TRANSCENDERS INC

Accused of AI Cheating? Start Here

A Kit for Students and Families

Helping disabled youth transition to adulthood: benefits, education, and services.

Who we are: Transcenders Inc is led by parents and educators. We are not lawyers, and this kit is not legal advice. We are families who have sat in these meetings ourselves, and we advocate alongside other families facing the same thing. This kit is general information to help you prepare, ask better questions, and protect your student's record. If your student faces formal discipline, an honor-code hearing, or loss of credit, consider consulting an education attorney or your state Parent Training and Information Center, which provides free help to parents of children with disabilities.

Part 1: First Steps, the First 72 Hours

An accusation is not a finding. AI detectors produce a probability score, not proof, and schools know these tools are disputed. Slow the process down and get everything in writing.

1. **Do not sign anything yet.** Do not sign a confession, an academic integrity agreement, or a "voluntary" penalty form in the first meeting. You can say: "We need time to review this as a family before we sign anything."
2. **Ask for the accusation in writing.** Request the specific assignment, the detector used, the score, the full detector report, and the exact policy the school says was violated. If they cannot produce a written policy that names AI use, note that.
3. **Ask what happens next, in writing.** What is the appeal process, who decides, what are the deadlines, and what is the penalty if the finding stands? Deadlines matter; write them down.
4. **Preserve everything.** Do not delete drafts, notes, chats, or files, even messy ones. See the Evidence Checklist in Part 2. Screenshots with dates count.
5. **For any new assignments, have your student work in a tool that saves drafts automatically.** School will likely continue while this is sorted out. Ask your student to draft new work in Google Docs, Word, or OneDrive rather than on paper or in a tool that overwrites. These tools keep a version history, a time-stamped record of the writing as it grew, and that history is the single strongest proof that the writing is theirs. It protects your student on every future assignment, starting now.
6. **Stay factual and calm in every message.** Short, written, polite. You are building a record. Assume every email will be read at a hearing.
7. **If your student has an IEP or 504 plan, say so early, in writing.** Ask how the accusation process accounts for the plan, and whether the tools your student used are connected to their disability or an accommodation. This changes the conversation, and it is the bridge to Part 5.

Part 2: Evidence Checklist, Proving the Work Is Theirs

Gather what you have. You do not need all of it. Check off and save copies outside the school account (school accounts can be locked).

- ☐ Version history of the document (Google Docs: File, Version history; Word: File, Info, Version History). Export or screenshot it showing dates and growth of the draft.
- ☐ Earlier drafts, outlines, notes, brainstorming, index cards, photos of handwritten work.
- ☐ Research trail: browser history, library checkouts, source PDFs, citation notes.
- ☐ Messages where the student discussed the work (texts to family or friends, emails to the teacher asking questions).
- ☐ The assignment prompt and any rubric, syllabus, or class policy on AI use. If the policy is vague or was never given, save proof of that too.
- ☐ The detector report, if the school will share it: the score, the tool name, and the date it was run.
- ☐ Prior writing samples in the student's own voice, ideally supervised or in-class writing, for comparison.
- ☐ For disabled students: the IEP or 504 plan, especially any assistive technology, speech-to-text, or writing supports listed, and notes on which tools the student used on this assignment and why.
- ☐ A short written statement from the student, in their own words: how they did the assignment, step by step, what tools they used, and what they used them for. Specific and honest beats long and defensive.
- ☐ Names of anyone who saw the student working (family, tutor, teacher).

Part 3: Response Letter Template

Send by email so there is a record. Replace the brackets. Keep your copy.

Subject: Request for information and meeting regarding AI use allegation, [Assignment name], [Class name]

Dear [Teacher's name],

I am writing about the allegation that my [son/daughter/student's name] used AI improperly on [assignment name] in [class name]. [He/She/They] wrote this assignment [himself/herself/themselves], and we are asking for the chance to show the drafting process before any finding or penalty is decided.

Please send us, in writing:

1. The detector tool used, the score it produced, and the full report.

2. The written policy on AI use that applies to this class, and when it was shared with students.

3. The process and deadline for responding or appealing, and who makes the final decision.

We have preserved [his/her/their] drafts and version history and are glad to walk through them with you. Please let us know a time to meet this week.

[If applicable:] [Student name] has [an IEP / a 504 plan]. Please also let us know how this process takes the plan into account, including the assistive technology and writing supports listed in it.

Thank you for your time and for keeping this process fair.

[Parent name]

[Phone] | [Email]

[Date]

Part 4: Detector Facts, a One-Pager for the Meeting

Bring this page. Every claim below is from published research or federal guidance.

- **Detectors guess. They do not detect.** AI detectors estimate the probability that text looks machine-generated. No detector can prove who wrote a document.
- **False flags are documented, at scale.** In a peer-reviewed 2023 study (Liang and colleagues, published in Patterns), seven popular detectors misclassified more than half of essays written by non-native English speakers as AI-generated, and at least one detector flagged 97.8% of them, while the same detectors were near-perfect on essays by native speakers. Students who write formally, simply, or in a second language are at the highest risk of a false accusation.
- **Federal guidance names this risk.** In November 2024, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights warned schools about discriminatory use of AI, including a scenario built around a detector with a high error rate for non-native speakers. The same guidance warned that cookie-cutter, AI-written 504 plans can violate a student's rights.
- **Students are getting in trouble on this basis, often.** In a 2023-24 survey reported by the Center for Democracy and Technology and EdWeek, 64% of teachers said a student at their school got in trouble for AI use or an accusation of AI use. Special education students use AI tools more, and special education teachers report using detectors more, so disabled students sit at the center of this.
- **Even the vendors urge caution.** Detector companies state in their own documentation that scores should not be the sole basis for discipline. Ask the school: what evidence besides the score supports this finding?
- **The question to close with:** "If the only evidence is a probability score from a tool with a documented false-positive problem, is that enough to put a finding on my child's record?"

Part 5: The Bridge, Ask for AI in the Plan Going Forward

However the accusation ends, use the moment. If AI tools help your student access learning, get them written into the plan as an accommodation, so the next assignment is not a new accusation. Ask in writing, and ask for the answer in writing.

Sample request, IEP or 504 team (K-12):

> "I am requesting that the team add the following accommodation to [student name]'s [IEP / 504 plan]: Use of AI tools to convert course content into accessible formats, including text-to-speech audio, simplified or leveled text, summaries, flashcards, and study aids, and to support the writing process (brainstorming, outlining, and revision feedback). Final work remains the student's own. AI use under this accommodation is authorized assistive technology and is not an academic integrity violation."

Sample request, college or university disability services:

> "I am requesting that AI tools be listed in my accommodation plan as assistive technology: AI tools to convert course content into accessible formats (audio, simplified text, summaries, flashcards, and study aids) and AI note-taking support. I am asking for this in writing so that my use of these tools in class is documented as an approved accommodation."

Tips that help the ask land:

- Name the barrier, not just the tool: "Dense textbook chapters are inaccessible to me in print alone. Audio and simplified text are how I access them."
- Keep the framing: AI as access to content, never a substitute for learning or for the student's own work.
- If the team declines, ask for the refusal in writing (in K-12, that is prior written notice) and the reasoning. A written no is appealable; a verbal no disappears.

Transcenders Inc is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit helping disabled youth transition to adulthood: benefits, education, and services. We are parents and educators, not lawyers, and we built this kit from the same tables we have sat at with our own kids. If it helps your family, pass it on. More free guides: https://transcenders.app/get-help/ | Join the newsletter: https://transcenders.app

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