



ICT Policy

ICT Policy for Castlegar National School

Introduction

This Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy for Castlegar National School was formulated by the Principal and teaching staff. The plan has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Vision Statement

In the area of ICT we expect each child to leave our school feeling comfortable and confident using computers and iPads, having a basic knowledge of word processing, of emailing and internet facilities and having gained reinforcement of their general classroom work in curriculum areas such as Maths, English, Geography, etc. using educational software, interactive games and digital devices. We further hope to keep abreast of and adapt to development in new technology through teacher training in ICT and to pass this knowledge onto our pupils.

Rationale for ICT at Castlegar NS:

As outlined by the Dept. Of Education in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Teachers, ICT offer teachers and children educational tools and resources which extend their learning environment. When used to support the aims, principles and objectives of the Primary School Curriculum, these technology tools have the potential to augment and transform classroom learning and teaching.

Specific Aims for ICT use in the Primary School include:

- to enable the child to use a range of ICT tools in a relevant curriculum context
- to enable the child to develop and use ICT skills in the attainment of curriculum learning objectives
- to foster the child's confidence in his or her use of ICT, through enjoyable learning experiences
- to develop the child's understanding and practice of the safe use of ICT
- to enable the child to overcome barriers of access to learning resources caused by geographic location, culture, or language
- to enable the child to use ICT to support his or her learning effectively and creatively
- to inform the child's attitudes regarding the role of ICT in society, including the

benefits and challenges of ICT use.

- to support the development of the child's social skills through cooperative learning and problem-solving.

Advantages of ICT:

- Children will get immediate feedback when problem solving in educational software packages
- Children develop confidence in using computers, iPads and hand held technology.
- The most up to date information may be accessed speedily
- Presentation of work is greatly enhanced
- Pupils with special needs are greatly empowered though use of ICT
- The computer can allow for individual differences, and can tailor programs to the child's progress
- Most children find computers a fascinating and fun source of learning
- The computer can supply children with a view outside the classroom.
- The computer provides the children with a different learning environment
- The Interactive White Boards, bank of iPads and desktop PC's mean that children can view Internet and research information as a class.
- The Interactive White Boards and Data Projectors can also be used for power point presentations at school meetings as well as for educational DVD's or videos.
- Computer classes also supply children with an essential skill for today's working life.
- Digital Camera shots contextualize the child's life and experience within their learning.

Disadvantages

- There are major financial implications in equipping a school with up-to-date ICT equipment
- Curriculum overload is an ever present problem
- Introduction of ICT to a school greatly increases the workload
- Teachers need to continually update their ICT skills
- Computers are open to viruses and even with anti-virus software can sometimes still be susceptible to harmful images.

How ICT can support and integrate with the Primary School Curriculum

- As a creative tool to produce visually appealing projects, essays, posters, etc. using word processing, PowerPoint, Film Making, Keynote, Prezi, Photostory etc.
- To communicate with other schools and the outside world in a secure and protected environment
- To share ideas and information

- To encourage collaboration between classes and students
- To provide the students with opportunities to different aspect of ICT and perhaps stimulate an interest in a career in this field
- To enable teacher to analyse pupils work and progress on topics covered in class at home e.g. Xtramath.org, MobyMax, StudyLadder, Khan Academy
- Storage of Pupils Records of Achievement / Portfolio Assessment
- Production of letters, notes, monthly newsletters, Confirmation/Communion booklets and school policies.
- Communication via email and text for school purposes only by staff.
- Storage of photographs, files and booklets for the school.
- To enable Special Needs pupils to complete homework on iPads, laptops and email homework to teacher.
- To display lists of relevant websites linked to learning topics on the school website, enabling pupils to complete fun activities related to the topics they are learning about.
- ICT is used in all classes to challenge and extend the educational opportunities for pupils with above average attainment.
- Some children of primary school age will need assistive technology in order to lead fuller lives as children and to assist them in their learning. They may need assistive technology to support their communication, interaction, mobility, and general participation within the classroom.

ICT experiences for pupils across all classes

The school has acquired a comprehensive library of computer software and iPad apps. The school also depends and relies on a wide array of freeware and shareware software as well as online drill, games, exercises and curricular supportive sites.

The progression of skills as listed below are incremental in nature as each further subsequent step depends on and enhances knowledge of previous steps.

Jnr & Snr Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch iPads/desktops on and off in the correct manner • Names of computer parts: monitor, keyboard, mouse, processor, printer. • Use mouse correctly for locating, selecting and activating • Open and close apps on tablet devices and navigate to/from the Home screen independently. • Use Maths/Phonics Education software and websites • Write/Draw on the IWB using the pen
1st & 2nd Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of computer parts. • Turning on and off iPads/computers in the correct manner • Open and close files • Use the space bar and return keys • Use the shift key for capital letters

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Microsoft Word for word processing • Save a document in Microsoft Word • Develop computer/iPad skills further through engaging in carefully selected educational software apps. • Launch a web browser, access and navigate to a given website for research purposes.
3 rd & 4 th Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of work done in previous classes • Typing practise • Word processing – correcting mistakes, spellcheck etc. • File open/save commands • Use appropriate educational software to reinforce class work. • Competency using keyboard • Write Stories with mixed cases • Carry out Internet Research • Creation of Presentations in PowerPoint/Keynote
5 th & 6 th Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a spreadsheet to create representations (graphs and charts) • Put together a project using presentation software (Keynote/PowerPoint) with images and visual sound effects. • Use internet search engines to obtain information • Independently type and edit documents • Take photographs using iPads • Navigate educational websites • Develop awareness of online environment safety

ICT for Learning Support and Special Education Needs

When planning for the integration of ICT at Castlegar NS, careful consideration will be given to the needs of children requiring learning support and those with Special Educational Needs. The child with Special Educational Needs or in need of learning support may experience more success with the curriculum when familiar equipment is combined with additional or differentiated resources.

Pupils requiring learning support may benefit from using software to support the development of reading and writing skills, while engaging his or her auditory and visual senses. The availability of specialised supportive software allows the teacher to provide differentiated material to support the learning needs of children in a range of areas. Similarly, the motivational aspect of working independently develops the child's ability to learn independently.

A variety of ICT equipment can help children with learning disabilities. Planning for the use of such equipment will take account of the identified needs of each child. Where a child has had an educational assessment, and the use of technology is recommended, the recommendations will be examined to ascertain how they are going to be implemented.

Multimedia technology, which can present sounds, photographs, and video, as well as text and graphics on the screen, can support children who have difficulty with the printed word alone in accessing the curriculum. In this way, ICT may allow these children greater access to the curriculum than more traditional methods of teaching and learning.

Roles and Responsibilities for ICT

ICT Co-Ordination

The role of ICT co-ordinator is held by Ms. Mary McMahon. She assumes the role of ICT advisor, providing leadership in ICT throughout the school and liaises with NorthStar in attention to maintenance and care of computers in the school

Access

Pupils and teachers have permanent access to ICT equipment and resources. The school has a network which is accessible wirelessly and wired in each classroom. The school network contains vast amounts of content for teachers in every subject area. Teachers share information via the school network and staff meetings.

Sustainability

It is our goal to establish an ICT infrastructure which is user friendly, and a level of competence and confidence among the staff which will allow us to embrace ICT just as effectively as other change has been embraced in the past. We plan to replace equipment as soon as it becomes obsolete.

Health and Safety Aspects

- All monitors comply with European regulations regarding radiation.
- Dedicated power points have been installed for all computers, and fused plugs used.
- Appropriate seating is being made available
- The children are not allowed access Internet sights without supervised permission.
- The children are prohibited from sending emails and accessing chat rooms.

Hardware and Software Audit and Inventory

Current Hardware Infrastructure

1. Each mainstream classroom is supplied with
 - Teacher's laptop with Broadband and connects wirelessly to the school network.
 - Interactive Whiteboard
 - Networked access to a coloured printer and black and white printer
 - Headphones
 - Wireless Keyboard
 - Wireless Mouse
 - Portable Speakers
2. The Office is equipped with
 - A desktop PC with Broadband and wired to the school Network
 - Coloured Printer
3. Each teacher is equipped with an iPad which connects to the school network

4. The school has a bank of 15 iPads for pupil use which all connect to the school network.
5. The school has 2 IBM Little Tikes Workstations.
6. A number of Digital Cameras are available, pupils can also use cameras on the iPads.
7. A charge and sync GoCabby cart is available for storage, charging and synchronization of all iPads.
8. The school network is backed up on a monthly basis to an external hard drive.

Current Software Provision:

- All teacher laptops run Windows 7 and have Microsoft Office installed.
- Various online games and activities etc for use on IWB for example see <https://sites.google.com/a/pdst.ie/curriculum-and-ict-primary/>
- Educational Apps for use on iPads include:
 - Khan Academy
 - XtraMath –
 - Math Racer
 - Scratch Jr
 - BeeBot
 - Daisy the Dinosaur
 - MathLands
 - Sandy Math
 - Splash Math
 - Matchmatics
 - Eggy Numbers
 - King of Math
 - Spelling City
 - Starfall ABC's
 - Splingo
 - Eggy Vocabulary
 - Eggy Nursery rhymes
 - Light-bot
 - Hopscotch
 - Thinking Blocks
 - Cúla Cainte
 - Bia Linn
 - Google Maps
 - TapQuiz maps
 - Shout Science
 - Physics Lite
 - Toontastic
 - Sock Puppets
 - Book Creator
 - Garage Band
 - Musical Paint
 - Popplet Lite
 - Doodle Buddy
 - Collins big Cat Story Books
 - Kids IQ
 - Activity Book
 - Compass
 - Grammaropolis
 - Tiny Hands, pairs & sorting
 - Monster Medic
 - DIY Human Body
 - DIY Sun Science
 - DIY Nano Science

Health and Safety in the Use of ICT

Interactive Whiteboards, laptops, all plugs should be plugged out every afternoon by the teacher as soon as he/she is finished with the equipment. This is to avoid boards being damaged as a result of lightning/electrical fault etc.

- Children are only allowed access to the Internet in supervised situations. The NCTE Broadband installation program is providing external centralised firewall.
- Unwanted material is deleted immediately and teachers have been asked to immediately inform the ICT co-ordinator.
- At the moment, children are not allowed to have their own e-mail accounts in the school and are not allowed to access their existing ones.
- Children are taught from an early age that they do not give out any personal details like surnames, addresses, phone numbers etc.

Pupils should take a break from the computers/iPads at least once every 20 minutes, and should do some simple stretching exercises to relieve the muscles they have been using, for example, their hands, wrists, necks. Eye muscles should be refreshed by looking at distant objects as well as those close up. Pupils can be encouraged to make these exercises into their own personal computer 'work-out' routine.

Posture is also very important and pupils are given a few simple guidelines. Their backs should be supported in an upright position in the chair and their bodies should face forwards, not twisted sideways. Pupils sharing a computer/iPad are encouraged to make sure that everyone in the group can see without straining

Teacher's continual professional development in ICT

The teachers have attended special courses or have all received computer demonstrations during staff meetings. Teachers are encouraged to share their knowledge with colleagues and also to personally improve through attendance at ICT courses and personal practise of skills.

Most appropriate form of training: Summer courses and evening courses in IT. Locally run and online PDST Technology in Education courses are the most common courses attended by staff at Castlegar NS. All teachers have received computer demonstrations at staff meetings.

Technical Support and Maintenance

Northstar Computers provides support and maintenance on all PC's and the school network. Support for iPads is provided by CompuB.

Revision Date

To reflect the evolving nature of technology whilst affording a realistic timeframe it has been agreed to review this plan annually.

Ratification and Communication

- This ICT policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 09/02/2015 and parents can inspect the policy in the school office
- A copy of the policy is available on the school web site

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management