ICT Policy

Mission Statement

As well as being an important educational resource, the ability to use ICT effectively is a vital life skill in modern society. Our aim is to produce learners (pupils and staff) who are confident and effective users of ICT. We strive to achieve this aim by:

- Helping all staff and pupils to explore the learning resources provided by ICT
- Helping all children to use ICT with purpose and enjoyment
- Helping all children to develop the necessary skills to exploit ICT
- Helping children to become autonomous users of ICT
- Helping all children to evaluate the benefits of ICT and its impact on society
- Using ICT to develop partnerships beyond the school
- Celebrating success in the use of ICT.

Rationale

Why does our school require ICT?

1. To provide the best possible education for all our pupils
2. To provide a powerful and up to date teaching resource for all our teachers
3. To allow for more effective administration

4. To help provide more effective communication with staff and parents

5. To communicate with teachers and pupils in Europe and further afield

6. To prepare children for life in a technologically advanced world.

To what use will ICT be put?

1. School Administration

2. Research software e.g. Encarta Encyclopaedia

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. Educational apps to support teaching and record, communicate with and publish work e.g. Seesaw, classroom dojo, etc.

7. Communication via email

8. Music composition and digital recording

9. Storage of Records of achievement/portfolio assessment

10. Special Needs pupils

Actual usage of ICT in School

Each teacher will devise their own ICT plan for the year depending on their own ability and the ability of the class. Children will acquire a certain level of competency at using computers. Skills to be learned are outlined below:

Junior Infants	Computer and tablet Familiarity: Introduction to computers, how to turn on, use and turn off the computer, how to use the mouse, use of software appropriate to their level, use of Bee-bots
Senior Infants	Computer and tablet Familiarity: Introduction to computers, how to turn on, use and turn off the computer, how to use the mouse, use of software appropriate to their level. Use of Bee-bots
1st class	Computer and tablet Familiarity; Competency Using Mouse; Competency using Drill Software and appropriate websites for their level, use of Bee-bots, taking photographs, using Lego WeDo to promote coding
2nd class	Computer and tablet Familiarity; Competency Using Mouse and keyboard; typing and becoming familiar with the keyboard;Competency using Drill Software and appropriate websites for their level, use of Bee-bots, taking photographs, Scratch Junior and Lego Wedo to promote coding

3rdclass   Computer and tablet Familiarity; Competency Using Mouse and keyboard; File Open/Save; Write Stories with Mixed Cases; Competency using Drill Software; Internet Research; Becoming familiar with Microsoft Word (typing a passage, using coloured text, inserting pictures and borders, printing), blogging

4th class   Computer and tablet Familiarity; Competency Using Mouse and keyboard; File Open/Save; Write Stories with Mixed Cases; Competency using Drill Software; Internet Research, Data Manipulation; Continuing to develop skills in Microsoft Word and if able, continue to Microsoft Powerpoint/Publisher, Blogging

5th class   Computer and tablet Familiarity; Competency Using Mouse and keyboard; File Open/Save; Write Stories with Mixed Cases; Competency using Drill Software; Internet Research, Search Engines, Data Manipulation; Taking digital photos, editing them, printing photos using an editing tool e.g. Picasa, Blogging, Scratch and Micro-bits

6th class   Computer and tablet Familiarity; Competency Using Mouse and keyboard; File Open/Save; Write Stories with Mixed Cases; Competency using Drill Software; Internet Research, Search Engines, Data Manipulation, Publication of Work; Compiling a photostory including text and sound, Blogging, Scratch and Micro-bits

Summary of School Audit

Current Infrastructure

- In keeping with our mission, we perceive computers 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 Eir, as dictated by the Department of Education and Skills Schools Broadband scheme.
- Most up-to-date operating system to be chosen when purchasing new computers.
- Our computer room consists of 16 networked computers connected to a master computer, one photocopier and a data projector.
- Each classroom has a data projector, interactive whiteboard/panel, a visualiser and teacher laptop/PC.
- Each learning support room has a computer/laptop. They also have access to 8 chromebooks.
- There are 15 digital cameras, 36 tablets, 5 hand-held video cameras, two Canon digital cameras, digital and tape video camera, a Dictaphone, USB card readers and USB cassette converter in the school for use by the classes. 6 Bee-bots, learning mats and a set of Lego WeDo are also available for use.
- The office is equipped with a PC, a colour printer and a photocopier/scanner.

Current Usage of Facilities

- Computers are used as a medium of teaching and learning in all the classrooms, but a timetable is issued for the Computer Room.
- Current usage includes pre-reading and early reading work; pre-number and early number work; mathematical application; development of thinking and problem solving skills; word processing, desktop publishing; use of multimedia encyclopaedia and typing skills; internet work; presentation of project work; creating artwork; spelling; development of fine motor skills; blogging; coding; music composition and recording.
- Staff are encouraged and frequently attend ICT courses for up-skilling and continuous professional development.

Additional Information

ICT Co-ordination

- The school has a special duties teacher, who holds responsibility for ICT as part of a designated schedule of responsibilities .
- Any IT faults which cannot be rectified by hardware users are to be reported to the ICT co-ordinator.
- Anti-virus Protection is installed on all computers with access to broadband.

Access

Pupils and teachers have permanent access to ICT.

Special Needs

Computers are provided in the learning support rooms, and resource rooms, as we recognise the potential of ICT to enhance the learning opportunities for pupils with special needs. Children with specific writing, reading and numeracy needs are using ICT to provide alternative and complementary educational experiences. Laptops and specialised keyboards are also provided where appropriate.

Exceptional Students

ICT is used in all classrooms to challenge and extend the educational opportunities for pupils with above average attainment.

Maintenance

We use Shane McKeown (Nortech Solutions) for our IT needs.

Donations

We welcome and appreciate any donation from corporate/private organisations.

Health and Safety Aspects

All new computers purchased will comply with European regulations regarding radiation.

School Website

- The school hosts a website at www.castletowngns.ie .
- School newsletters and other news items will regularly be added.
- School policies that are relevant to parents will also be added to this site.
- Parents are asked to sign a disclaimer when enrolling in the school, giving permission for their child's work and photographs to be used on the website.

HSCL Facebook page

- Our Home-School Liaison teacher (shared between Castletown G.N.S. and St. Nicholas' Monastery Boys School) has created a Facebook page.
- The purpose of the page is to increase and encourage communication with parents and assist in supporting them remotely. It also aims to make parents aware of courses and events ongoing in the school community and encourage participation in same.
- Parents choose to "like" the Facebook page and can therefore, follow the posts.

Communication & Ratification

- Reviewed by staff in March 2022.

- Presented to parents for review in March 2022.

- Ratified by the Board of Management of Castletown GNS in

    _____ and will be reviewed and updated in March 2024.

Internet Acceptable Usage Policy

Educationalists believe in the benefits of curriculum-based internet use. The purpose of the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources, and will be protected from harmful and illegal use of the Internet.

Castletown Girls' National School will employ a number of strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet.

These strategies are as follows:

1. Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)
2. Education
3. Filtering/Monitoring

Sanctions

If a pupil deliberately misuses the internet or email, this will result in disciplinary action, including the withdrawal of access privileges. Parents/guardians will receive written notification of misuse by a pupil.

Internet

1. The Internet will be used for educational purposes only.
2. Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.

3. Pupils will seek permission before entering any Internet site, unless previously approved by a teacher.

4. Filtering software will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.

5. The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet usage.

6. Pupils will receive training in the area of internet safety.

7. Pupils will be taught to evaluate the content of internet sites.

8. Teachers will be made aware of internet safety issues.

9. Uploading and downloading of non-approved material is banned.

10. Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.

11. The use of non-school electronic equipment in school requires a teacher's permission e.g iPods etc.

12. Pupils will observe good "netiquette" (etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any action that may bring a school into disrepute.

Email

If pupils are allowed to use email, the following rules will apply:

1. Email will be used for educational purposes only.

2. Students will only use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.

3. Pupils will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

4. Pupils will not send text messages to or from school email.

5. Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's personal details e.g. addresses, telephone numbers, or pictures via school email.

6. Pupils will never arrange to meet someone via school email.

7. Sending or receiving email attachments is subject to teacher permission.

Internet Chat

Students are not permitted to use internet chat rooms.

School Website

Designated teachers will manage the publication of material on the school website.

1. Personal pupil information, home addresses and contact details will not be published on the school website.
2. Class lists will not be published.
3. Pupils' full names will not be published beside their photograph without written permission from the parent.
4. Digital photographs, video clips and audio clips will generally focus on groups and group activities rather than on individual pupils.
5. Pupils will be given an opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the school website.
6. Teachers will select work to be published and decide on the appropriateness of such.
7. Permission to publish a student's work will be sought from pupils/parents/guardians on enrolment. This permission may be withdrawn at any time.
8. Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Education

Castletown Girls' National School will undertake an education programme to educate children on the safe, responsible use of the Internet.

21st century life presents dangers including violence, racism and exploitation from which children and young people need to be protected. At the same time they need to learn to recognise and avoid these risks – to become internet wise.

Resources that may be used to implement this programme include

- NCTE Internet Safety Awareness Video
- Use of the 'Kids' section on the www.webwise.ie website
- SAFT Internet Safety Awareness Education Programme and exemplars
- Play and Learn: being online
- My Selfie and the Wider World
- Be Internet Legends
- HTML Heroes

Filtering

'Filtering' is a term used to describe a way of limiting the content of web pages, emails, chat rooms and other electronic data to which users may be exposed. No filter is 100% accurate. The most effective filtering tool is adult vigilance.

Many browsers have their own built-in filtering tool e.g. Google. Google's search engine has a built-in "Safe Search". This filter eliminates sites that contain pornography and explicit sexual content from search results. It is easily applied by clicking on the **Preferences** link on any Google page. Unfortunately it is also easily removed.

Castletown Girls' National School has filtering software. The access to websites from all school computers is monitored and regularly reviewed by the NCCA. Websites are only allowed through following a verification of their suitability.

Remote Learning

In March 2020, schools were closed due to the outbreak of Covid-19. This was unprecedented and even though the school buildings were closed, schooling continued remotely and ultimately through digital technology. Arising from this, the following changes occurred and will continue to be used:

- Teachers may use apps and digital services to communicate with the children in their class and their parents in and out of school hours.
- Apps may include Seesaw, Classroom dojo, Google classroom and others.
- Castletown Girls' School will predominantly use the SeeSaw app to communicate with pupils, set work and provide feedback.

- Initial contact will be made with the parent through email and then, once the parent accepts the invitation, communication between the school and home will continue through the chosen app.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work created.

- Parents will be contacted via email or phone calls on a regular basis by class teachers or Special Education Teachers.

<u>Video conferencing</u>

On occasion Castletown Girls' School will use video conferencing using the platform of Zoom.

Video conferencing will mainly be used to check - in with a class, examples include

- News
- Show and Tell
- Assembly
- SPHE lessons/ Circle time
- Oral language activities

It may also be used for:

- Reading or Maths Recovery lessons
- EAL Lessons
- Check - ins with SNAs or SET teachers
- Junior Infant induction meeting : teacher and parents
- Job sharing meetings: Teacher and parents

Rules for video conferencing

- Participants must be appropriately dressed.
- Participants will mute their microphones unless requested otherwise.

- If the chat function is enabled all messages will be respectful, polite and kind.

- For the dignity and respect of all participants, the meeting should take place in a quiet room with no interruptions.

- Child protection: A parent should be in the room with the child during their meeting. Nobody is permitted to take a recording or a screenshot of the meeting.

- A second teacher/ SNA will join a meeting in the case of a class check -in to act as host/ moderator - to deal with any technical queries and to enable the class teacher to focus on the class.

- Note: Some safety tips can be found on :

https://www.webwise.ie/parents/explained-live-streaming/