

Archdiocesan AI Policy

AI & CoPilot: Enhancing Operations with Microsoft Copilot

April 2026

AI and Catholic Social Teaching

All AI usage across the Archdiocese of Seattle must be guided by the ethical principles articulated by the Catholic Church and the teachings of Pope Francis. In his 2025 address to the World Economic Forum, Pope Francis emphasized that:

“AI must promote and never violate human dignity... It must assist the human person in fulfilling his or her vocation, in freedom and responsibility, and contribute to greater justice, fraternity, and a more humane order of social relations.”

All AI applications must be consistent with the moral and ethical teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes:

- Upholding the inherent dignity of every human person
- Avoiding the reduction of human relationships or decisions to purely technical or efficiency-driven processes
- Using AI for collaboration, compassion, and the common good
- Ensuring ethical discernment, especially when AI systems operate autonomously or influence decisions affecting people’s lives

These principles must be considered during review process and in all decisions regarding the deployment, use, or development of AI technologies.

AI Usage Policy

To ensure responsible, ethical and mission-aligned use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies across our organization, the following policy governs all AI-related activities:

All AI tools, platforms, or services—whether used for administrative functions, education, ministry, communications, or third-party integration—must undergo a formal review and approval process by local leadership with delegated technical and administrative responsibility prior to use.

Local review and approval authority may include, as appropriate:

- The pastor, principal, or parish administrator
- A designated parish or school technology coordinator
- A local IT administrator or managed service provider supporting the parish or school

The review process must include the following components:

- **Initial request submission**

Staff, faculty, or volunteers seeking to use an AI tool must submit a written request (email, form, or other locally defined method) describing the intended use, types of data involved, and expected outcomes.

- **Licensing and vendor review**

Local leadership must review the tool's licensing terms to ensure they are appropriate for parish or school use, including clarity around data ownership, data retention, support, and vendor accountability.

- **Privacy and security assessment**

The AI tool must be evaluated for how it collects, processes, stores, and retains data to ensure compliance with applicable privacy laws, safeguarding requirements, and Archdiocesan guidance. Tools that lack clear privacy protections or permit reuse of submitted data are not appropriate for handling sensitive or regulated information.

- **Ethical and mission alignment review**

Local leadership must assess whether the proposed use of the AI tool aligns with the moral and ethical teachings of the Catholic Church and supports the pastoral, educational, and ministerial mission of the parish or school.

- **Approval requirement**

No AI solution may be adopted or used for official parish or school purposes without documented approval from local leadership or their designated technical authority.

Local leadership remains responsible for ensuring that approved AI tools are used consistently with this policy and that users understand applicable limitations and safeguards.

2. Privacy, Data Stewardship, and Model Training Restrictions

AI usage must uphold the highest standards of data privacy and stewardship. Specifically:

- Personally identifiable information (PII) must be protected in accordance with applicable data protection laws and internal policies.
- AI systems must not collect, process, or share sensitive data without explicit authorization and safeguards.
- Parishioner data may not be used to train public or third-party AI models under any circumstances. This includes uploading data to external platforms or services that retain or learn from submitted content.
- Data used in AI models must be anonymized or de-identified where appropriate and approved by IT.

3. Human Oversight of AI-Generated Content

All content generated by AI platforms—whether text, images, data summaries, or other outputs—must be reviewed and approved by a human prior to distribution, publication, or use in decision-making.

This ensures:

- Accuracy and appropriateness of content
- Alignment with organizational values and Catholic teaching
- Prevention of misinformation, bias, or unintended harm

AI-generated content must never be used as a final or authoritative source without human validation.

4. Ongoing Oversight

The Archdiocesan Information Technology team, in collaboration with relevant leadership, will maintain oversight of AI usage, including:

- Periodic reviews of AI tools in use
- Monitoring for compliance with this policy
- Updates to the policy as technology and Church guidance evolve

AI Usage with Microsoft Copilot

Archdiocesan employees can leverage Microsoft Copilot to streamline daily operations, improve productivity, and enhance service delivery. Here are several impactful ways Copilot can be utilized:

- **Document drafting and editing**

Copilot can assist in drafting official correspondence, legal documents, meeting minutes and reports with improved accuracy and consistency.

- **Data analysis and reporting**

Employees can use Copilot to analyze data, generate summaries and create visual reports, enabling data-driven decision-making.

- **Task automation**

Routine tasks such as scheduling, email responses and document formatting can be automated, freeing up time for higher-value work.

- **Knowledge management**

By organizing and retrieving institutional knowledge, Copilot helps staff access relevant policies, precedents, and procedural guidelines efficiently.

- **Training and onboarding**

New employees can use Copilot as a learning assistant to understand workflows, access templates, and get answers to procedural questions.

- **Collaboration and Communication**

Copilot enhances collaboration by summarizing meetings, suggesting action items and integrating seamlessly with Microsoft Teams and Outlook.

By integrating Copilot into archdiocesan workflows, employees can work more efficiently, reduce administrative burdens, and focus on delivering high-quality public service.

AI Usage with Approved Platforms

In addition to Microsoft Copilot, the archdiocese recognizes certain mission-appropriate AI tools that support theological education, catechesis, and formation when used responsibly and with human oversight.

Magisterium

Magisterium is an AI-powered research and reference platform designed specifically for use within the Catholic tradition. It is trained on authoritative Catholic sources, including:

- Sacred Scripture
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Papal encyclicals and apostolic exhortations
- Conciliar documents
- Verified theological and magisterial texts

Approved uses of Magisterium within parishes and Catholic schools include:

- Supporting catechetical preparation and religious education
- Assisting clergy, catechists, and educators with theological research
- Helping staff locate and understand Church teaching and doctrinal references
- Enhancing classroom instruction and faith formation planning

Magisterium may not be used as a substitute for:

- Clergy judgment or pastoral discernment
- Official theological instruction or authoritative teaching
- Sacramental preparation determinations
- Counseling, spiritual direction, or sensitive pastoral care

All outputs from Magisterium must be reviewed by a qualified human and used as reference or support materials only, not as final or authoritative sources.

Appendix One - Open/Free vs Enterprise AI Platforms

Why You Should Know the Difference Between Free and Paid AI Platforms

As AI tools become increasingly integrated into daily work and decision-making, understanding the differences between free and paid AI platforms is essential. Here's why:

Open/Free Platforms

These are publicly accessible tools or models, often available at no cost or with minimal restrictions, which we do not recommend.

Characteristics:

- **Accessibility:** Anyone can use them, often via a web interface or API.
- **Cost:** Free or freemium (basic features free, advanced features paid).
- **Data handling:** Often unclear or broad data usage policies; user data may be used to improve the model.
- **Support:** Limited or community-based support.
- **Security and Privacy:** May not meet enterprise-grade standards for data protection, encryption, or compliance (e.g., FERPA, HIPAA).
- **Customization:** Limited ability to tailor models or features to specific organizational needs.
- **Examples:** ChatGPT Free, Google Gemini (free tier), Hugging Face public models, open-source LLMs like LLaMA or Mistral (without enterprise wrappers).

Risks for Organizations:

- Data may be stored or used for model training.
- No contractual guarantees around uptime, data ownership, or compliance.
- Not suitable for handling sensitive or regulated data (e.g., parishioner or student PII).
- Open or free AI platforms must never be used to process, store, upload, analyze, or generate content using sensitive or regulated information. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Parishioner, student, parent, or family personally identifiable information (PII)
 - Sacramental records (e.g., baptism, marriage, confirmation data)
 - Pastoral communications or counseling information
 - Student educational records, accommodations, or disciplinary information
 - Donor, financial, medical, or safeguarding-related data

Because free or publicly available AI platforms often retain user inputs, reuse submitted content, or use data for model improvement, any interaction involving sensitive data could result in unintended disclosure, loss of confidentiality, or non-compliance with privacy, safeguarding, or educational regulations. Use of such platforms for this purpose presents an unacceptable risk to the dignity, trust, and privacy of those entrusted to the care of parishes and schools.

Enterprise AI Platforms (with Licensing Agreements)

These are commercial-grade solutions designed for secure, scalable and compliant use in professional environments.

Characteristics:

- Access Control: Restricted to licensed users with role-based permissions.
- Cost: Subscription or usage-based pricing, often with tiered service levels.
- Data Governance: Clear terms around data ownership, usage and retention. Typically, data is not used to train public models.
- Support: Dedicated support, SLAs, onboarding, and training.
- Security & Compliance: Designed to meet enterprise standards (e.g., SOC 2, GDPR, FERPA, HIPAA).
- Customization: Often includes APIs, private model hosting, and integration with internal systems.
- Examples: Microsoft Azure OpenAI, Google Vertex AI, Amazon Bedrock, Anthropic Claude for Enterprise, OpenAI Enterprise.

Benefits for Organizations:

- Ensures data privacy and control, especially for sensitive information.
- Enables compliance with Church values, legal standards, and internal policies.
- Provides scalability and reliability for mission-critical applications.
- Allows IT oversight and integration into existing infrastructure.

CoPilot

Included in the Archdiocesan Microsoft license, is an approved and secure AI platform for official use.

Faith-Specific AI Platforms

Some enterprise or purpose-built AI platforms are designed specifically for use in Catholic educational and ministerial contexts.

Example:

- **Magisterium** – An AI research platform focused exclusively on Catholic theology and Church teaching, designed to assist clergy, educators, and catechists with faithful doctrinal research and reference.

When used appropriately, such platforms can support formation and education while remaining consistent with Catholic teaching and Archdiocesan values. Use remains subject to local leadership oversight, human review of all AI-generated content and compliance with data privacy and safeguarding requirements.

Resources

- *Data, Privacy, and Security for Microsoft 365 Copilot*
<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/copilot/microsoft-365/microsoft-365-copilot-privacy>
- *Copilot Copyright Commitment for customers*
<https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2023/09/07/copilot-copyright-commitment-ai-legal-concerns/>
- *About Magisterium*
<https://www.magisterium.com/about>