

ICT Policy

ICT coordinator: Caitriona Daly

Mission Statement

As well as being an important educational resource, the ability to use ICT effectively is a vital life skill in modern society. "Our aim is to produce learners (pupils and teachers) who are confident and effective users of ICT".

We intend to achieve that aim by:

- 1) Teaching ICT skills as a separate subject
- 2) Ensuring that ICT is incorporated into all subjects on the curriculum
- 3) Helping all children to use ICT with purpose and enjoyment
- 4) Helping all children to develop the necessary skills to exploit ICT

Rationale

Why does our school require ICT?

- The pupils in our school need to be IT literate.
- We want to provide the best possible education for all our pupils.
- We want to provide a powerful and up to date teaching resource for all our teachers.
- ICT will be used for more effective administration.
- ICT will be used to help children in need of learning support.
- ICT will be used to provide more effective communication with parents.
- ICT will be used to communicate with teachers and pupils in other schools.
- ICT will be used to prepare children for life in a technologically advanced workplace.

To what use will ICT be put?

- Maintenance and updating of the School website.
- As a Teaching Aid using the Interactive Whiteboard, visualisers etc
- School Administration-pupil details, standard letters, newsletters, book lists, school library, Aladdin and Primary Online Databases etc.
- Research software, e.g. Encyclopedia Britannica.
- Drill and Practice software: e.g. English, Maths, Geography
- Adventure games e.g. Granny's Garden etc.
- Word Processing and printing of children's work.
- Research on the internet.
- Communication via email.
- Storage of Records e.g. Micra-T & Sigma-T Results.
- Software for Special Needs pupils e.g. Word Shark, Number Shark.
- Software for more able pupils.

Advantages of ICT:

- The most up to date information may be accessed speedily.
- Presentation of work is greatly enhanced.
- Pupils with special needs are greatly empowered through use of ICT.
- The computer has endless patience when used for drill and practice applications.
- The computer can allow for individual differences.
- All children find computers a fascinating source of learning.

Disadvantages of ICT:

- There are major financial implications in equipping and upgrading a school with ICT.
- Researching software and lesson plans is very time consuming.
- Curriculum overload is an ever present problem.
- Introduction of ICT to a school, greatly increases the workload and thereby the stress levels of the teachers.
- Teachers need to continually update their ICT skills. Some teachers lack confidence using ICT.
- ICT is an outstanding teaching resource, but should only be used in conjunction with other more traditional teaching resources and methodologies.

Summary of School Audit

Current Hardware:

- The school is equipped with 23 interactive whiteboards – 19 in mainstream classrooms and 4 in the Speech and Language/Special Class/library rooms. All these computers are networked and have broadband access to the internet.
- The Promethean Activboard comes with Activprimary software, Activpens, and a remote control. These transform the classroom into an interactive learning environment. The interactive whiteboards enable anything that can be seen or done on a computer screen to be projected onto a whiteboard. It is possible to hide, reveal or highlight text and images to stimulate discussion; encourage active participation through measuring tools, interactive rulers or protractors; and engage the senses with sounds, colours and videos. The software allows access to thousands of resources and sample lessons.
- The Activpens write like pens with the added functionality of a mouse.
- There is a computer, a printer and a scanner in the Principal's office.
- Each teacher has a personal laptop, a desktop, a visualiser, a camera (shared) and an iPad.
- iPads have been synced in groups of eight, further information is in the school AUP.
- All laptops are linked to a central photocopier/printer.

Current Software:

All teachers have a selection of appropriate, educational software.

Current Usage of ICT for Pupils:

- All pupils become familiar with the computer, developing competency in use of the mouse, keyboard, software, iPad and interactive whiteboard.
- Current usage of software includes pre-reading and early reading work; pre-number and early number work; mathematical application; development of thinking and problem solving skills; word processing; use of multimedia encyclopedia and typing skills; internet work; creating art work; communication using e-mails; scanning and presentation of project work.
- Computers are used as a medium of teaching and learning in all classrooms..
- Computers and appropriate software are used extensively by teachers in the Learning Support, Resource and EAL areas.

Teaching Staff

Total Staff: 33

Teachers are familiar with the use of Interactive Whiteboards in all classes.

All teachers have completed in-service training on the use of the iPads.

Most appropriate form of training: Galway Education Centre; In-service on site.

ICT Co-Ordination:

The school has an Assistant principal, Ms Caitriona Daly, who holds responsibility for ICT.

Special Needs:

Computers are provided in the Learning Support/Resource/EAL/Special Class/Speech and Language Rooms as we recognise the potential of ICT to enhance the learning opportunities for pupils with special needs. Children with specific writing, reading and numeracy needs are using ICT to provide alternative and complementary educational experiences. Laptops and specialised keyboards are provided where appropriate.

Exceptional Students:

With the advent of Broadband and an increase in the number of computers in individual classrooms we see an opportunity to use ICT to challenge and extend the educational opportunities for pupils with above average attainment.

Maintenance:

Teachers ensure that lenses on data projectors are free of dust by cleaning them once a month.

The school uses NorthStar Computers for essential repair, upgrading and maintenance.

The school uses Liosdoire for extensive repair and upgrading of the Interactive Whiteboards and projectors.

Health and Safety Aspects:

All new computers comply with European regulations regarding radiation.
With Broadband there will be free internet access for everybody using school premises – the school has an Internet Acceptable Use Policy in place.

The Schools' Goals Regarding ICT

Technology Integration:

Our long-term aim that technology be used to support the teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum and in all classrooms is almost realized.

What should be taught in ICT to pupils in our school?

Junior/Senior Infants:

- Names of computer parts: monitor, keyboard, mouse, printer etc.
- Basic care of a computer/iPad.
- Manipulating the mouse using software for painting games, jigsaws etc.
- Finding letters/numbers and basic words.
- Literacy/Numeracy programmes.

1st & 2nd Class:

- Revision of computer parts.
- Turning on and off a computer.
- Opening & closing files.
- Use of space bar & return keys.
- Using shift key for Capital letters.
- Using Microsoft Word to type a few sentences.
- Changing font type and size.
- Saving to file.
- Using Clip Art.
- Using educational software to reinforce class work.

Children receiving Learning Support:

- Using literacy & phonic software: eg Word Shark, Starfall, Clicker, Write-on for Windows, First Keys.
- Using Maths software: Number Shark, Topmarks. .

Hardware Purchase:

ICT co-ordinator C. Daly will be responsible for purchase of appropriate hardware.

Software Purchase:

C. Daly in conjunction with the Principal and relevant staff members will be responsible for reviewing and recommending purchase of appropriate software. Class groups also consult each other and purchase educational apps for grouped iPads using a prearranged budget.

School website:

The school hosts a website at <http://scoilchaitrionajnr.blogspot.ie/>

Ms.Jane Mc Loughlin has set up, monitors, updates and maintains this website. The school has received nominations for the Junior Spider Award over the years.

School news, helpful educational links, educational activities, art and project work etc are regularly added.

School policies that are relevant to parents will also be added to this site.

Children's class work is published using their first name only for identification purposes.

Class photographs are published without names.

This policy was reviewed in April 2015 and will be revised again in 2017.

This policy should be read alongside the school AUP policy.

