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# Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Policy

## Aims and objectives

ICT is changing the lives of everyone. This policy therefore reflects the school values and philosophy in relation to teaching and learning using ICT. Through teaching ICT skills we equip children to participate in a rapidly-changing world where work and leisure activities are increasingly transformed by technology. We enable them to find, explore, analyse, exchange and present information. We also focus on developing the skills necessary for children to be able to use information in a discriminating and effective way. ICT skills are a major factor in enabling children to be confident, creative and independent learners. This policy should be read in conjunction with the schemes of work in the school for ICT which set out in detail what pupils in different classes and year groups will be taught and how ICT can facilitate or enhance work in other curriculum areas. Using ICT is about providing our pupils with opportunities to acquire, develop, understand, demonstrate and apply ICT concepts and processes appropriately in a variety of meaningful contexts across the curriculum.

The aims of ICT are:

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- to enable children to become autonomous, independent users of ICT, gaining confidence and enjoyment from their ICT activities
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- to develop a whole school approach to ICT ensuring continuity and progression in all strands of the Northern Ireland Curriculum
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- to use ICT as a tool to support teaching and learning and management across the curriculum
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- to provide children with opportunities to develop their ICT capabilities in all areas and to ensure their experiences are monitored and evaluated
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- 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
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- to maximise the use of ICT in developing and maintaining links between other schools and the local community, including parents and other agencies
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## Teaching and learning style

As the aims of ICT are to equip children with the skills necessary to use technology to become independent learners, the teaching style that we adopt is as active and practical as possible. While at times we do give children direct instruction on how to use hardware or software, the



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main emphasis of our teaching in ICT is for individuals or groups of children to use computers to help them in whatever they are trying to study. So, for example, children might research a history topic by using Fronter or they might investigate a particular issue on the Internet. Children who are learning science might use the computer to model a problem or to analyse data. We encourage the children to explore ways in which the use of ICT can improve their results, for example, how a piece of writing can be edited or how the presentation of a piece of work can be improved by moving text about etc.

We recognise that all classes have children with widely differing ICT abilities. This is especially true when some children have access to ICT equipment at home, while others do not. Regarding Equal Opportunities, the Northern Ireland Curriculum states that 'All pupils, regardless of race, class or gender, should have the opportunity to develop ICT capability.' We provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and experience of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (not all children complete all tasks);
- grouping children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity that are matched to the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children, particularly in the Foundation Stage;
- providing curriculum materials and software which are in no way class, gender or racially prejudiced or biased
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The ICT Co-ordinators monitor and evaluate teachers' medium term planners every 6 weeks to ensure a range of teaching styles are employed to cater for all needs and that they promote the development of ICT capabilities to use resources to enhance children's learning and presentation of information.

## ICT curriculum planning

Our school's schemes of work will be used by each teacher and they will make adaptations to ensure the plan is progressive in developing pupil capability. These are used as working documents to identify time markers, additional resource needs and to indicate whether optional activities have been undertaken.

The school uses the Northern Ireland Curriculum as a basis for its schemes of work for ICT and to provide the foundation for its curriculum planning.



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We carry out the curriculum planning in ICT in long-term, medium-term and short-term notes. The long-term plan maps the 5 Es and desirable features that the children study in each term during each key stage. The ICT Co-ordinators have a monitoring and evaluation overview of teachers' planning where they report back to staff about what has been recorded. We continue to work at improving ICT plans which show how ICT tasks are distributed across the year groups, and how these fit together to ensure progression within the curriculum plan. The 5 Es are: Explore, Express, Exchange, Evaluate and Exhibit. They describe learning experiences that teachers from P1-P7 must provide for their pupils at a level appropriate to their ability. Explore and Express will form the core of most ICT activities. However, in planning for teaching, learning and assessment we must also provide opportunities for pupils to Exchange, Evaluate and Exhibit.

Our half termly plans give details of each task and supporting activities for a half term. We are working towards identifying the key learning objectives for each unit of work. The ICT Co-ordinators are responsible for evaluating these plans.

The class teacher is responsible for writing the daily/weekly plans with the ICT component of lesson plans, including specific learning objectives for lessons. The class teacher keeps these individual plans and s/he and the ICT co-ordinators discuss them on an informal basis.

The topics and tasks studied in ICT are planned to build upon prior learning. While we offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, we also build planned progression into the scheme of work, so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move up through the school.

## The contribution of ICT to teaching in other curriculum areas

ICT contributes to teaching and learning in all curriculum areas. These links are in the process of being clearly identified in schemes and class planners. For example, work using databases supports work in mathematics, while interactive games and the Internet prove very useful for research in The World Around Us subjects. ICT enables children to present their information and conclusions in the most appropriate way.

### Literacy:

ICT is a major contributor to the teaching of English. Through the development of keyboard skills and the use of computers, children learn how to edit and revise text. We are working towards developing opportunities to develop their writing skills by communicating with people over the Internet, where they are able to join in discussions with other children throughout the world through the medium of video conferencing. They learn how to improve the presentation of their work by using desk-top publishing software.



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## **Numeracy:**

Many ICT activities build upon the mathematical skills of the children. Children use ICT in mathematics to collect data, make predictions, analyse results, and present information graphically. They also acquire measuring techniques involving positive and negative numbers, and including decimal places.

## **Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities:**

ICT makes a contribution to this area through children learning to work together in a collaborative manner. They develop a sense of global citizenship by using the Internet and e-mail. Through the discussion of moral issues related to electronic communication, children develop a view about the use and misuse of ICT, and they also gain a knowledge and understanding of the interdependence of people around the world.

We teach ICT in our **Foundation Stage** classes as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. The children have the opportunity to use the computers and assorted software. Then during the year they gain confidence and start using the computer to find information and use it to communicate in a variety of ways.

## **Teaching ICT to children with special educational needs**

At our school we teach ICT to all children, whatever their ability. ICT forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our ICT teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors - classroom organisation, teaching materials and IT hardware, teaching style, differentiation - so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs is developed in partnership with SENCo, Learning Support Teacher and Class Teacher and is shared with both the child and the parent. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to ICT. In some instances the use of ICT has a considerable impact on the quality of work that children produce; its usage can effectively increase their confidence and motivation.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning ICT. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to an ICT



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exhibition, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

## Assessment and recording

Teachers assess children's work in ICT by making informal judgements as they observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work or task, the teacher marks it and comments as appropriate. At the end of a unit of work a summary judgement is made about the work of each pupil in relation to the Level Descriptors for ICT, currently in progress. Teachers will develop their recording as these Level Descriptions are established; currently ICT is assessed by each teacher with comments included in the Pupil Profile for publication to parents at the end of each school year. Progress of the children is shared with the next teacher before the end of the academic year to assist with pupils' continuity.

The ICT Co-ordinators keep samples of the children's work in digital and printed portfolios. This demonstrates the expected level of achievement in ICT for each age group in the school.

We aim to build on our current summary sheet record details by developing and maintaining electronic portfolios of pupils' work, holding moderation meetings and using summative assessments to assign levels to pupils' work at the end of each Key Stage.

## Resources

Our school is in a position where there is a computer available in every classroom in addition to a computer room with a network of computers for groups of children. The school has Internet access for computers and iPads.

Along with the computers, the school has the following:

### Hardware

- colour printers;
- printing linked to a photocopier;
- scanners;
- digital cameras;
- video recorders;
- electronic keyboards;
- listening centres;
- calculators;
- Beebots;
- iPads;



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- laptops.

## Software

- word processing packages;
- painting/drawing software;
- clip art;
- iPad apps on line;
- music composition package;
- a multimedia programme;
- spreadsheets/database programmes;
- control programme;
- simulations;
- CD-ROMs.

ICT resources are deployed throughout the school to maximise access, to enhance teaching and learning and to raise achievement. To enable regular and whole class teaching of ICT, the school has a computer suite in Dromkeen House's specialist teachers' room. Classes are timetabled for the teaching of specific skills in ICT for all classes, with a session per week, and all classes have unlimited access to the suite at other times by arrangement through a timetable for cross-curricular use.

To support the cross-curricular nature of ICT, a number of laptops along with the Computer Suite exist for all classes and 2-3 computers are located in each of the Lower Prep classrooms. All classrooms have the use of a C2k linked interactive whiteboard with Apple TV which enables the presentation of teaching materials for all classes. The school also has a digital projector for flexibility of use as needed. Each class has a set of iPads and each teacher has her own iPad.

All equipment is identified and logged in the Fixed Assets Register and it is the responsibility of the ICT Co-ordinators to update the register as new purchases are acquired.

A Computer Club operates from time to time in the school, as an extra-curricular activity for KS2 pupils from P5-P7 to use the Computer Suite and laptops as appropriate for a term where possible for one hour per week. We believe this access outside school hours increases the amount of time our children spend learning; increases the access to ICT especially for children without a computer at home; enables some children to develop and extend personal hobbies and interests; and develops ICT capability, potentially raising self-esteem, motivation and standards of achievement.



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## Monitoring and review

The monitoring of the standards of the children's work and of the quality of teaching in ICT is the responsibility of the ICT Co-ordinators. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of ICT, for keeping informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school alongside the Head Teacher. The ICT Co-ordinators give the Head Teacher an annual summary report in which they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicate areas for further improvement/development. They are given time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and for visiting classes to observe the teaching of ICT as identified in the annual School Development Plan.

## Health and Safety

We will operate all ICT equipment in compliance with Health and Safety requirements. Children will also be made aware of the correct way to sit when using the computer and the need to regular breaks if they are to spend any length of time on computers. We have Rules for Computer use on display in the Computer Suite for reference along with specific Rules for the Use of the Internet. The Health and Safety at Work Act (January 1993) and European Directive deals with requirements for computer positioning and quality of screen. This Directive is followed for all administrative staff. Whilst this legislation only applies to people at work, we seek to follow it to provide appropriate conditions which meet their needs too.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for the use of ICT rests with the Senior Management of a school.

The **Head of Prep**, in consultation with staff:

- determines the ways ICT should support, enrich and extend the curriculum;
- decides the provision and allocation of resources;
- decides ways in which developments can be assessed, and records maintained;
- ensure ICT is used in a way to achieve the aims and objectives of the school;
- ensures there is an ICT policy and identifies co-ordinators;
- ensures children and parents are aware and understand the associated safety procedures required for the safe use of the internet. (Please also refer to Internet Safety Sheet in Safe Guarding Procedures).



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The **ICT Co-ordinators** oversee the planning and delivery of ICT within the school and will be responsible for:

- raising standards in ICT as an assessed subject within the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- facilitating the use of ICT across the curriculum in collaboration with all subject co-ordinators;
- providing or organising training to keep staff skills and knowledge up to date;
- advising colleagues about the effective teaching strategies, managing equipment and purchasing resources;
- monitoring the delivery of the ICT curriculum and reporting to the Head Teacher on the current status of the subject.

The Subject Co-ordinators:

There is a clear distinction between teaching and learning **in** ICT and teaching and learning **with** ICT. We will now move towards subject co-ordinators identifying where ICT should be used in their subject's schemes of work. This might involve the use of short dedicated programs that support specific learning intentions or involve children using a specific application which they have been taught how to use as part of their ICT study and are applying those skills within the context of another curriculum subject. Subject co-ordinators work in partnership with the ICT Co-ordinators to ensure all Northern Ireland Curriculum statutory requirements are being met with regard to the use of ICT within curriculum subjects.

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 and assist the ICT Co-ordinators in the monitoring and recording of pupil progress in ICT.

\*\* Please also refer to e-safety, ICT Acceptable Use and Digital Media Policy for further specific details connected to this policy.