

**St Mary's Primary School,  
Killyleagh**



*“Learning Today for a Better Tomorrow”*

**ICT Policy  
Addendum Covid-19**

Policy reviewed by staff – Sept 2020

Policy reviewed and ratified by Governors- Nov 2020

Signature of Chair \_\_\_\_\_

At St Mary's, the safety and well-being of our children is paramount. Given the current climate we have made a number of amendments to our ICT policy to ensure we are meeting the digital needs of every child within our school.

### **Barriers to online learning during COVID-19**

The Education Minister agreed criteria for the distribution of devices and internet access. Priority will be given to children currently in year groups 11, 13, 6 & 3 in this order; and categories: free school meals, special educational needs, Newcomer target groups (including Asylum Seeker, Refugee & Roma children), Looked after Children and children considered vulnerable.

The Education Authority has established an online process to enable schools to indicate the number of devices and internet access required for pupils within the identified criteria.

The school will provide a number of devices and internet access for the pupils within the identified criteria. If additional digital support is needed C2K will be contacted.

Relevant paperwork will be provided to the parent including any loan agreement and copies of relevant school policies. Parents are requested to sign a copy of the Loan Agreement. Pupils are requested to sign the Pupil Usage Agreement form

The school will keep a record of all devices that are loaned out, including the details of the device (type, serial number, condition) and the pupil to whom the device was loaned.

The school will provide information to parents/ guardians to support them to set the device up at home. If the device is a C2K device some guidance is available in Information Sheet EN161 on C2k Exchange

### **Effective communication during the COVID-19**

St Mary's facilitates effective communication with the whole school community through the use of Schools NI App/Seesaw/Google Classroom/School website, social platforms (Facebook/Twitter) Microsoft Teams/Forms. Information and regular updates regarding upcoming events can be found on these various platforms.

During Lockdown the school successfully used Seesaw in FS/KS1 and Google Classroom in KS2 as way of improving the home-school links and providing remote learning activities. It proved extremely popular and a huge success with parents. Information was clearly shared and monitored. During the academic year 2020-21 we will build on this and all home learning will be done via these e-learning platforms. If a child is isolating due to being identified as a close contact of someone who has tested

positive for Covid 19 or has had their own positive case of Covid 19 remote learning will take place using these e-learning platforms.

## Care and welfare during COVID-19

Staff, pupil and parents will be using the internet more during this period. The school will also use online approaches to deliver teaching and learning throughout the pandemic.

- Staff will be aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other risks online and apply the same child-centred safeguarding practices as when children were learning at the school.
- The school continues to ensure appropriate filters and monitors are in place .Our governing body will review arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate
- The school has taken on board guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre on safe remote learning and guidance for safer working practice from the Safer Recruitment Consortium. We have reviewed the code of conduct and information sharing policy accordingly. (Please see the Remote Learning Policy)
- Staff have discussed the risk that professional boundaries could slip during this exceptional period and been reminded of the school's code of conduct and importance of using school systems to communicate with children and their families.
- Children and young people accessing remote learning receive guidance on keeping safe online and know how to raise concerns with the school, Childline, the UK Safer Internet Centre and CEOP. These can be accessed in the links section of the school website.
- Parents and carers have received information about keeping children safe online with peers, the school, other education offers they may access and the wider internet community. We have set out the school's approach, including the sites children will be asked to access and set out who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.

Parents have been advised to become familiar with the following links:

- Internet matters - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- Net-aware - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- Parent info - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- Thinkuknow - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- UK Safer Internet Centre - advice for parents and carers

Free additional support for staff in responding to online safety issues can be accessed from the Professionals Online Safety Helpline at the UK Safer Internet Centre

## **Continual Professional Development during COVID-19**

Staff training provides the technical upskilling of staff so that they can utilize a range of e-learning platforms and multimedia tools in their teaching. As a result of COVID we have had to alter our approach to CPD. Throughout the year we will avail of online training through various webinars/workshops/on-line tutorials and collaborate ultra training sessions to ensure professional development continues.

## **Blended Learning during COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it necessary to develop facilities for distance learning to ensure that the education of our children continues to remain our priority. St Mary's Primary School will continue to provide education and support to our pupils, using in-school teaching, remote learning and/or a combination of both. Depending on circumstances, learning will be conducted using in-school teaching and learning, educational packs of resources and the Seesaw Class apps/Google Classroom/ Collaborate Ultra. This will ensure that the needs of all pupils are catered for. These e-learning platforms will provide a platform to ensure a consistent approach to blended learning throughout the pandemic.