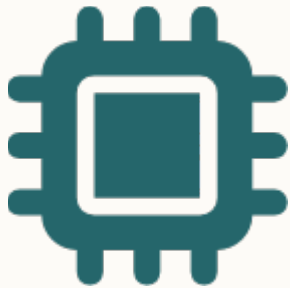
The "Teachable Moment"

The policy distinguishes between traditional **Plagiarism** and **AI Misuse**. First offenses of AI Misuse are treated formatively. Students must redo the assignment adhering to the assigned Matrix Level to demonstrate mastery (potentially for a capped grade).

Parental Opt-Out & COPPA

Schools may not require students under 13 to use Generative AI unless covered by a strict COPPA-compliant BIE vendor contract. A formal process exists for families to opt out; alternative assignments will be provided without penalty.

Seeking Tribal Input: Student AI



AI POLICY

- How should BIE balance preparing students for an AI-enabled workforce while protecting Tribal values and sovereignty?
- What safeguards should BIE establish regarding vendor security standards and the protection of Tribal data?
- Does the proposed "5-Level Scaffolding Matrix" provide clear enough guidance for classroom instruction?
- How should the agency best support parental rights regarding the proposed Generative AI Opt-Out process?

Questions & Feedback

We value your partnership and guidance.

BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION | WWW.BIE.EDU

CULTURE • KNOWLEDGE • LEADERSHIP



U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Indian Education