St. Dominic's National School

ICT Policy

Introductory Statement

'We live in a world that is characterised by abundant information, advanced technology, a rapidly changing society, greater convenience in daily lives and keener international competition. Therefore, it is important that all stakeholders are proactive and take a leadership role in identifying how ICT can enhance our education system, particularly in the areas of teaching, learning and assessment' (Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020).

This document is a statement of the aims and objectives, principles and strategies for ICT in St Dominic's National School. The policy was first developed in 2019 through a process of consultation with the school community. The Board of Management approved the policy in the 2019/2020 academic year. This policy will be fully implemented as of March 2020.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Our vibrant school community is welcoming and inclusive. There is a motivating and nurturing environment where students are encouraged to broaden their experiences and to make the most of their many talents. Parents and teachers work together in striving to motivate and inspire all children to love learning and to maximise their development in all areas. We believe that ICT has a significant role to play in ensuring that each child reaches their potential.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of ICT in our school and to set out our general aims and goals in delivering ICT to the pupils. Our policy provides us with a framework for long and short term planning which will be of benefit to the teaching and learning of ICT in St Dominic's National School. Our policy provides information for all teachers, the Board of Management and parents of the approaches and methodologies being used in the teaching of the ICT, emphasising the key messages of ICT.

Vision

St Dominic's National School recognises the potential of ICT as a method of enabling all children and teachers to engage with the curriculum in a deep, child-centred and creative way. We are aware of the rapid development and the increasing complexity and range of uses of ICT (much broader than just computers), the increase of interactive technologies in schools and the development of communication through broadband.

We are confident that the existing ICT infrastructure will enhance the learning opportunities of our pupils in an atmosphere of self-worth, self-belief and self-motivation. We recognise the success of ICT staff training in raising the profile of ICT within our school and in enthusing teachers. We aim to develop and strengthen the use of ICT in our school to support learning and teaching.

Historically, our school has facilitated the provision of ICT through an Interactive Whiteboard in each classroom and the timetabling of a computer room with approximately 10 PCs. In 2017, the school began a process of upgrading these PCs. Each PC is run off the Windows 10 operating system and has the Microsoft Office 2016 suite. Creating projects, touch typing and research using the internet is encouraged in this way.

Aims

In line with the general educational philosophies of the school, effective provision of ICT opportunities will attempt to generate in the children a sense of fulfilment, while experiencing the benefits of ICT to facilitate creative expression and academic achievement. As well as being an important educational resource, the ability to use ICT effectively is a vital life skill in modern society. We want our pupils to become independent, autonomous learners who are confident and competent using technology.

Through the use of ICT our pupils will be enabled to:

- gain competence and confidence in using ICT
- develop thinking skills and problem solving strategies.
- locate, gather, analyse, reconstruct, communicate and present information.
- experience deeper analysis of concepts and processes.
- gain more control over the direction of their learning.
- collaborate on joint tasks both face to face in the classroom and online.
- develop creativity.
- engage in learning out of school in other settings.
- gain access to the internet, interactive learning resources and whiteboards to facilitate cross-curricular learning.
- develop information handling and research techniques thereby enriching project management and presentation skills

Uses of ICT in St Dominic's N.S.

ICT will be put to use in the following ways:

- School Administration-pupil details, standard letters, newsletters, book lists etc., Aladdin software
- Word Processing of children's work using Microsoft Word
- Research on the internet
- Communication via email in senior classes
- Music composition and digital recording
- Drill and Practice software/apps: e.g. literacy and numeracy
- Software for SEN pupils e.g. Word Shark, Number Shark.
- Embed ICT in the yearly and fortnightly plans.
- Digital presentations
- Filming eg. iMovie
- Animation eg. Stop Go Motion
- Book Creator

Current Infrastructure
- In keeping with our mission, we perceive ICT technologies being used as a tool of teaching and learning in each classroom. All computers are networked to our own internal network, including networked printing.
- Our current broadband provider is Eir, as dictated by the Department of Education and Skills Schools Broadband scheme. We have wifi broadband with several wifi access points to facilitate ease of access for pupils and teachers throughout the entire school.
- We currently have 39 Apple iPads, stored in 2 secure areas of the school with timing chargers.
- Each classroom has a data projector, interactive whiteboard and teacher laptop.
- The office is equipped with a PC and colour printer/scanner.

Current Usage of Facilities
- iPads are used at all class levels through whole class instruction using a range of apps during the school day the classroom and in SEN settings.
- Current usage includes early reading work and early number work; mathematical application; development of thinking and problem solving skills; word processing, desktop publishing; use of typing skills; internet research; presentation of project work; creating art work; spelling; development of fine motor skills and movie making.

Curriculum Planning
The integration of ICT is possible at many different levels and in various areas in St Dominic's NS. Interactive whiteboards in classrooms allow teachers to use a fully integrated approach across all curricular areas.
Opportunities for children and teachers to engage with the curriculum are provided in the following ways:
- Using high-quality interactive activities enables deep learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- Word-processing packages encourage the Draft-Edit-Publish approach to both creative and functional writing. This keeps the child in control of his / her own creative effort throughout the process and enables him / her to maximise creative potential.
- Internet research enables child-centred learning in a wide variety of topics across the curriculum.
- Engagement with animation software (e.g. Stop Go Motion) supports much talk and discussion as children collaborate to produce artwork that integrates Literacy, Mathematics, Music, Visual Art, Drama and SESE.
- The interactive whiteboard allows the children to interact with onscreen resources in a child-friendly way.
- The school website provides an opportunity for teachers and students to publish and celebrate their work. The site is updated regularly and reflects the many activities and projects in which the school is involved.
- Teachers use class twitter accounts and the school Facebook page to convey the life of the classroom to the outside world.

Expected Skill and Learning Outcomes for ICT at each Class Level

Infants
- iPad Familiarity. App usage, Spelling City, Jolly Phonics, Starfall.
- Navigating software by entering, exiting, closing, choosing options using touch screen and swiping
- Navigate the interactive whiteboard using the wand
- Learn about internet safety (Guided by teacher on all using all APP's, Lock children into one app, Restrict use of Youtube, internet browser)

1st & 2nd Class
As above for Infants and:
- Log on to educational websites such as Scoilnet to explore content, play interactive games and search for information at an age-appropriate level. Sites to be chosen by the teacher and pre-loaded onto each device.
- Continue to develop use of interactive whiteboard activities.
- Introduce pupils to using PCs in our Computer Room, learning how to use the mouse, turn on the computer and turn on the monitor.
- Use basic features of Microsoft Word, learning how to type on a word document and save a file.
- Use a range of digital storytelling tools to create simple texts e.g. Book Creator

Middle Classes (3rd and 4th)
As for junior classes, plus:
- Develop further use of Microsoft Word tools such as WordArt, Copy and Paste, Spellcheck, Align right / Centre / Align Left, Print.
- Publish creative writing and project work on the school website.
- Learn to create folders, store and file work in different locations and retrieve it when necessary.
- Learn to use an Internet browser to search for information.
- Use Internet interactive learning sites, e.g. Spelling City, to deepen and enhance learning across the curriculum.
- Use a range of media for project-based work e.g. Microsoft Powerpoint, Google Slides etc.
- Store work using an ePortfolio app or website e.g. Seesaw.
- Use resources such as 'HTML Heroes' to learn about internet safety.

Senior Classes (5th and 6th)
As for middle classes, plus:
- Learn to exploit further features of Microsoft Word such as choosing different fonts, changing colours, using text-boxes, creating columns and simple tables, etc.
- Learn to copy and paste from one file to another.
- Contribute reports to the school website.
- Practise typing skills using websites such as Typingclub.com, Typing.com and BBC Dance mat.
- Explore more advanced educational websites.
- Continue to learn about safety on the Internet, especially with regard to social networking sites using resources such as 'MySelfie' from Webwise.
- Use a Google account to create an ePortfolio of work as part of our JDO Project.
- Learn to use keyboard shortcuts to copy and paste text on Microsoft Office.
- Begin to explore basic features of Microsoft Excel.

- Explore and utilise Google Docs, Slides and other G-Suite features.

The Internet as a Resource

The internet provides a wealth of educational resources that support the strands of the Irish Primary School Curriculum.

Organisational Planning

Every class, from Junior Infants to Sixth Class is timetabled to use the iPads weekly. The class teacher is responsible for ensuring that the iPads are replaced in the storage area safely after use. This enables the charging of devices thus facilitating maximum use of the equipment. Children may work individually or in pairs. The SEN team are furnished with the weekly timetable and have access to the iPads during any slot they choose. They also choose a slot on the timetable for the computer room.

Health and Safety

In all classrooms consideration is given to health and safety in the location and positioning of equipment. The following issues are also addressed:
- Position and posture of the child.
- Children should be seated correctly on the iPad.
- When using the iPad the child should be able to sit upright on a chair which gives some back support, having their arms roughly horizontal when using a keyboard.
- The child's body should face forwards, not twisted sideways.

Provision for pupils with SEN in Mainstream

As a school we are deeply committed to providing the best possible learning experiences for children with special educational needs. ICT has an important role to play in this commitment, as it facilitates deep engagement with the curriculum and caters for a variety of learning styles.

PCs and iPads are available for use in the SEN settings and children are encouraged to use them extensively.

Teachers shall familiarise themselves with the variety of graded levels within suitable software in order to provide differentiation and cater for children with special educational needs within their classrooms.

The Board of Management is happy to fund the purchase of special software or other equipment as necessary.

Equality of Access

All children will have equal access to the use of ICT across the curriculum Children of all ages, ability levels and backgrounds will have equal access to ICT resources.

Continued Professional Development

The current members of staff have received training on the use and educational application of ICT, through initial teacher training, summer courses, evening classes in the local Education centre and day-release seminars provided by the PDST. In addition, the staff members regularly contribute to each other's professional development in ICT through advice, demonstration and informal discussion. We have a very open and inclusive attitude to staff training and skills development in our school and we endeavour to provide any and all opportunities for staff development.

Roles and Responsibilities in ICT

The ICT coordinator/ICT Team will:

- Provide leadership and direction by creating and reviewing our school's Digital Learning Plan.
- Play a key role in the drawing up of a whole school policy for ICT in collaboration with all staff.
- Support, guide and motivate colleagues in the use and development of ICT across the curriculum.
- Advise staff on ICT training and support which is available to them.
- Ensure that the use of ICT is managed and organised to meet school aims and objectives.
- Contribute to the monitoring and evaluation process.
- Keep up to date with recent developments in ICT and advise colleagues appropriately.
- Source and update ICT software/apps and ICT equipment.
- Identify and assess new approaches to the use of e-learning.
- Report technical problems to the Principal.
- Monitor the work being carried out in ICT throughout the school to ensure progression.
- Monitor and update the school website where necessary.

The class teacher will:
- Assess pupils' skills.
- Share ideas, resources, skills and practices with fellow teachers on staff.
- Integrate ICT throughout the curriculum.
- Have read the school's internet acceptable use policy.
- Inform the ICT co-ordinator/ICT team of any technical problems and resources which need replacing.
- post updates on classwork to the school website.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting
Children's use of ICT is assessed and recorded by the class teacher using:
- Formative assessment – observing and questioning during classroom activities
- Summative assessment methods – collecting samples of children's ICT work
- Teachers will report on a child's progress to the next teacher
- by discussing progress
- by passing on samples of work
- Teachers will report on a child's progress to parents through discussion during formal parent teacher meetings.

Teacher Planning and Reporting
- Teachers will consult our digital learning plan and the curriculum documents when drawing up short and long term plans.
- Where it is meaningful and suitable, ICT will be integrated across all curricular areas.
- Cúntas míosúil will assist in recording work covered, in evaluating progress in ICT and informing future teaching. It is agreed to tick short term plans as a means of indicating work covered.

ICT in the Home and in the Community
An increasing number of children have access to computers in the home or through their out-of-school activities.
Where appropriate children will be given opportunities to make use of ICT resources to:
- Carry out research to support classroom work and projects
- Use suggested websites provided by teacher to support learning
- To complete work begun in school

School Website

St Dominic's National School's website (www.stdominicsns.ie) is updated regularly with current information regarding events and ongoing work by pupils in the school. It is also used as a tool for informing and involving parents in their child's education.

It was set up in 2014. It is envisaged that our website will better aid the communication in the wider school community. Teachers will be encouraged to keep it updated with 1 post per month. The ICT team will monitor this throughout the school.

Budgetary Provision

Purchasing of new equipment will be undertaken by the BOM in consultation with the middle management team. This will be guided by the evaluation of the ICT plan, budget constraints and Department of Education guidelines. Advice on purchasing will be sought from various areas. Cost comparisons between different agencies will be viewed with special relevance to backup service.

Success Criteria

The effectiveness of the I.C.T. policy will be assessed through:
- continual observation
- Staff feedback
- End of year review and recommendations

Review

As ICT is such a valuable tool for learning and curriculum implementation, its use is continuously under review by the teaching staff. Matters such as the website, new software, timetabling and difficulties with equipment are discussed regularly at staff meetings. A formal review and updating of the policy will be undertaken every two years by the staff or sooner if necessary. The Board of Management will discuss the outcome of such reviews and ratify them as it sees fit.

Ratification and Communication

Copies of the policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of the staff and a copy will be available on the school website.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on: 12th May 2020

Chairperson
Board of Management

Principal