

## **Information and Communication Technology (I.C.T.) School Policy**

### **Introduction:**

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 Nicholas' National School. The policy was revised and reviewed during the academic year 2023/2024 through a process of consultation with the teaching staff. The Board of Management approved the policy it is fully implemented as of March 2024

### **Rationale:**

Integrated technology in teaching and learning across the curriculum is a new challenge which we feel must be met in Primary Education. We aim to develop skills in our children to enable them to live and work in an ever-changing world. We, as teachers, recognise the potential of ICT as a cross-curricular resource at primary level. In line with the general educational philosophies of the school, the mode of instruction will attempt to generate in the children a sense of fulfilment, while experiencing the benefits of ICT to facilitate creative expression and academic achievement.

### **Aims:**

Our aims in using ICT are to:

- Raise levels of pupil competence and confidence in using ICT – by developing children's knowledge, understanding and skills in using a range of ICT tools to enhance learning experiences across the curriculum.
- Offer equal entitlement of ICT to all pupils.
- Raise levels of teacher competence and confidence in integrating and using a range of different technologies into their planning, teaching and assessment of children's work.
- To enhance and enrich children's learning and add to its enjoyment.
- Provide access to internet, interactive learning resources and whiteboards.
- Develop children's independent learning skills using ICT across the curriculum.
- To develop information handling and research techniques thereby enriching project management and presentation skills.
- To develop co-operative skills through participation in ICT projects that demand the pooling of skills and interactive development of ideas and materials.

## **Uses of ICT in our school:**

ICT will be put into use in the following ways:

- School Administration – pupil details, Roll Call (Aladdin Software)
- Word processing of children's work
- Research on the internet
- Embed ICT in yearly and fortnightly plans
- Communication via email
- Drill and Practice software/apps e.g. literacy and numeracy
- Software for SEN pupils e.g. Work Shark
- Digital Presentations
- Book Creator

## **Current Infrastructure/Resources:**

- All desktops/laptops are networked to our own internal network including networked printing.
- Our current broadband provider is Eir, as dictated by Department of Education and Skills Schools Broadband scheme. We have e-fibre broadband and a/c wireless access points circulated around the school to maximise coverage.
- Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and desktop/laptop.
- There is 1 digital camera in the school for use by the classes, located in school office.
- We currently have 32 iPads, with two iPad storage/charging trolleys. The iPads are stored in Ms Gaynor's Room (16 iPads) and SET Room 2 (10 iPads).
- There are 6 iPads, 2 laptops and a printer/photocopier in the Haven.
- There are two printers/photocopiers in the main school building.
- The school office and principal's office are equipped with a desktop/laptop.

## **Curriculum Planning**

The integration of ICT is possible at many different levels and in various areas within our school. Interactive boards 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.
- 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.

## **Expected Skill and Learning Outcomes for ICT at each Class Level**

The following is a suggested progression of skills for class level:

### Infants

- iPad Familiarity; Competency using keyboard; Competency using some installed apps
- Navigating software by entering, exiting, closing, choosing options using touch screen and swiping
- Navigate the interactive whiteboard
- Learn about internet safety

### 1st & 2nd Class

As above for Infants and:

- Log on to educational websites such as Topmarks to explore content, play interactive games and search for information at an age-appropriate level. Sites can be chosen by the teacher and placed on favourites list.
- Continue to develop use of interactive whiteboard activities.
- Develop basic coding skills using programmes such as Scratch

### 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> Class

As for junior classes, plus:

- Develop further use of Microsoft Word tools such as WordArt, Copy and Paste, Spellcheck, Justify / 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. Brainpop, Mr Don, to deepen and enhance learning across the curriculum.
- Use Microsoft Paint to create artwork.
- Participate in ICT projects e.g. Photostory, Book Creator, Green Screen
- Internet Safety Lessons

### 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class

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.

- Explore more advanced educational websites.
- Continue to learn about safety on the Internet, especially with regard to social networking sites.

### **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.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of ICT Co-ordinator**

- Provide leadership and direction.
- Play a key role and liaise with the Principal and staff in the drawing up of a whole school policy for ICT.
- 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.
- Keep up to date with recent developments in ICT and advise colleagues appropriately.
- Identify and assess new approaches to the use of e-learning.
- Report technical problems to principal.
- Monitor the work being carried out in ICT throughout the school to ensure progression.
- Monitor and update the school website.

### **Responsibilities of Class Teachers**

- Assess pupils' skills.
- Share ideas, resources, skills and practices with fellow teachers on staff.
- Integrate ICT throughout curriculum.
- Have read the schools internet acceptable use policy.
- Inform the ICT post-holder of any technical problems and resources which need replacing.
- Ensure that all resources borrowed are returned.
- Post updates on classwork to the school website.

### **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.

### **Teacher Planning and Reporting**

St Nicholas' National School recognises the advantages of using ICT as a tool for teacher planning, preparation, record keeping and reporting. All teachers use ICT to prepare yearly and fortnightly plans. Teachers make use of the NCCA online planning tool to inform their planning. Additionally, the school has access to a number of educational companies' online resources for planning including [cjfallon.ie](http://cjfallon.ie) and [folensonline.ie](http://folensonline.ie).

### **Health and Safety**

Each classroom should have rules for safe use of the iPad – devised and discussed with children. In all classrooms consideration is given to health and safety in the location and positioning of equipment.

#### *Reducing Risks*

- Due care shall be taken not to overload extension cables or double socket adapters where it is necessary to use such equipment.
- Leads should not trail on the floor.
- Damaged plugs or leads shall be replaced.
- Ventilation grills should not be blocked as overheating may occur.
- There is a slight risk of triggering epileptic seizures from excessive screen flicker. As monitors can vary in the steadiness of screen image due care will be taken to use a monitor with minimum screen flicker where an individual child may be at risk.

### **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. Laptops 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.

There are a range of accessibility features. The following is sample that can be used on iPad:

- Guided Access

Guided Access helps students with autism or other attention and sensory challenges stay on task. A teacher or therapist can limit an iOS device to stay on one app by disabling the Home button,

and even restrict touch input on certain areas of the screen. So wandering taps and gestures won't distract from learning.

- **Speak Selection**

Hearing a word as it's being read can help with comprehension for a wide range of learners. Speak Selection can read a student's email, iMessages, web pages and ebooks out loud. Double-tap to highlight text in any application, tap Speak and the device reads the selected text. Students can have words highlighted as they're being read so they can follow along. And the voice's dialect and speaking rate can be adjusted to suit students' needs.

- **iBooks**

iBooks Author gives teachers a way to create customised learning materials for iPad to support a wide range of learning needs. Features like multicolour highlighting, notes, search, study cards and the glossary help students be better organised and better prepared. Built-in review questions give students an immediate assessment of their knowledge so they understand where to focus more study time. iBooks supports Voice Over, Speak Selection and closed-captioned videos to help all types of learners.

### **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.

### **School Website**

St Nicholas' National School's website will be kept updated regularly with current information regarding events and ongoing work by pupils in the school. It will also be used as a tool for informing and involving parents in their child's education.

### **Policy Review**

As ICT resources increase and pupil and teacher ICT competence develops the ICT Policy will be reviewed to evaluate its effectiveness. This policy will be updated when further information becomes available or when deemed necessary.

### **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management ratified this revised policy at its meeting. Copies of the policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of the staff. A copy will be available on the school website for parents and guardians.

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson Board of Management)