ICT Policy

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Policy

Introductory Statement

This document is a statement of the aims and objectives, principles and strategies for ICT in St Paul's.

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 St Pauls' 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 for ICT

In 2014, the school began with the purchase of 8 pcs, networked computers operating within our computer room. Each pc is run off the Windows 7 operating system and has the Microsoft Office 2013 suite. Creating projects, touch typing and research using the internet was the 'order of the day'. However, it became apparent that the necessity to leave the mainstream classroom to visit the computer room on occasions restricted the full integration of ICT and curricular learning. It was decided that the procurement of 8 laptops for pupils' use could circumvent this issue due to their mobility and ensure the full benefit of ICT in the day to day curricular learning of our students.

All devices were set up on the school network with provision of filtered internet from the school's broadband service. With service and technical support provided by GDK.

A wireless network was installed and access routers were enabled within the school. The a/c wireless network along with the CAT-6 cabling future proofs the school for future advances in technology and facilitates.

In early 2017, St Paul's purchased a new server and the introduction of the use of amazon fire and ipads by pupils also occurred.

ICT is now a powerful tool which is central to the educational process. The Staff at St Paul's School recognise the potential of ICT at the heart of the curriculum in terms of learning and teaching and as a core competence for the pupils. We recognise the success of ICT training in raising the profile of ICT within our school and in enthusing teachers. We aim to develop and strengthen the use of ICT to support learning and teaching. We want our pupils to become independent, autonomous learners who are confident and competent using technology. 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.

Rationale

Why should our pupils use ICT?

ICT can develop thinking skills and problem solving strategies.

·   ICT can enable pupils to locate, gather, synthesis, analyse, reconstruct, communicate and present information.

·   ICT can provide opportunities for deeper analysis of concepts and processes.

·   ICT can allow pupils to gain more control over the direction of their learning.

·   ICT can present social opportunities for collaboration on joint tasks both face to face in the classroom and online.

·   ICT can develop creativity.

·   ICT can encourage learning out of school in other settings.

·   ICT can allow pupils to gain knowledge, understanding and skills beyond that of the teacher.

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.

·   Develop information handling and research skills.

·   Embed ICT in the half yearly and fortnightly plans.

To what use will ICT be put?

1. School Administration
2. Assessment
3. Adventure games that stimulate higher order thinking skills and problem solving
4. Word Processing of children's work
5. Research on the internet
6. Communication via email
7. Music composition and digital recording
8. Storage of Records of achievement/portfolio assessment

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 through the Schools Broadband scheme.
  A wireless network was installed and access routers were enabled within the school. The a/c wireless network along with the CAT-6 cabling future proofs the school for future advances in technology and facilitates
- We currently have:
  - Each teacher has a laptop and each classroom has an overhead projector colour printer and a photocopier/scanner.
  - There is a staff colour photocopier/printer wirelessly linked to the network through a port switch in the staff room. (Back up HP printer)
  - There are two digital cameras in the school for use by the classes.
  - The Principal and Family Therapist is equipped with a laptop and colour printer and a photocopier/scanner in their offices.
  - There are 8 PCs in the computer room.
  - 12 x Ipads
  - 15 x tablets
  - 8 Amazon Fire tablets
  - 8 x student laptops
  - 3x old laptops for specific functions

Storage: All hardware to be stored safely either at home, (in the case of teacher laptops or admin laptops) and/or in school lock up or locked facility in classroom.

Current Usage of Facilities

- Ipads are used as a medium of teaching and learning in all the classrooms.
- 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 multimedia encyclopedia and typing skills; internet work; presentation of project work;

creating art work; spelling; development of fine motor skills; music composition and recording.

- Staff are encouraged and frequently attend ICT courses for up-skilling and continuous professional development.
- All IT devices with cameras and digital cameras may be used for educational purposes and school purposes with consent only.

Teaching and Learning through ICT in our School

iPad Familiarity; Competency Using keyboard; Write Stories; Competency using Software; Internet Research; Search Engines; Publication of Work; Junior Cycle English CBA1 using Microsoft PowerPoint

Organisation of Resources

Timetabled usage agreed by teachers to ensure equitable distribution of resources.

The Internet as a Resource

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

Roles and Responsibilities of ICT co-ordinator (Principal in St Paul's)

· Provide leadership and direction.

· Play a key role and liaise with 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.

· 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.

· Identify and assess new approaches to the use of e-learning

· 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 by them from the computer room are returned.

· Post updates to the school website.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

· Planning at whole school level

· The Principal and ICT co-ordinator discuss how ICT is incorporated into the school development plan

· ICT is embedded into the schemes of work of each teacher.

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.

Internet Safety

Refer to school internet policy for pupils and for staff.

Health and Safety

·   Each classroom has rules for safe use of IT devices. In all classrooms consideration is given to health and safety in the location and positioning of equipment.

·   The following issues are addressed.

·   Position and posture of the child.

·   Children should be seated correctly at 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.

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.

Continuing Professional Development

Staff development in ICT is ongoing within the school. It is our aim to raise the level of teacher competence and confidence in ICT by:

· Becoming familiar with digital and online technologies.

· Continuing to have Professional Development training where possible during Croke Park Hours

· Making provision for ICT in-service training.

- Providing in–school support for teachers requiring assistance in developing particular aspects of ICT skills knowledge and understanding.

- Displaying information on the staff notice board for ICT courses.

Teacher Planning and Reporting

St Paul's School recognises the advantages of using ICT as a tool for teacher planning, preparation, record keeping and reporting. All teachers use ICT to prepare ISPs, yearly, and weekly plans. End of Year Reports are also completed using ICT.

St Paul's School Website

The 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.

Data Protection and GDPR

Ratification and Communication

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

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on ………………………………