



# Holycross National School

## ICT POLICY

### Information and Communication Technology

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

The school has four main classrooms, staffroom/learning support room, resource room and principal's office. With the exception of the resource room all the above rooms are networked and have broadband internet access.

**Resources:** Each classroom and the learning support room are fitted with an Interactive Whiteboard. Each teacher has their own laptop.

**Skills:** All teachers are competent in ICT, having attended several courses over the years and all use computers in the classroom.

The school has maintained an active website for almost 30 years and was awarded "Scoilnet Star Site Status" many years ago. The site was totally overhauled and modernized within the last year. The school has for many years been active in ICT projects including a number of International Comenius Projects. The school was selected as one of the Schools Integration Projects (S.I.P.) as part of the Departments I.T. 2000 initiative and produced a wonderful project on Coalmining in Castlecomer. The project was presented in three formats: website, C.D. and 190 page book. The entire project is on the school website.

#### Rationale

1. To enrich and extend learning throughout the curriculum, using the technology to support cross-curricular and collaborative working, independent study and the re-working of ideas as well as providing students with the opportunity to work at a more demanding level.
2. To help students acquire the confidence and ability to use a range of ICT resources, become familiar with the everyday application of ICT and be able to evaluate the technology's potential and limitations.
3. To encourage an attitude of mind that can adjust to and take advantage of the developing nature of the technology while being mindful of the implications and consequences for individuals and society.
4. To encourage the use of ICT regardless of race, cultural, international, gender or special educational needs.
5. To encourage project management and presentational skills for children and staff.
6. To provide a blended learning aspect to every child's overall education.

#### Aims

1. All students should become effective users of a range of ICT resources and have the opportunity to access ICT resources in all areas of curriculum.

2. Students should experience a broad range of ICT skills and resources.
3. Student's development in ICT should be continuous and progressive throughout the key stages.
4. All members of staff have a responsibility to contribute to the development and use of ICT in the curriculum, developing students ICT capability, monitoring and evaluating student's progress and continuity of experiences.
5. Students should develop the capability :
  - To use information sources and ICT tools to solve problems
  - To use ICT tools and information sources, such as computer systems and software packages, to support learning in a variety of contexts.
  - To understand the implications of ICT for working life and society.
6. Students have an entitlement to have reasonable opportunity to access a range of ICT resources and courses that will extend their use, understanding of and experience of ICT.

### **Vision Statement**

Capability in Information and Communication Technology is now a lifelong skill. The school has the responsibility to ensure that all students receive appropriate access to this skill. We must strive to provide students with the opportunities to experience and develop their ICT capability to the full.

Pupil Access to the Internet (See Acceptable Usage Policy also)

The school encourages use by pupils of the rich information resources available on the internet, together with the development of appropriate skills to analyse and evaluate such resources. These skills are seen by us as fundamental in the society our pupils will be entering.

On-line services significantly alter the information landscape for schools by opening classrooms to a broader array of resources. As directed by national policies, supporting and enriching the curriculum while taking into account the various teaching needs, learning styles, abilities and developmental levels of pupils will be paramount. Internet access, because it may lead to any publicly available resource in the world, opens classrooms to electronic information resources which have not been selected by teachers as appropriate for use by pupils. Safety and security is seen as an integral issue which is constantly addressed.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation of citizens and future employees during the coming Information Age. The school expects that the staff will investigate possibilities and blend use of such information as appropriate within the curriculum and that staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources. Staff will consult the ICT coordinator for advice on content, training and appropriate teaching levels consistent with the school's ICT programme of study.

Independent use of telecommunications and electronic information resources is not advised and will only be permitted upon submission of permission and agreement forms by parents of pupils.

Access to on-line resources will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with people throughout the world. The school believes that the benefits to pupils from access to information resources and increased opportunities for collaboration

exceed the disadvantages but ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

### **Resource Development**

In order to match electronic resources as closely as possible to the national and school curriculum, teachers review and evaluate resources in order to offer “home pages” and menus of materials that are appropriate to the age range and ability of the group being taught.

The class teacher will provide appropriate guidance to pupils as they make use of telecommunications and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies.

All pupils will be informed by staff of their rights and responsibilities as users, before their first use, either as an individual user or as a member of a class or group.

As far as possible, the school uses information resources in ways that points pupils to those that have been reviewed and evaluated prior to use.

While pupils may be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been evaluated by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly suited to the learning objectives.

The school, in conjunction with Kilkenny Education Centre, will offer parents a tailor made webinar on the development of their own ICT skills in order for them to gain knowledge and expertise on our online blended learning forum, i.e. SeeSaw

### **School Rules**

The school has developed a set of guidelines for internet use by pupils. These rules are known to all pupils and kept under constant review.

All members of staff are responsible for explaining the rules and their implications. All members of staff need to be aware of possible misuses of on-line access and their responsibilities towards pupils. The school also has a set of clearly defined rules for the Computer Room.

### **Resources and Support**

In general, ICT equipment is widely and readily available throughout the school and is adequately supervised to allow for easy student access.

Technical support is a major issue and expense. The ICT coordinator carries out maintenance to the best of his ability but sometimes external expertise has to be purchased. There is no budget for same and the school has to find funding from its own resources.

### **Short Term Goals- Pupils**

- To make pupils comfortable and reasonably proficient with ICT as an educational and curricular support.
- To provide for all children, regular access to the ICT facilities of the school and to ensure that they learn, using a safe and secure offline/online environment.

- To ensure that ICT training given to pupils is relevant to their needs and targeted at appropriate levels.
- To train pupils in the use of certain technical skills regarding use and care of ICT in the school.
- To train pupils in the use of certain software packages that are directly relevant to their curriculum areas of education.
- To present pupils with certain curriculum project ideas that can be enhanced through the use of computers.
- To educate pupils in the use of the internet, i.e. web browsing, SeeSaw and Google Classroom.
- To enthuse pupils so that their computer literacy is seen as a relevant, coherent and a basic part of education.
- To give children with special needs the skills to learn appropriate ICT skills.
- To engender co-operative skills as part of the work ethic of the children.

#### **Short Term Goals- Teachers**

- To monitor skills needs and to organise or sponsor training for teachers as required.
- To pool resources within the school and plan for development of same.
- To identify a teacher or teachers within the staff with special interest and/or skills in the area of ICT.
- To construct evaluative procedures for monitoring the progress and effects of ICT in the classes, including those with special needs.
- To provide supports in terms of hardware and software.
- To provide teachers with access to new theories of education that are directly related to the evolving educational processes of ICT.
- To provide teachers with easy access to ICT and its ongoing developments.
- To provide a method of allowing individual feedback from the teachers as to the success or failure of the ICT in various initiatives.
- To train all staff, children and parents in the forum of the online platform, SeeSaw as part of our blended learning initiative.
- To keep up with our Education Centre initiatives and work with them on a needs basis.

#### **Technology**

- To audit the ICT resources of the school in terms of hardware/software/technical skills base (school and community) and staff skill level and commitment level.
- To acquire the necessary hardware to continue the development of ICT skills and initiatives at the school to a very high standard.
- To acquire the necessary software to continue the development of ICT skills and initiatives at the school.
- To source, within the community if possible, technical advice and expertise.
- To identify, a person or persons within the community with skills for hardware repair and maintenance.
- To audit the hardware and software resources of the school on an ongoing basis (once a term) and to ensure that teachers and the community are made aware of these resources and their possible uses for them.

### **Long Term Goals – Pupils**

- Pupils will become comfortable and proficient with ICT in education.
- Pupils will have knowledge of a number of relevant educational programs so that they will be able to use these confidently in the classrooms
- ICT will become an educational tool rather than a plaything.
- Pupils will be able to use e-mail, the internet etc as educational resources.
- Pupils will be able to communicate with their teachers through SeeSaw and Google Classroom.
- Pupils will be encouraged to frequently update their knowledge base about ICT.
- Pupils will begin to be in contact with other schools nationally and internationally thus broadening the education experience for children and staff.
- Pupils will appreciate the value of educational opportunities provided by a skill base in ICT.
- That ICT in education will enhance the learning opportunities of all children, from the weak to the gifted in an atmosphere of self worth, self belief and self motivation.
- The whole school community will become proficient in the use of a blended learning approach.

### **Long Term Goals – Teachers**

- Provide incentives for staff to attend ICT courses to update their skills.
- Facilitate teachers attending ICT Exhibitions & Information Days.
- Teachers will be encouraged to use ICT skills to develop specialized relevant knowledge for the use of all pupils.

### **Technology**

- To keep abreast of new hardware developments
- To update equipment at regular intervals
- To monitor ICT developments and keep up to date with new material & resources.
- To provide specific hardware resources; Digital camcorder, Digital cameras, Recording equipment, Website facilities

### **Administration: Objectives**

- To actively promote community involvement in the educational activities of the school with respect to ICT. (ICT courses for parents)
- To maintain the high ICT profile of the school by continuing to advance the developmental work carried out over the past few years.
- To continue staff development in ICT.
- To add to the software and hardware base as required.

### **Equipment**

- To constantly update equipment so that learning can occur smoothly and without interruption.

### **Professional Development**

- The school staff are encouraged to utilize training opportunities provided by Department of Education and NCTE.

- They also avail of the coordinators and staff trainer's expertise and are fully aware of the capabilities of the pupils and learn many new skills with and from them.

### **Curriculum, Instruction and Evaluation**

A set of goals in this respect would include a set of practical guidelines for the school in general:

- To promote a positive, masterful attitude to technology.
- To implement this aim, children are given structured access to ICT on an individual or group basis and are encouraged to develop basic skills in a supervised context. Care is taken that the content is both fun and educational.
- To use ICT as tools to enhance further learning and a blended learning environment.
- Children are exposed to a variety of ICT tools and environments in both a supportive and challenging environment. This access is structured and developmental.
- To facilitate cross-curricular learning.
- Access to a wide variety of software which enhances their daily learning ensures that ICT is deeply embedded in the curriculum and is not seen as an exceptional subject area.
- To develop basic keyboard skills.
- No formal keyboard training is given but children are encouraged to use correct fingering and posture from an early age.
- To promote imagination and creativity.
- The integration of ICT into everyday school life and easy access to computers for project work is fundamental to the promotion of creativity and the imaginative use of technology.
- To develop problem-solving skills.
- Various projects have led to the children becoming adept at using ICT. This is seen as a particular use of technology which makes problem-solving an integral part of the children's thinking.
- To motivate children to collect, enter and interpret data via computer.
- Data collection and interpretation is widely used in project work and as part of the Maths curriculum.
- To encourage children to communicate effectively.
- Language communication in both Irish and English is supported by the use of sound recorder and microphone. Children make use of photography and film to communicate effectively and gain much enjoyment from their usage.
- To generate cross-cultural and international links through the use of e-mail.
- To develop project management and presentational skills in children.
- Children use all available technology to develop higher order skills and to present their projects to various audiences. (Powerpoint projects, SeeSaw).
- To develop lifelong learning skills.
- Children's use of ICT is embedded in their learning and is seen as an integral part of their daily life. This learning develops over their Primary School years and will continue as they learn new skills and use new technologies.
- To allow children to interact internationally as well as locally with other children (e-mail/internet).

- Children's use of e-mail is supervised and supported in school. Parents are also encouraged and supported in their role and are kept informed of current issues particularly cyber bullying and the use of inappropriate materials.

#### **Assessment and Recording:**

- Assessment in ICT is inseparable from the teaching process and should be built on good classroom practice.
- The function of assessment is to direct the development of the individual.
- Progression will be seen in an increasing difficulty of problem, sophistication of application or extension of quality, quantity or both but not necessarily in the use of more complex hardware or software.
- The professional judgment of teachers is the foundation of assessment in observing students applying ICT within their work across a range of situations to advance, enrich or enhance their performance.
- Self assessment and appraisal by a student of his/her own achievement is an intrinsic part of ICT development.
- Feedback is provided to children by their teacher(s) on the activities they complete on SeeSaw.

#### **Networking**

A network system for the school is in place and all computers have a file sharing commodity and access to the internet.

#### **Maintenance**

A maintenance cost has to be built into the budget though this cost is minimized through internal expertise.

#### **Provision for Pupils with Special Needs**

There are children with special learning difficulties in this school. Our task is to identify software that will aid their learning. This can be done in consultation with the Special Education Teacher (SET), Education Centers, Special Ed. groups and Special Needs Resource catalogues.

#### **ICT Progression – Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class**

- Familiarisation with tablet rules.
- Learning basic use of and care of tablets.
- Using a wide variety of Curriculum Software/Apps.
- Use of SeeSaw and completion of activities to further develop their curriculum knowledge at their level.

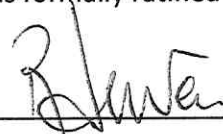
#### **3rd - 6th Classes**


- Reinforcement of tablet rules and familiarisation with laptop rules.
- Reinforcement of basic use of and care of ICT equipment.
- Progressing keyboard skills.
- Using a wide variety of Curriculum Software/Apps.
- Progressing Word Processing, creating their own files.
- Introduction and use of Powerpoint for project work.
- Progressing file management.

- Use of SeeSaw and/or Google Classroom and completion of activities to further develop their curriculum knowledge at their level.
- Using the internet as a library and as a resource.

**Ratification and Review**

This policy was formally ratified by the Board of Management on 2/10/25.

Signed:  Chairperson, BoM Date: 2/10/25

Signed:  Principal Date: 2/10/25