A Teacher's Guide to Still in Charge

Your students will use AI whether or not you do. Your job is to decide what it is allowed to do in your room, within your school's policy.

You have 50 minutes, a full roster and no extra hours. This guide does not ask you for more of them. It gives you the five principles your students will hear, what each one can look like in class, a blank template for your classroom rules, and a few questions worth asking about any work.

What you get, and what you do not have to do

Still in Charge gives your students five principles for using AI without handing over their own judgment. Your part is smaller than you might think.

A reference to hand out
The Student Reference puts the five principles in students' own words.

A guide to send home
The Parent Guide gives families one question to ask at dinner.

A live Q&A
Schools that arrange live sessions get a one-hour virtual Q&A for teachers, led by the founder or a trained presenter.

No new system
Nothing to install, no accounts, no dashboard. We do not require or accept student accounts, student information, or student-level data.

No cost
Free to schools, teachers and families.

Not a mandate
Nothing here requires you to use AI, in class or in your own work.

Using AI is your choice

AI is a tool, like a hammer. Swing it well and you drive the nail. Swing it carelessly and you hit your thumb.

> **"Whether to swing it at all is yours to decide."**
>
> **Within your school's rules.**

Everything in this guide works in a classroom AI never enters.

Five principles, and what each one asks of you in class

PRINCIPLE 1

Think Better

Use AI to sharpen reasoning and ideas, not to replace effort or judgment. Students remain responsible for the thinking behind the work.

In class. The test is not whether a student used a tool. It is whether they can still tell you what they decided. Where it fits your class, give students room to show what they decided.

PRINCIPLE 2

Protect Privacy

Never enter personal, confidential, financial, company, client, or restricted information into AI tools. Once sensitive information is entered, students may not control where it goes.

In class. Model it. Do not paste student names, grades or identifiable work into a tool your district has not approved for it, and tell students why you will not.

PRINCIPLE 3

Verify Outputs

Students must check facts, sources, and claims before using, presenting, submitting, or acting on AI-generated output.

In class. Let students catch the tool being wrong. Using a tool your school has approved, ask it something your class already knows cold and wait for it to miss. Then look at how it sounded when it did. Exactly the same. That lesson sticks longer than any warning.

PRINCIPLE 4

Follow the Rules

Household, school, classroom, workplace, and organizational rules come first. AI does not override the standards set by parents, teachers, employers, or institutions. When rules are unclear, students should ask before using AI.

In class. Students cannot follow a line nobody drew. Make yours visible, on the assignment, the syllabus or the board, in line with your school's policy. There is a blank template in this guide.

PRINCIPLE 5

Pause and Ask

When something feels wrong, risky, inappropriate, or uncertain, students should stop and ask a teacher, supervisor, or responsible adult before proceeding.

In class. Make it safe to say "this does not look right," about the tool or about their own work. A student should never get in trouble for stopping to ask.

> **"The machine does not sign your name. You do."**
>
> **Underneath all five.**

Make the line visible

Your school’s policy comes first. Fill in the template to match it. AI rules can change from class to class, and students are left guessing which one applies. Three short lines end the guessing.

Fine	Say so	Not on this one
Allowed. No need to mention it.	Allowed if the student notes it.	Not allowed on this assignment.

Fillable template: stillincharge.org/rules. Type into it on screen and save a copy for each assignment, or print it and write on it.

A written line protects the honest student most. Without one, the student who used a tool to fix a sentence and the student who had it write the paper look the same on the page.

Questions to ask anytime, to anyone, about any work

These are questions good teachers already ask. Use them in conversation, whenever it fits. They are prompts for reflection, not a test, and no single answer proves anything.

> **“Walk me through one choice you made, and why.”**

- What would change if [one fact] were different?
- Which part were you least sure about?
- What did you decide that the tool did not?

Worth a quiet word

Neither of these is proof of anything. Each is a reason to talk, with curiosity rather than suspicion.

They take every answer as given

Questioning the tool is the habit this program builds. A student who never doubts it has not built it yet. Show them it can be wrong.

They talk about a chatbot as a friend

Or turn to it for comfort. That is worth a quiet word. If it worries you, follow your school’s student-support process.

The goal is not less AI

The tools will change faster than any training can follow. What you are building does not change: students who can tell you what they decided, and why.

> **“What did you decide that the tool did not?”**

This guide was written from the research, not from years at the front of a classroom. If something here does not fit your room, tell us. Teachers will make it better than we can.

contact@stillincharge.org · See what your students see: stillincharge.org/student-guide

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