

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY POLICY

At St Laurence's NS we recognise the potential of ICT as a powerful teaching and learning tool when used to enhance and support the learning objectives across all curricular areas. We endeavour to create an environment where the use of ICT forms an integral part of our teaching and the children's learning.

NOTE: ICT is not seen as another school subject but rather as a tool to enhance teaching and learning.

Purpose

This policy reflects the school values and philosophy in relation to the use of ICT. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate. The policy sets out how ICT can facilitate or enhance work in other curriculum areas. This document is intended for

- All teaching staff
- All staff with classroom responsibilities
- School management
- Parents
- Inspection teams

Copies of this policy are kept centrally and are available from the principal and the p-drive in the Administration Policy documents folder.

Introduction

Information and Communications Technology prepares pupils to participate in a rapidly changing world in which work and other activities are increasingly transformed by access to varied and developing technology.

We recognise that Information and Communications Technology is an important tool in both the society we live in and in the process of teaching and learning. Pupils use ICT tools to find, explore, analyse, exchange and present information responsibly, creatively and with discrimination. They learn how to employ ICT to enable rapid access to ideas and experiences from a wide range of sources.

Our vision is for all teachers and learners in our school to become confident users of ICT so that they can develop the skills, knowledge and understanding which enables them to use appropriate ICT resources effectively as powerful tools for teaching & learning.

Aims

- To enable children to become autonomous, independent users of ICT, gaining confidence and enjoyment from their ICT activities

- To use ICT as a tool to support teaching, learning and management across the curriculum.
- To provide children with opportunities to develop their ICT capabilities.
- To ensure ICT is used, when appropriate, to improve access to learning for pupils with a diverse range of individual needs, including those with SEN and disabilities.
- To maximise the use of ICT in developing and maintaining links between other schools, the local community including parents and other agencies.

Objectives

In order to fulfil the above aims it is necessary for us to ensure:

- a continuity of experience throughout the school
- that all children have access to a range of ICT resources
- that ICT experiences are focussed to enhance learning
- that cross curricular links are exploited where appropriate
- that children's experiences are monitored
- that resources are used to their full extent
- that resources and equipment are kept up to date as much as possible
- that staff skills and knowledge are kept up to date

Organisation

Each class is allocated a time in the ICT room. A timetable is displayed within the ICT room. Individual laptops in some classrooms support the use of the Lexia programme. Digital projectors and Interactive White Boards are located in all classrooms as well as the ICT room. These are used as a teaching resource across the curriculum. All laptops and PC's are networked with children accessing the network via the s-drive and teachers accessing the network via the p-drive. Only teachers have access to the school printers of which there are two Ricoh pull printers and one Brother A4 Colour printer.

Teaching & Learning

Teachers' planning is differentiated to meet the range of needs in any class including those children who may need extra support, those who are in line with average expectations and those working above average expectations for children of their age.

A wide range of styles are employed to ensure all children are sufficiently challenged:

- Children may be required to work individually, in pairs or in small groups according to the nature or activity of the task.
- Different pace of working.
- Different groupings of children - groupings may be based on ability either same ability or mixed ability.
- Different levels of input and support.
- Different outcomes expected.

Internet Safety

Internet access is planned to enrich and extend learning activities. The school has acknowledged the need to ensure that all pupils are responsible and safe users of the Internet and other communication technologies. An Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) has thus been drawn up to protect all parties. The AUP is signed each year by teacher, pupil and parents/guardian. A copy is displayed in the ICT room. This policy forms 'Appendix A' of this policy.

Although the school offers a safe online environment through filtered internet access, set at the highest level by the Schools Broadband Service, we recognise the importance of teaching our children about online safety and their responsibilities when using communication technology. Children will be taught about internet safety using the Webwise activities developed by the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre. (www.webwise.ie)

Management Information Systems

ICT enables efficient and effective access to and storage of data for the school's management team, teachers and administrative staff.

Only teaching staff have access to the P-drive section of the server which is accessed using individualised passwords. All teachers have individual passwords to access the Aladdin online service with only senior management and the school secretary allowed unlimited access to the entire service.

The school has defined roles & responsibilities to ensure data is well maintained, secure and that appropriate access is properly managed. All information given by parents at the time of a child's enrolment is kept strictly confidential and will be retained on the Aladdin database.

Security

Each teacher is asked to lock away their laptop in the class filing cabinet each evening if not taking it home with them. The computer room is locked each evening by the caretaking staff. Each teacher is requested to delete any confidential information when passing their laptop on to another teacher.

School liaison

Email is now used frequently to liaise with staff member, the DESS, other schools and parents.

Inclusion

We recognise ICT offers particular opportunities for pupils with special educational needs and gifted and/or talented children and /or children with English as an additional language for example.

ICT can cater for the variety of learning styles which a class of children may possess.

Using ICT can:

- increase access to the curriculum
- raise levels of motivation and self esteem
- improve the accuracy and presentation of work
- address individual needs

We aim to maximise the use and benefits of ICT as one of many resources to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential.

When a recommendation has been made that a child with specific needs requires access to a laptop the child's resource teacher in conjunction with the ICT Coordinator will apply for and purchase these resources, if granted.

Roles & responsibilities

➤ Senior Management

The overall responsibility for the use of ICT rests with the senior management of a school. The Principal, in consultation with staff:

- determines the ways ICT should support, enrich and extend the curriculum;
- decides the provision and allocation of resources
- ensures that ICT is used in a way to achieve the aims and objectives of the school
- ensures that there is an ICT policy, and identifies an ICT co-ordinator.

➤ ICT Coordinator

There is a designated ICT Co-ordinator to oversee the planning and delivery of ICT within the school.

The ICT coordinator will be responsible for:

- facilitating the use of ICT across the curriculum
- providing information on C.P.D training to keep staff skills and knowledge up to date
- managing equipment and purchasing resources
- compiling a timetable for the ICT room
- reviewing and updating the ICT policy
- organising the distribution and collection of the AUP on a yearly basis
- liaising with the IT company to organise repairs
- maintaining an up to date audit of laptops and PC's in the school
- maintaining up to date antivirus software
- the organising and distribution of laptops to teachers on a yearly basis

➤ The Classroom Teacher

Even though whole school co-ordination and support is essential to the development of ICT capability, it remains the responsibility of each teacher to plan and teach appropriate ICT activities.

Health & Safety

We will operate all ICT equipment in compliance with Health & Safety requirements. Children will also be made aware of the correct way to sit when using the computer, how to adjust the brightness of the screen and the need to take regular breaks if they are to spend any length of time on computers. Computer Room Rules are also on display within the ICT room for reference. Children will also be reminded not to look directly at the beam of light from the projectors used in the classroom. All classrooms and the ICT room are fitted with suitable blinds to eliminate glare. Children are not allowed to plug in or unplug PC's or laptops.

Home school links

A school email address has been given to parents and is listed on the school website. We have a school website which will promote the school's achievements as well as providing information and communication between the school, parents and the local community.

Appropriate legislation, including copyright and data protection

All our software is used in strict accordance with the licence agreement. We don't allow personal software to be loaded onto school computers.

Effective and efficient deployment of ICT resources

ICT resources are deployed throughout the school to maximise access, to enhance teaching & learning and to raise attainment.

To enable regular and whole class teaching of ICT the school has an ICT room which all classes from Junior Infants to 6th class use weekly to develop their ICT skills.

To support the use of the Lexia programme additional laptops are shared between classes that need it.

All classes are fitted with an interactive board and projector. There are two mobile projectors in the ICT room. There is also a visualiser, video camera and digital camera available for use in the school.

At the end of year there is an audit of equipment. (laptops, PC's)

Purpose

The purpose of Internet use in school is to raise educational standards, to promote pupil achievement, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management information and administration systems. Internet use is a necessary tool for staff and pupils.

Benefits

- access to world-wide educational resources including museums and art galleries;
- educational and cultural exchanges between pupils world-wide;
- access to professional bodies and experts in many fields for pupils and staff;

Internet Content

The school Internet access will be designed expressly for pupil use and will include filtering provided by the NCTE. The school will work in partnership with the NCTE to ensure systems to protect pupils are reviewed and improved. Pupils will be taught what is acceptable and what is not acceptable and given clear objectives regarding Internet use. Staff should guide pupils in on-line activities that will support the learning outcomes planned for the pupils' age and maturity. Pupils will be educated in the effective use of the Internet in research, including the skills of knowledge location and retrieval.

Safeguards

If staff or pupils discover unsuitable sites the URL (address) and content must be reported to the ICT Coordinator

School Web Site

The point of contact on the Web site will be the school address, school e-mail and telephone number. Web site photographs that include pupils will be selected carefully and written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of pupils or their work can be published on the school Web site. Children's work will only be identified by first name and/or class level. The school will keep a record of all pupils who do not have consent for use of their work or photographs on the school website.

Emerging Internet Uses

Emerging technologies will be examined for educational benefit and a risk assessment will be carried out before use in school is allowed. Pupils will not be allowed mobile phones during school time. Any mobile phones brought into school by children should be handed to the class teacher and kept in the class filing cabinet during the school day. The use of a mobile phone by children on school property is forbidden.

Internet Access Authorisation

The school allows Internet access to all staff and pupils. All pupils and their parents or carers, will be asked to sign and return an AUP form each September.

Inappropriate Material

In common with other media such as magazines, books and video, some material available via the Internet is unsuitable for pupils. The school will take all reasonable

precautions to ensure that users access only appropriate material. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of Internet content, it is not possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on a school computer. The school cannot accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences of Internet access.

Staff

All staff must accept the terms of the 'Acceptable Use Policy' statement before using any Internet resource in school. All staff including teachers, support staff and administrative staff will have access to the School Internet Policy. Discretion and professional conduct is essential.

ICT system security

The school ICT systems will be reviewed regularly with regard to security. The use of data sticks and any other data recordable devices, except by staff, will not be allowed. Personal memory sticks and other data record devices may not be brought into school without an up to date virus check. Files held on the school's network will be regularly checked. Only IT technicians will be able to introduce and install new programs onto the network.

Complaints

Responsibility for handling incidents will be delegated to a senior member of staff. Any complaint about staff misuse must be referred to the Principal. Parents will be informed should a pupil misuse the Internet.

Parents

Parents' attention will be drawn to the School Internet Policy on the school Web site. Internet issues will be handled sensitively to inform parents without undue alarm.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____