

Q2 Any documentation outlining the conditions, guidelines, or policies attached to the approval and use of these tools.

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## **Pause before you Prompt**

*Published 13/11/2025*

AI tools like Copilot can be incredibly helpful, like having a super-efficient digital teammate who never sleeps. But, just like any tool, it's only as safe and smart as the person using it.

A misplaced prompt or a rushed upload can turn a helpful shortcut into a compliance headache. So, before you hit enter, take a moment to think it through. Here's a handy guide to help you use AI responsibly and keep our data safe.

### **Do's**

#### **Only use MfE approved AI tools**

[Microsoft Copilot](#) is currently the only AI tool approved to use for our work. It's been vetted for security and compliance.

It has the enterprise data protection tick (the green tick in the top right hand corner), which means there are systems in place to make sure that sensitive information doesn't get lost, stolen, leaked, or misused. This ensures you can use it confidently, as long as you follow these dos and don'ts.

#### **Pause before you prompt**

Always double-check your inputs whether it's a document, a question, or a dataset, and make sure you're not accidentally sharing any information classified as '[Sensitive](#)' or '[Restricted](#)'.

#### **Check your facts**

AI can be a great copilot, but it's not perfect. It can make mistakes, misinterpret context, or generate outdated info. Always fact-check and verify information before using AI-generated content in your work.

#### **Follow legal and privacy requirements**

Your AI usage must comply with:

- [Privacy Act 2020](#) - protecting personal information
- [Official Information Act 1982 BE](#) - managing public sector information responsibly

If you're unsure whether something falls under these, it's better to check than guess.

### **Trust your instincts**

If something feels off - whether it's an AI output or a prompt you're about to submit - trust your instincts. Double-check before proceeding. It's always better to be safe than sorry.

### **Ask for help**

If you're not sure whether something is safe to share or use, reach out to your manager or refer to the [AI Use Policy](#).

### **Join the conversation**

AI is evolving fast, and so is how we use it. Join the MfE AI Community on Viva Engage to share your experiences, learn from others, and help shape how we use AI in our mahi.

### **Don'ts**

#### **Don't input sensitive information**

Never enter anything labelled 'Sensitive' or above into the AI tool. Once it's out there, you can't take it back. Follow our internal policies when handling personal or commercially sensitive information.

#### **Don't rely on AI for critical decisions**

AI can support your thinking, but it shouldn't make the final call. Avoid using AI-generated content for decisions involving compliance, privacy, legal matters, or financial decisions. These areas require human judgment and expert review.



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## **Copilot update: IN-CONFIDENCE data now allowed**

*Published 11/08/2025*

We're excited to share a major update to our AI use policy: Copilot can now be used with IN-CONFIDENCE classified data. Here is what you need to know.

### **What's changed and why**

The Ministry has updated its AI Use Policy: you can now use **IN-CONFIDENCE** information within **approved AI applications** - specifically, Copilot.

Until now, our AI Use Policy only allowed UNCLASSIFIED information to be entered into approved AI tools. Following a decision by Te Pūrengi and feedback across the Ministry, the policy has shifted to unlock the value of AI in our work while managing risks effectively.

### How this affects you

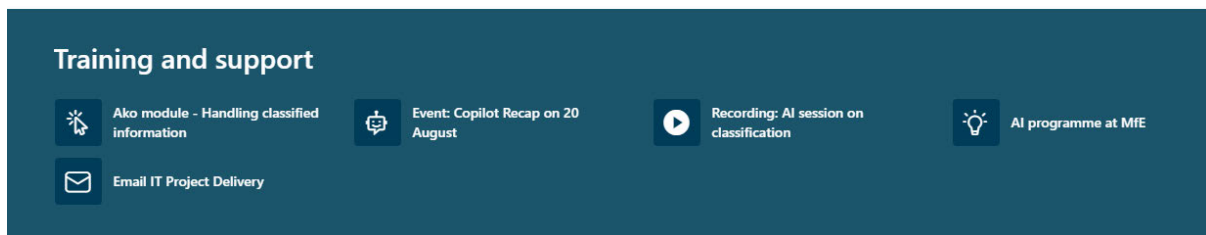
You can use IN-CONFIDENCE information in Copilot, as long as you follow the [AI Use Policy](#).

For all other unapproved AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT), only use UNCLASSIFIED information. These tools are being monitored by the IT Security team.

### What you need to do

- Use only **approved AI tools** (currently, Copilot) for IN-CONFIDENCE information
- Follow the [AI Use Policy](#)
- Be transparent about your use of AI in your work.

Let's keep using AI tools in a smart, safe way, so we can do great mahi for Te Taiao and our communities.



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## Kaiwhakahaere Managers' Update – 4 August 2025

*Published 04/08/2025*

### AI update: Upcoming change to how you use Copilot

We're pleased to give you a heads up about a significant enhancement to our AI use policy: Copilot will soon be approved for use with IN-CONFIDENCE classified information. To refresh your understanding of handling classified information, check out the new [module](#) on Ako.

This update unlocks exciting new opportunities to work smarter, collaborate more effectively, and innovate securely with approved AI tools like Copilot.

Updated guidance will be available soon on our AI policy pages. We expect to launch this change by the end of this week and will keep you posted via Te Taiao.

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## Unlocking the potential of Artificial Intelligence

*Published 09/12/2024*

MfE has a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy, supporting the use of AI under certain safeguards.

“AI has the potential to transform the way we work. The policy released today will start unlocking its potential for the Ministry, while managing potential risks,” says Mike Porter, General Manager of Information and Technology.

The AI policy is part of the Renew programme, which is focused on making it easier to work together and growing our impact. It provides approved tools and rules for AI use, allowing us to benefit from productivity gains. The policy also gives kaimahi an avenue to explore other opportunities for its use in a considered way, with the right support.

Potential uses of AI under this policy could include:

- Assisting with research
- Drafting an internal policy or standard
- Creating a draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for a governance group

Mike says we need to ensure our use of AI upholds the Ministry’s responsibilities around data protection and privacy, and supports our reputation as New Zealand’s lead advisor on the environment and climate.

“AI is being adopted at an explosive pace around the world. It can make work a lot easier, but it can also trip organisations up, damaging trust and confidence. The policy will help to ensure we get the balance right.”

A working group has been set up with representatives from across the Ministry to look at the potential use of AI in different areas as opportunities come up. The group will provide thought leadership on what an AI strategy for the Ministry looks like. It will also review requests that sit outside of the policy to make prioritised recommendations to Te Mimirot on their implementation.

Before you use any AI tool, please [read through the policy](#) and make sure you understand what your responsibilities are.

### Here are four key things to know:

- Only approved AI tools should be used. Initially this will be [Microsoft Copilot \(web version\)](#). Further approved AI tools will be published on the [Apps we use at MfE](#) page on Te Taiao.

- No information classified IN-CONFIDENCE or above should be entered into these tools.
- Be transparent about the use of AI and declare, as appropriate, when it is used.
- Be aware of how to engage with the AI working group when work is outside the scope of this policy.

AI is a powerful tool and needs to be used carefully and responsibly. Please make sure you've read the policy and stick to the guidelines.

Please see the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy on Te Taiao for supporting guidance. If you have pātai, please reach out to [ServiceHub@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ServiceHub@mfe.govt.nz)

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## **Kaiwhakahaere Managers' Update – 3 December 2024**

*Published 03/12/2024*

### **Renew programme updates**

#### **New AI Policy in place from 6 December**

The Ministry is releasing a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use policy to support the use of AI under certain safeguards. We expect to launch this on Friday December 6th.

Implementing this policy and providing approved tools for our people to use will enable our people to benefit from some of the productivity gains of AI tools while also providing measures that help protect the Ministry.

The use of AI in the workplace has the potential to transform the way we work, make decisions, and deliver services. While we want our people to benefit from using AI, we still require that they align to MfE's AI Use Policy, specifically around data protection and privacy.

As a manager you are obligated to make sure your team members follow the principles of the AI Use Policy and make sure every step is taken to ensure they understand the policy and their responsibilities when using AI tools.

#### **Here are four key things for you and your teams to know:**

- Only approved AI tools should be used (these will be published on Te Taiao when the policy is launched. Initially, this will be Microsoft Co-Pilot (web version).
- No information classified IN-CONFIDENCE or above should be entered into any approved AI tools.

- Be transparent about the use of AI and declare, as appropriate, when it is used.
- You must always engage with the AI working group when work is outside of the scope of this policy.

It could have a huge impact on MfE if we do not fully comply with the policy. So, please stick to the guidelines, read through the policy when it is published later this week, and check that your team understands it. If you or your team have pātai or are unsure whether something complies with the policy, please email [ITSecurity@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ITSecurity@mfe.govt.nz).

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## **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy**

*Published: 09/09/2025*

AI in its broadest sense, is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computers. By integrating AI into our processes, we aim to improve efficiency, accuracy, and overall productivity. This is the policy on how we use AI at the Ministry.

### **Purpose of this policy**

The AI Use Policy aims to ensure responsible and trustworthy use of AI at the Ministry. This aligns with information management principles and New Zealand's legal requirements on data protection and privacy.

### **Who does this policy apply to**

This policy applies to all:

- employees
- contractors
- third parties with access to the Ministry's digital environment
  - including core third-party ICT contractors and vendors.

### **Policy Principles**

The Ministry follows guidance from various governmental bodies and the New Zealand Privacy Commissioner. Principles include use only approved AI tools, protect confidential information, ensure accuracy and transparency, respect Māori Data and Perspectives.

### **Guidelines for AI Use**

- Only approved AI tools should be used. Initially this will be [Microsoft 365 Copilot Chat](#). Further approved AI tools will be published on the [Apps we use at MfE](#) page on Te Taiao.
- No information classified SENSITIVE or above should be entered into any approved AI tools.
- Be transparent about the use of AI and declare, as appropriate, when it is used.
- Be aware of how to engage with the AI working group when work is outside of the scope of this policy.

Users must also adhere to the Privacy Act 2020 and the Official Information Act 1982.

The AI Use Policy