

READER 1

The NYC AI Rules

What changed this year - and what the city has not decided yet.

This year your school is following new rules about artificial intelligence. New York City Public Schools wrote them for 2026-27 only. That was on purpose. The city gave itself one year to watch, listen, and learn before deciding what comes next.

So the rules you are living under right now are not final. Someone will write the next version. This lab is about who that someone should be.

Three words you need

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a broad term for computer systems that find patterns, make predictions, or complete tasks.

Generative AI makes new things - text, images, audio, code, conversation - after you give it instructions. Chatbots and image generators are the ones you already know.

A moratorium is a temporary pause. Not a ban forever. A stop, so people can study something before they decide.

The new limits are aimed at generative AI that students use directly. They do not shut off every device or every piece of software.

What the rules say

GRADE	STUDENT-FACING GENERATIVE AI	TIME ALONE ON A SCREEN
2K-2	Not allowed	None
3-5	Not allowed	30 minutes a day, recommended limit
6-8	Not allowed	45 minutes a day, recommended limit
9-12	Only approved, reviewed programs	Depends on your school and course

Screen time here means you, alone, working on a device. A teacher putting something on the board for the whole class is different, and still allowed. So are coding, robotics, simulations, e-books, and tests.

The rules do not take away technology you need in order to learn. If your IEP or 504 plan requires a tool, you keep it. Students with disabilities and multilingual learners keep the supports they need.

If you are in high school

Every high school student will be required to complete two 45-minute AI literacy lessons. They cover how AI works, data privacy, bias, and when it is appropriate to use AI in school.

Beyond those lessons, five programs have been approved: Quill, Edia, Brisk Teaching, Playlab, and Intel AI-Ready Schools. Your school has to apply, and you can be in only one. The city says the pilots may reach up to 50,000 high school students - roughly 5 percent of everyone enrolled in NYC public schools.

Some students may also encounter approved AI through supervised career-readiness programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE).

The doses are small. Quill: 15 minutes a week. Edia: 20 minutes a week, in class only, never homework. Brisk Teaching: 20 to 40 minutes. Playlab: 45 minutes, with two assignments a term. Intel AI-Ready Schools: one period a week.

That is the whole idea. The city is testing specific uses. It is not opening the door.

READER 1

Who decides

The city set one year of rules, not a permanent answer.

Not “should students use AI?” Ask: which student, using which tool, for what learning goal, under what rules - and with what proof that it works?

Who checks a tool before it reaches you

Before software can be used with students, it goes through a review called ERMA. ERMA asks two questions: is your data private, and is the system secure? New York State law requires this.

Here is the part worth underlining. ERMA approval alone does not show that a tool improves learning or treats every student fairly. The city says it is developing a broader review of algorithmic bias, equity, accessibility, and instructional effectiveness.

What teachers can and cannot do

Teachers may use approved AI to plan lessons and handle school tasks, under the same privacy and purchasing rules. They may not use AI to grade you, to monitor your behavior, or to decide your placement, promotion, or graduation. A qualified person has to do that. And if AI gets something wrong in a teacher’s work, the teacher is still responsible.

Afterschool counts too

If a community organization teaches during the school day or inside your building, it follows the same rules. Afterschool providers will get their own guidance. That matters - your school day and your afterschool program are supposed to line up.

Who decides what comes next

The city has promised that student data belongs to students and families, and that decisions will be made in the open. You can raise a question through your principal, your School Leadership Team, your PTA, your Community Education Council, or the Panel for Educational Policy.

The city is also forming a Technology in Schools Coalition - students, educators, families, advocates, unions, elected officials, and experts. It is expected to recommend what happens in future years in April 2027. That is your deadline. Work that lands after April lands after the decision.

What nobody has decided

- Will the pilots actually improve learning, or just increase use?
- Which students gain, and which get left out or harmed?
- What proof should a tool show before it spreads to more schools?
- What rights should you have over your data, and over decisions made about you?
- How much power should students have in writing the next rules?

YOUR TURN: Pick one part of the policy. What would you keep? What would you change? What evidence would you need before you would make it permanent?

Sources, checked September 8, 2026: NYC Public Schools, Guidance on Artificial Intelligence and Screen Time; NYC Mayor's Office announcement, September 2, 2026. This is a student summary, not the official policy. The policy can change - check the city's website before you present your recommendation.