



St. Laurence O'Toole's G.N.S.

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I.C.T. POLICY incorporating AUP

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1. Background:

This policy has been jointly formulated in consultation with all stakeholders in St Laurence O'Toole's CBS and GNS. It is the culmination of a process of co-operative ICT practice between both schools since the school term 2002/2003.

To enable progression and continuity we must have suitable machines; this includes the upgrading of the hardware and the software where needed and when manageable. The manageability is determined by available finance and realistic demands on staff time.

2. Pupils Skills

Pupils are given basic skills teaching through time spent working on the computer. Pupils are encouraged to use ICT in a variety of situations and contexts:

- Within the curricular areas of Language, Mathematics, SESE, Art and Music most particularly.
- To develop transferable skills to encourage them to gain confidence to experiment with unfamiliar software.
- To gain experience in the following areas of ICT: communicating and handling information, using graphics, charts, databases and spreadsheets.
- To develop critical awareness of ICT within society to support the development of the above skills.

3. Skills Support

To support the progression of skills for the pupils we endeavour to:

- Expose pupils to the use of ICT in as many subject areas and contexts as possible. This will increase as more confident and begin to extend the incorporation of ICT into their schemes of work.
- Use a wide and expanding range of software and ICT equipment as appropriate, manageable and affordable.
- Encourage pupils to increase their depth of knowledge of software as they gain in confidence.
- Teach pupils to use ICT equipment and software confidently and purposefully to communicate and handle information and to support their problem solving, recording and expressive work.
- Teach pupils to become discerning in their use of ICT, select information, sources and media for their suitability of purpose and to assess the value of ICT in their work practices.

Our school believes guidance is important as pupils begin to learn to take responsibility for their work and progress. Work must be sufficiently challenging, meet the needs of all individuals and provide a balance between teacher-directed and self-directed work. Teacher confidence is critical within the realm of ICT for them to feel confident enough to allow the pupils to develop at their own rate.

Teachers encourage discussion and sharing of ideas when appropriate to the work. Teachers conduct lessons within an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Pupils are encouraged to take 'risks' and try new things with their work. Active involvement of pupils in their learning helps to foster independent thinking and informed planning - we view this as crucial for pupils to exploit the ICT facilities to the maximum. We aim is not to inhibit pupils by placing a ceiling on their target.

We aspire to provide pupils of all abilities access to rewarding ICT that is able to support and enhance their learning across the curriculum. The mode of delivery must remain flexible so as to address the various needs of the pupils in the classroom. A variety of ICT facilities are made available to encourage pupils of all abilities to experiment and progress.

The importance of ICT as a cross-curricular tool is recognised. The school aims to expose the pupils to the diversity, influence and uses of ICT.

3a Special Needs

It is acknowledged that extensive ICT support is required for the delivery of the following services within the school.

Maths Recovery, Reading Recovery, Teacher Support, Learning Support

Recording Cameras and assistive technology have been allocated to individual pupils and to support teachers to assist those with special educational needs in accordance with best practice guidelines.

4. Strategies

Strategies for ensuring the achievement of ICT policy through providing – in an ongoing manner - suitable resources to support and develop ICT plan, such as:

- Ongoing suitable training for teachers.
- Stand alone networked computers in each classroom.

- Mobile Computer room with a network of computers.
- *SmartBoard / Promethean* IWB for each mainstream classroom (currently there is one upstairs and one downstairs)
- Wired Broadband Internet Access in all rooms, wireless in a number.
- Provide own domain and develop website and class blogs / wiki
- Employ ICT to maximise the use of learning resources in the school.
- Employ ICT for school administrative, planning and review functions.
- Provide parent classes on basics – internet, email, podcasting, digital camera, digital video, virus protection, net safety etc.
- Promote home-computing through initiatives such as advice on purchase, help with maintenance and facilitating group computer purchase deals for parents.
- Ongoing ICT meetings with designated ICT coordinator Mrs O’Halloran, FutureKids Instructor Mike Travers and Principal Mr O Riordain

5. Activities designed to develop computing abilities:

- Text handling: Use of word processors to compose, edit and revise text.
- Information handling: Use of databases, spreadsheets, word processors, graph plotting to store, display and analyse information.
- Sound and graphics: Use of computer systems to compose and play music, use of drawing and design packages in the visual arts.
- Picture and Video: Use of digital imaging – still and motion – with ICT to develop/display projects.

6. Impact and value of ICT:

- Learning about and discussing the applications of computer software from their own uses and by considering uses outside school.
- Generation of text, editing and revising text, composition of pages, booklets, news sheets and reports, sending and retrieving e-mail, developing awareness of use of new technologies in mass media.
- Using spreadsheets and other generic packages to solve numerical problems, using computers to investigate patterns, carrying out investigations and problem solving activities based upon computer simulations.
- Using word processors to produce a report, using database to store, process and retrieve information, using spreadsheets to store, analyse and interpret data, using simulations to investigate scientific and technological process, geographical phenomena, and historical events; investigating and considering the effects of new technologies.
- Using word processors to generate text; develop an appreciation of the ethical and moral issues associated with the use of computers.

7. Internet Use

The internet is a valuable teaching and learning tool. It provides information and allows people to communicate with others and share information. It can develop children’s independent research skills and promote life-long learning.

However, some material available on the Internet is unsuitable for children and therefore these guidelines will be followed when using the internet.

7a Pupils' use of the Internet: Pupils are responsible for good behaviour on the internet. Access to the Internet may be withdrawn from pupils who fail to maintain acceptable standards of use. Internet access in the school includes a filtering service. However no filtering service is completely foolproof and therefore pupils are supervised during the use of the internet.

Staff ensure – to the maximum extent possible – that pupils know and understand that no internet user is permitted to:

- Use the internet for any illegal activity including accessing other computers.
- Retrieve, send, copy or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Use obscene or offensive language.
- Cause damage to computers, computer systems or networks.
- Violate copyright laws.
- Trespass in another user's folders, work or files.
- Cause any form of vandalism to the machine or the work of others including the up loading or creation of viruses.

7b Organisation and Management of Internet Use

Staff will select sites which will support pupils' learning. Pupils may be given with details of suitable sites to extend their learning at home as and when appropriate. The school website www.larriers.ie is regularly updated with particular reference to parental consent (Appendix 1 and 2). It is understood that individual children's names will not be used.

7c Promoting Safe and Independent Use of the Internet

Internet access will be supervised. Teachers ensure that pupils understand appropriate use of the internet and are aware of the rules. Pupils are encouraged to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

7d Children's Use of Email

Children in school must only use email for educational purposes and e-mails will be checked before being sent. Pupils will not be allowed to send personal emails from the school system without permission. In-coming email will be regarded as public and may be examined by any staff member. The use of chat rooms is forbidden.

It is considered, for project work, that a 'wiki' or 'google document' format is preferable to e-mail where online documents are updated and corrected.

7e Staff Internet Use

Members of staff are encouraged to use I.C.T. resources in their teaching and learning activities, to conduct research, and for contact with others.

- Each member of staff has access to an email address as part of his/her work, protected by the use of a confidential password, which should be kept secure. This address takes the form of girls@larriers.ie
- The use of personal email in school is acceptable outside of teaching hours.
- When using the internet, all users must comply with all copyright, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity laws.
- All users are expected to communicate in a professional manner.
- It will not be usual practice to read staff emails but the school reserves the right to do this in the case of a suspected breach of these policy guidelines.
- A serious breach may be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- No person will in any way alter the filtering preferences.

8. Other General Issues:

- The school is indebted to St Laurence O'Toole's CBS and Citigroup for ICT provision and support within their computer room which the girls access weekly. It is not considered to be a sustainable process owing to health and safety concerns.
- The majority of the current stock of laptop computers is two years old, two of which are connected to Interactive whiteboards.
- Under the previous action plan the strategies outlined on page 2 above have been – and continue to be – implemented. Under the next plan it is envisioned that the school will increase its level of ICT integration through the provision of wireless broadband access and mobile/laptop computing across the school. Part of this vision will see pupils take laptops home for project work and, potentially, experiment with 'virtual homework club' techniques, among other initiatives. It is further planned to have a mobile computer unit within the school with 24 laptops to enable children to access ICT lessons in their own classroom.

9. Policy Review and Ratification:

All our school policies are subject to annual appraisal and review by staff, Parents' Council and Pupils' Council as appropriate, and final ratification by the Board of Management. As new initiatives are regularly attempted, not least in ICT, those that become established are included in policy for the following year. This approach seeks to promote the organic development of curriculum provision and to promote and encourage the trying of new things, as outlined above. Ongoing ICT meetings with designated ICT coordinator Mrs O'Halloran, FutureKids Instructor Mike Travers and Principal Mr O Riordain will continue as previously outlined.

APPENDIX 1

Dear Parents,

As part of the school's ICT programme we will be offering pupils supervised access to the Internet. As you are probably aware the Internet contains a vast amount of information, but unfortunately not all of this is suitable for children. Therefore we have included Internet use in our I.C.T. Policy stating our school practice.

Before being allowed to use the Internet, all pupils must obtain parental permission. We therefore ask that both you and your child sign the enclosed form as evidence of your approval and acceptance of the school rules on this matter. A copy of our Internet Use statement is attached.

Please read this statement carefully.

Name of Pupil

Class:.....

I allow my child (Full name):

..... to use the Internet in school and accept school rules on this matter.

Signature of Parent

Signature of Pupil

APPENDIX 2

Advice for Parents on ICT in the Home

During school hours, teachers will guide pupils toward appropriate materials on the internet. Outside school, parents or guardians should bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they normally would with other information sources, such as television, magazines etc.

Parents or guardians should be aware that the internet service provider at home may not be filtered.

It is therefore important that these guidelines are followed:

- Discuss rules for using the internet with your children and decide together when, how long and what comprises appropriate use.
- Be aware of the sites your children are visiting and discuss with them what they are learning.
- Ensure that children do not give out personal identifying information on the internet such as a picture, address, phone number, school name or financial information such as credit card or bank details.
- Encourage your children not to respond to any unwelcome, unpleasant or abusive messages and to inform you if they receive any such messages or images.

Appropriate home use of internet can be educationally beneficial and can make a useful contribution to home and school work. It should however be supervised and parents be aware that they are responsible for their children's use of the internet resources at home.