SHORT POLICY BRIEF #1

March 2026

Integrating Generative AI in Secondary Education: Insights and Recommendations from Year 1

GENAI4ED AT A GLANCE

GenAI4ED, A platform for Assessing and Bridging Generative AI and Human Skills in Secondary Education, is a 36-month Horizon Europe project that started in October 2024. The project designs, develops and pilots a platform that offers a targeted Training Resource Hub and AI- enhanced tools to enable students, teachers, parents and guardians to critically assess available GenAI tools and to support effective and responsible use while promoting digital skills.

HOW GENAI4ED WORKS

- **Research:** systematic review of policies and academic literature; stakeholder dialogue (teachers, students, parents/guardians, AI experts); Societal Readiness Level analysis and a taxonomy for the assessment of GenAI tools' relevance and suitability for learning and for education stakeholders.
- **Co-design:** development of the GEARS framework (Group, Evaluation criteria, Assessment indicators, Review method, Source & data type), enabling separate assessments for different stakeholder groups.
- **Development & piloting:** iterative platform development and pilot experiments in selected schools in Cyprus, Greece and Italy to test the recommendation engine and tool assessments.
- **Policy support:** evidence from pilots and interdisciplinary analysis informs actionable recommendations for policy and practice.

KEY MESSAGES

- Schools are facing a fast-growing ecosystem of GenAI tools, while practical guidance, AI literacy, and trustworthy-by-design safeguards remain uneven.
- Evidence gathered by GenAI4ED points to strong infrastructure in many countries, but weaker readiness in policy, ethical/regulatory guidance, and AI literacy.
- Stakeholders (students, teachers, parents/guardians) converge on three risks that must be actively managed: over-reliance, misinformation, and data safeguarding for minors.
- Policy action should combine:

(1) AI Act-aligned education frameworks,
(2) transparency and safety requirements for tools, and
(3) sustained investment in AI literacy and wellbeing.

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WHAT EVIDENCE SHOWS SO FAR

1. READINESS IS UNEVEN ACROSS EUROPE

Societal Readiness Level (SRL) analysis across multiple countries indicates comparatively strong governance and digital infrastructure in most countries, but **lower readiness in policy, ethical/regulatory frameworks and AI literacy**, suggesting that capacity building and clearer governance are needed for safe and equitable GenAI integration.

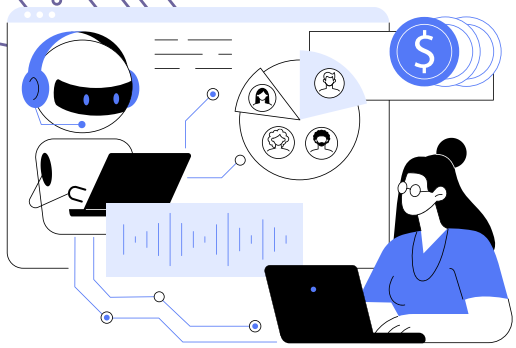
2. CURRENT GUIDANCE IS OFTEN TEACHER-FOCUSED AND LIGHT ON CONCRETE STEPS

Systematic review of existing guidelines found a **lack of formal policies on GenAI in education in Europe**, limited references to the EU AI Act, and infrequent coverage of environmental impact, the digital divide, or accessibility for learners with special needs. **Guidance for parents/guardians** is generally minimal and tends to focus on data protection rather than practical measures. Guidance for **students** also turned out to be **minimal**, focusing mainly on academic integrity.

3. USERS WANT GUIDANCE AND TRANSPARENCY, NOT JUST TOOLS

Research with students, teachers and parents highlights positive expectations (e.g., efficiency, scaffolding, personalisation), alongside concerns (about accuracy, misuse, over-reliance, reduced creativity and critical thinking, and technostress). **Stakeholders require clearer rules, training, and better transparency** on how tools work, where training data comes from, and how user data is handled.

RECOMMENDATIONS



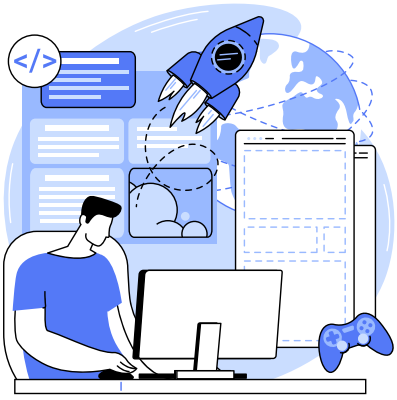
A. EU and national policy makers

Integrate the EU AI Act into national education frameworks: Embed AI Act provisions explicitly in education policy, with attention to children's rights, teachers' preparedness and professional development, transparency, accountability and responsible use of GenAI use in schools.

Make ethics and transparency by design a legal requirement in educational GenAI tools consistent with the Digital Services Act (DSA): Strengthen dialogue with developers and claim clear disclosures about data practices, content sourcing, common limitations, and age appropriateness; ensure robust safeguards for privacy and child protection.

Invest in evidence on wellbeing and working conditions: Fund research on the impacts of GenAI on teacher wellbeing and working conditions, and on student wellbeing and learning conditions, to guide future policy decisions.

B. Educational authorities (e.g., agencies responsible for training and support)



Treat equity as a baseline requirement: Provide actionable guidance to prevent GenAI from exacerbating inequalities; promote localisation, accessibility features, and low-bandwidth options for users with limited internet connectivity.

Adopt multi-perspective evaluation frameworks: Use evaluation approaches that incorporate distinct perspectives from students, teachers, parents/guardians and AI experts; include pedagogical alignment, usability, ethics, and developmental impact—not only technical performance.

Strengthen teacher GenAI literacy with subject- and scenario-based training: Prioritise pedagogy, assessment integrity and ethics; train teachers to fact-check outputs, review tools before classroom use, and understand privacy policies; provide curriculum-aligned starter materials with examples of acceptable, conditional and prohibited uses.

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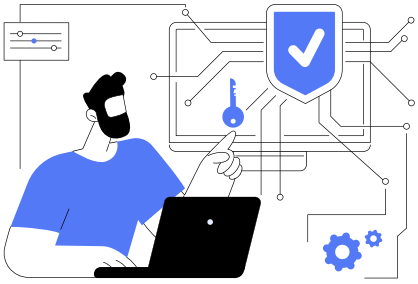
RECOMMENDATIONS

C. Practitioners (schools, teachers, students, families)



Build student AI literacy for safe and critical use: Teach verification and safe practices (e.g., anonymising data) and avoid placing the burden of academic honesty solely on students.

Improve school-family communication and family AI literacy: Provide brief plain-language guidance for families, clarify which tools are used in class and why, and offer parent/guardian information sessions where possible.

NEXT STEPS

GenAI4ED will continue developing and piloting its platform and assessment approach with end users. A second policy brief is planned for September 2027, building on evidence from pilot experiments and further research.

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