ICT Policy

Aims

Beara Community School aims to educate staff and students to use ICT effectively to support and develop their lifelong learning.

To use ICT as an effective and efficient teaching, learning, communication and management tool throughout the school.

We aim

· To promote a positive, masterful attitude to technology

· To use computers and interactive boards as tools to enhance further learning

· To facilitate cross-curricular learning

· To develop basic keyboard skills

· To promote imagination and creativity

· To develop problem solving skills

· To motivate students to collect, enter and interpret data

· To encourage students to communicate more effectively

· To develop project management and presentation skills

· To develop co-operative skills through participation in ICT projects that demand the pooling of skills and interactive development of ideas and material

· To train students in the use of scanners and digital cameras and their software packages thus enriching their multimedia experience

· To train pupils in the use of certain software packages that are directly relevant to their areas of education, from Junior to Senior Cycle

· To enthuse pupils so that computer skills are seen as relevant, coherent and basic part of education in the future

· To continuously improve the ICT capability of students and staff.

· To provide access to high quality ICT resources and support for staff and students.

Whole-school issues

The school's policy is to use and develop the opportunities provided by ICT to benefit the entire school community. This includes communicating with parents and providing opportunity for the wider community to benefit from the schools ICT resources.

IT Curriculum issues

Teaching staff continue to review all teaching and learning in line with current ICT good practice.

A whole-school network supports curriculum delivery for all subject areas in providing networked resource materials, teacher-researched Internet links for student use and material for staff curriculum related professional development. The network is maintained and developed by the IT Technician.

Student Issues

Students are facilitated with supervised use of ICT. Several departments also ensure that pupils have access to ICT in their subject area via a booking system of the Computer Room. It is important that ICT is used effectively to support access to the curriculum for all students. Identified students may have access to additional resources such as laptops with specific software to support curriculum access.

Staff issues

All members of staff are offered training to improve their ICT capability and have a responsibility to keep abreast of developments in ICT.

There is continuous attention to improving the quality of staff computers throughout the school subject to budgetary control.

Resource Issues

Purchasing of new equipment will be done by the BOM in consultation with the Principal and the ICT co-ordinator. This will be guided by the evaluation of the ICT plan, budget constraints and Department of Education guidelines. Advice on purchasing will be sought from various areas. Cost comparisons between different agencies will be viewed with special relevance to backup service.

Network access

Staff and students have access to reliable and industry-standard hardware and software in order to use ICT effectively as a teaching and learning resource. It is also used as a working tool for management and administration.

Every classroom has at least one PC and Overhead projector for staff use.

All staff and student users have access through the school's network to their personal data areas and shared data.

All applications are held locally except for Internet.

Computers for staff/student use

Teaching of core ICT is mainly in the Computer Room and Drawing Room. "Free" slots can then be booked in any of the rooms by any member of staff when needed.

A policy of integrating ICT into teaching and learning across the curriculum has been reflected in the provision of a PC and digital projector in all classrooms and also by providing teachers with ICT access outside the main ICT rooms and classrooms. Teachers have also been provided secure network access for personal laptops and use the same Anti-virus software as school provided equipment. This access is maintained by the IT Technician.

Security and backups

To maintain network security, the wireless access points that are in use around the school use either WEP or WPA encryption.

Microsoft Security Essentials is installed on every networked computer in the school and also on teacher's personal laptops that access the school network. The software updates itself daily, and constantly scans for viruses to keep the network secure.

Upon entering the school pupils and their parents/guardians are required to sign an, "Acceptable Use Agreement" for computer use and internet access at school.

Procedures can be put in place for staff to be able to block pupil's internet access at school for a period of time as a sanction for inappropriate use of the internet. In the event of this occurring, parents/carers are informed through a letter sent home.

Pupils' network access can also be blocked at the discretion of the IT Technician in the event of more serious network abuse. In the event of pupils hacking into the network or attempting to disrupt the smooth running of the network, they can be suspended at the discretion of the Principal or Deputy Principal

Technical Support

On-site technical support for the curriculum network is provided by the IT Technician who is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the network

infrastructure, all hardware and software owned by the school, and the provision of technical support for all ICT users.

The ICT inventory is incorporated within the schools records, and is updated every 6 months to show current locations, and other pertinent information for all ICT hardware.

Software procedures

An up to date record of all networked software and license information is kept. Networking data including the assignment of static IP address and nodes for networking equipment is also maintained and updated by the IT Technician

Sustainability

Technical support routines and procedures are continuously reviewed and developed to ensure the sustainability of the network infrastructure, hardware and software.

The whole school register provides a continuously-updated audit of hardware that facilitates decisions on repair, replacement and development.

The whole school annual budgetary cycle provides the opportunity to identify maintenance, replacement and development needs for ICT infrastructure, network services, technical support, equipment and software.

Before being disposed of, all ICT equipment is firstly made safe and removed from the schools register of assets. All hard drives are either destroyed or reformatted to wipe all data stored for possible reuse. Equipment is then stored in a secure location on site and then removed to the local recycling facility,

Emerging technologies

In an ever increasing world of ICT developments it is important we try to keep abreast of emerging technologies and review their potential impact on teaching, learning and communication within the school and beyond. To support this representatives of the school attend ICT Conferences and other relevant conferences as appropriate.

Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service on the use of ICT in the classroom.

If a development in (hardware or software) is deemed to have the potential to improve teaching and learning or administration it will be reviewed, trialled and, if proved to be successful, incorporated into whole school use depending on budgetary constraints.

Home-school links

It is our aim that information about the school will be made available to staff, students, parents/guardians and the general public on the school's website.

Each year, parents/guardians of 1st Years are made aware of, and asked to support the school's policy on internet use when they receive an "Acceptable Use Agreement" They are required to read and sign the agreement, as are the 1st Years students.

Parents/Guardians are informed if their child is found to be using the network or the internet in any way that contravenes the "Acceptable Use Agreement".

Acceptable Use Agreement

The purpose of the Computer Resources policy is to provide a framework for the use of ICT by students and staff. The school has provided ICT equipment for use by students offering a vast amount of information and offering great potential to support the curriculum.

In this policy, computing resources are defined as those computers, computer software, networks, and electronic messaging systems (e-mail, voice mail, facsimile and imaging systems) operated by or for the benefit of the students of the school. The use of these resources is a privilege, not a right and inappropriate use will result in that privilege being withdrawn. It is the student's responsibility to use these resources in a manner that is efficient, ethical and legal.

Data Security & Privacy

All Data is stored in accordance with provision of the Data Protection Act: 1998

· Students should protect work by keeping their personal passwords private. Use of someone else's personal logon/name or password is forbidden.

· To protect the ICT network, security on the computers must not be breached or settings on computers altered in any way.

· Network/Computer storage areas and USB keys may be reviewed by staff.

· Students may not examine copy, alter, rename, or delete the files or programs of another student. System administrators may, as a requirement of system maintenance, delete files that are determined to be non-essential.

· Only relevant information and photographs of students will be used on the School website and for promotional material.

Internet

· Use of the Internet is for study or for school authorised/supervised activities only.

· Use of ICT resources must not be used for personal profit.

· Using the Internet to obtain, download, send, print, display or otherwise transmit or gain access to materials which are unlawful, obscene or abusive is not permitted.

· All measures have been put in place to protect vulnerable children from inappropriate approaches and from making inappropriate personal disclosures over the school network.

· "Chat" activities are banned.

· Respect the work and ownership rights of people outside the school as well as other students or staff. This includes abiding by copyright laws.

· Games may not be downloaded or played on any School ICT equipment.

· All Internet use on ICT resources is monitored on an on-going basis.

· Students need to be aware that e-mails sent and received as part of classroom activity are subject to monitoring.

· Parents must understand that their child may encounter material that they consider inappropriate (i.e. Vulgar Jokes, statements of belief that some may consider immoral, pornography, etc.,) The student is responsible for not pursuing material that could be considered offensive.

Equipment

· Eating or drinking is not allowed anywhere there is ICT equipment.

· Damaging, disabling, or otherwise harming the operation of computers is forbidden.

· Never deliberately install and use software illegally or install any malicious code on school ICT resources. All software and hardware that needs to be installed and used must be approved by the Principal and Systems Administrator.

· Always report damaged or bad working hardware or software to the teacher or systems administrator.

· Please be aware that all used hardware and installed software is also registered in a central database maintained by the Systems Administrator.