China's approach to AI Education in Schools (Year 1-12)

(Information as at September 2025)

China continues to promote itself as a global leader in digital education, and embracing artificial intelligence (AI) is a key national priority. At a Politburo meeting in April 2025, President Xi Jinping emphasized that AI education across all levels is fundamental to educational reform. AI is viewed as a key aspect to further accelerate China's digital economy, industrial upgrading and innovative capacity.

In November 2024, the Ministry of Education (MoE) issued its *Guidance on Strengthening AI Education in Primary and Secondary Schools*.[1] This guidance linked AI education to China's goal to nurture innovative talent and build the nation's capacity to address future challenges. It promotes project-based learning, the use of AI to enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills and calls for whole-of-government coordination and pilot programs.

China's ambition to harness its education system to accelerate China's AI advancement is summarised in the Outline of a Plan for Building China into a Leading Country in Education 2024-2035 (the Plan) released in January 2025. In line with the Plan, Chinese undergraduates will also be able to study a major in Artificial Intelligence Education from the start of the 2025-26 academic year. In addition, the MoE has released a *White Paper on Smart Education in China and the National Education Digitalisation Strategic Plan 2.0*. Key elements include improving access, equity, personalisation, flexibility and global reach. Building on this, in May 2025, the MoE released two more detailed documents:

- *General AI Education Guide for Primary and Secondary Schools (2025 Edition)* (the General AI Guide), and the

- *Guide for the Use of Generative AI by Primary and Secondary Students (2025 Edition)* (the Guide for the Use of Generative AI).

The General AI Education Guide

The General AI Education Guide outlines differentiated goals across school levels in four key areas: Cognition, Skills, Thinking, and Values.

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[1] This links to an official summary of the Guidance in English. The full report has not been publicly released by the MoE in either a Chinese or an English version.

Table 1: China's AI Education Goals at Primary, Junior and Senior High Levels

	Primary	Junior High	Senior High
Cognition	Spark interest through hands-on experiences with smart devices and basic AI concepts like speech and image recognition.	Build understanding of AI logic, including machine learning basics and how data and algorithms interact.	Deepen strategic awareness of generative AI and its societal impact, especially in areas like smart cities and national security.
Skills	Develop basic AI skills by using simple tools, visual programming, and practicing data handling.	Apply AI to real-world problems through project-based learning and building simple intelligent agents.	Focus on innovative AI use by building simple models and creating interdisciplinary solutions with intelligent tools.
Thinking	Build foundational thinking by practicing logical reasoning, task breakdown, and comparing AI with human behavior.	Develop engineering thinking by analyzing needs, matching technologies, and evaluating outcomes through critical, systems-based problem solving.	Strengthening systems thinking by connecting technical principles, system design, and societal impact through hands-on innovation projects.
Values	Deepen ethical understanding by recognizing AI's strategic role in innovation and evaluating misinformation risks in generative technologies.	Deepen ethical awareness by recognizing AI's strategic value and evaluating risks like misinformation in generative applications.	Promote social responsibility by examining AI sovereignty within national tech strategies and balancing innovation with ethical risks.

Source: Ministry of Education (2025) *General AI Education Guide for Primary and Secondary Schools*

Guide for the Use of Generative AI

Generative AI refers to models and technologies capable of generating content such as text, images, audio and video. The MoE Guide for the Use of Generative AI recognises the important role that Generative AI plays in school education in terms of tailoring teaching material to meet individual student needs and encouraging creativity and innovation. The Guide to the Use of Generative AI also clarifies boundaries on the use of Generative AI in schools. The guidance is tailored for students, teachers and administrators.

Use of Generative AI by students

Generative AI can be used in schools to support students by:

- tailoring study plans and recommending resources based on individual learning needs
- generating simulations, modelling, and virtual dialogues to help students explore complex topics
- supporting deeper reading through feedback, storytelling and cultural content
- assisting to support student mental health, and

- providing assistive technologies for students with disabilities (e.g. speech-to-text tech)

Example: Student X uses a generative AI learning companion to guide their studies. The AI quickly analyses Student X's strengths and weaknesses, creating a personalised study plan. It recommends tailored resources, practice questions, and enrichment tasks based on Student X's progress. As Student X learns, the system gives instant feedback, updates their knowledge map, and suggests strategies to overcome challenges, helping Student X build a deeper, more connected understanding of the subject.

Use of Generative AI by teachers

Generative AI can be used in schools to support teachers to:

- customise teaching materials and lesson plans
- create immersive learning experiences, incorporating tools such as virtual and artificial reality
- supporting assignments and grading systems, which avoiding using AI to directly evaluate students
- supporting the use of AI and simulated assistants to inform assessment and evaluation methodology, and
- supporting personalised instruction for individual students.

Example: Teacher Y uses Generative AI to help with lesson planning. The AI designs customised teaching materials based on Teacher Y's goals, teaching style, and student needs—automatically generating interactive slides, videos, and worksheets. It also suggests tailored support resources for students at different levels. Teacher Y finetunes the content to better match class needs and uses a virtual AI-powered platform to collaborate with peers and enhance teaching skills.

Use of Generative AI by school administrators

Generative AI can be used by school administrators to:

- automate routine task such as reports and event planning
- deliver tailored content to underserved regions
- support human-led student assessment, focusing on creativity and critical thinking
- simulate policy impact and generative risk assessments, and
- digitalise and analyse school records to support planning and research.

Example: Administrator Z uses generative AI to streamline school operations. The AI helps draft meeting notes, reports, and event plans in multiple languages and formats, reducing manual work. It suggests student-centered activities, complete with workflows and resource plans. AI monitors processes for risks and generates compliance reports—helping the school to run smoothly and efficiently.

Provincial and city approaches to AI in schools

Beijing

Beijing officially launched a detailed implementation plan for AI in schools in July 2025. Starting from September 2025, primary and middle schools across the city will introduce general AI education, with a minimum of eight class hours per academic year. The curriculum will focus on three key areas, AI

awareness and understanding, practical applications and innovation and ethics and social responsibility.

The initiative aims to guide students from basic AI literacy to responsible use; while fostering problem-solving and creative thinking. AI-related skills will also be included in students' overall academic assessments.

Schools will have flexibility in delivery—either through dedicated AI courses or by integrating AI content into existing subjects such as information technology, science, general technology, practical activities, and labor education.

Guangdong

As the innovation hub of the Greater Bay Area, Guangdong province has long embraced internationalization and forward-thinking education. In April 2025, the province launched an AI education initiative for primary and secondary schools.

The plan sets out how much AI education students should receive by grade level. Students in Grades 1–4 should receive at least 6 hours of AI education annually, students in Grades 5–9 should receive at least 10 hours per year and students in Grades 10–11 should receive at least 1 hour every two weeks.

Primary students will explore and become familiar with AI through hands-on experiences; junior high students will begin understanding and applying AI concepts; and senior high students will focus on AI design and innovation.

Schools have flexibility to deliver AI education either as standalone courses or by integrating it into subjects such as IT, science, general technology, and practical activities.

Key terms

English translation	Chinese term
Guidance on Strengthening AI Education in Primary and Secondary Schools	《关于加强中小学人工智能教育的通知》
General AI Education Guide for Primary and Secondary Schools (2025 Edition)	《中小学人工智能通识教育指南（2025 年版）》
Guide for the Use of Generative AI by Primary and Secondary Students (2025 Edition)	《中小学生成式人工智能使用指南（2025 年版）》

ENQUIRIES

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