



ICT POLICY

Reviewed April 2016

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1. Background

1.1 Vision and Aims for ICT

Our Vision

Belfast Hospital School uses ICT to enhance, extend and enrich the learning process for all stakeholders, by creating a flexible learning environment where resources can be accessed wherever and whenever they are needed, including at home. A range of resources and specialist devices are used to ensure that ICT facilities are fully accessible to learners with special educational needs and disabilities. The school aims to instil in children a sense of confidence, achievement and enjoyment through their experience in ICT. Furthermore, ICT is used to support all staff, through professional development, by providing tools for teaching and learning, collaboration, management and administration.

The ICT policy aims:

1. To enhance, extend and enrich the learning process for all stakeholders, by creating a flexible learning environment
2. To provide equal access to these resources to everyone, wherever and whenever they are needed, including from home
3. To ensure that the user experience is maximised, using additional software and devices as required, for learners with special educational needs and disabilities
4. To instil in children a sense of confidence, achievement and enjoyment through their experience in ICT
5. to support all staff, through professional development, by providing tools for collaboration, management and administration.

1.2 Rationale for the Teaching and Learning of ICT in BHS

In Belfast Hospital School we realise the importance of preparing our pupils for a society in which Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is pervasive. Competence in ICT is now as much a requirement for life as *Using Maths* and *Communication*. We believe that the preparation of our pupils for the Information Society is a task that begins in the early years and continues into adulthood.

In the context of the School we welcome the opportunity to teach pupils from early school years to school leaving age. By using ICT as an integral part of the curriculum, and helping pupils recognise its importance in the wider world, we strive to promote and develop skills that are highly transferable, and that will enhance the quality of the pupils' lives both within and beyond the school context.

1.3 ICT Roles And Responsibilities

The School management team has overall responsibility for all curricular matters including ICT. In addition, there is an ICT coordinator who leads the school's ICT team.

The ICT Leader and team are responsible for the following:

- Leadership in all ICT initiatives, including developing partnerships with other schools and agencies (e.g. Nerve Belfast)
- The creation and updating of ICT related policies
- The development of the school website and social media sites
- Day to day liaison with C2k and management of the C2k network.

An internal ICT team was established in 2007 to assist the ICT coordinator in promoting and developing the use of ICT throughout the School. The team members represent the interests of children from all Key Stages.

1.4 ICT Development Priorities

A whole School Improvement Plan exists that includes provision for the development of ICT. This Plan is reviewed by the SMT annually and updated accordingly, to take account of new ICT initiatives.

2. Resource Management

2.1 C2K

The C2k project is a significant enabler for the Education Technology Strategy for NI. Established in 1998, C2k is a major government programme for delivering high quality, sustainable ICT services to all schools, teachers and pupils in Northern Ireland. It is the largest, single e-learning project in the world, involving 1280 schools, over 330,000 pupils, and 20,000 teachers in N Ireland, including the Belfast Hospital School.

The overall aim of the C2k project is:

- to provide a world class learning technology service, and to optimise its use throughout the community.

A key objective in fulfilling this strategy is to deliver to all schools in Northern Ireland a range of managed ICT services including:

- an infrastructure of school-based networked computers, connected to the internet
- access to a wide range of education technology resources (made up of content and services) to support the NI curriculum, and to further support the professional development of teachers.

The School has embraced C2k, as it provides a secure, robust, and efficient platform for the delivery of our ICT vision and aims. In addition, we can continue to enhance this infrastructure with our own resources to specifically address the areas of special educational needs.

2.2 ICT Infrastructure

Belfast Hospital School has a fully operational C2K network which was installed in November 2005, and refreshed in January 2010 with new managed desktop computers and printers. The hardware is currently deployed across all sites: the RBHSC, Musgrave Park Hospital and the TOPS centre in the Westcourt Centre.

The policy of the School is to refresh devices in line with the C2K refresh policy. Should initiatives require new/additional hardware then these needs are reviewed by SMT, advised by the ICT Leader and external parties such as Nerve Belfast, and resources procured directly by the School.

2.3 Additional Hardware

In addition to the C2k network there are a number of networked printers available throughout the school. All teaching staff have been allocated a laptop computer to help in planning and preparation. The laptops are also used for teaching and learning. Staff who are absent from school for more than one week are asked to make their laptop available for the teacher providing substitute cover.

In pursuing some of our new ICT initiatives, the school purchased iPads for class-based work and in September 2015 a teacher iPad initiative was launched where every member of the teaching staff has their own device to assist with planning and teaching.

2.4 Software and apps

The C2k managed service provides a comprehensive educational software bundle. Pupils have access to this software in the teaching areas and children on home tuition have access to the software via teacher laptops. Teachers who require a specific app can request it through a member of the ICT team. All apps are reviewed by the team and purchase approved where appropriate.

2.5 Technical Support

In the case of the core C2k infrastructure, all repairs and maintenance are the responsibility of C2k. The responsibility of individual teachers therefore is limited to checking, reporting and closing faults. Additional technical support is provided by Schools support NI and the school has a system that allows staff to log technical issues.

2.6 Staff Development

Analysis of ICT training needs is carried out by the ICT team on a yearly basis and an appropriate ICT INSET programme is developed and delivered (either internally or by external bodies) based on the results of this analysis.

Monitoring and evaluation is carried out through the PRSD scheme and monitoring of teacher notes.

2.7 Role Of ICT In School Administration

For some years now the School's administrative function has been carried out using the various SIMS applications available through the CLASS Network initially, and these are now available through the C2k network.

At present the STAR module is used for attendance, FMS6 is used for financial management and the Personnel module is used for maintaining staff records.

The school has developed a number of in-house templates to deal with the unique nature of the functions carried out within the school. For instance, the TOPS centre uses a custom-designed system for target setting and monitoring. A system is currently being piloted (beginning March 2017) to manage teaching and learning notes for pupils who are admitted to hospital.

3. Curriculum Organisation

3.1 Discrete Provision

While ICT is an integral part of teaching and learning in Belfast Hospital School, some staff are qualified to offer discrete courses in ICT to children receiving home tuition or in hospital long term. These courses include the GCSE CCEA Digital Technologies from September 2017 (replacing GCSE ICT), GCSE Business and Communication Systems, Applied ICT, and 'A' Level ICT.

3.2 Cross-Curricular Provision

ICT is used by staff and pupils in various ways to support teaching and learning objectives. These include the use of ICT to produce coursework, the use of online collaborative tools to facilitate team work, (for instance, video conferencing and wikis) the use of the Internet for research purposes and the use of a range of software packages to enhance subject-specific teaching and learning.

In accordance with the NI Curriculum, all staff are aware of their responsibility to help children acquire skills in ICT through the areas of learning.

In recognition of our unique nature as a hospital school, we are committed to piloting online learning courses for some of our students, using Fronter, the platform provided by C2k. This would enable the students to access learning resources online from home and engage in online discussions. Homework can also be submitted online, marked and sent back to the students. It is envisaged that this will be extended in the future so that students can collaborate with other fellow students in similar circumstances. This would help to minimise the negative impact of isolation experienced by children who are not able to attend mainstream school because of illness.

3.2 The Northern Ireland Curriculum

The use of ICT is a cross-curricular skill at Key Stages 1 and 2. These cross-curricular skills will be assessed with reference to levels of progression. The annual report will be in the form of a Pupil Profile report. Further information is available at http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/key_stages_1_and_2.

The revised Northern Ireland curriculum at Key Stage 3 incorporates a significant rise in the profile of ICT, which forms part of a Skills and Capabilities Framework along with Communication and Using Maths. ICT is to be formally assessed commencing 2016-2017 and a level for ICT is to be included in an annual report to parents on their child's progress throughout the three years of Key Stage 3. CCEA has updated the ICT Accreditation Scheme (for KS1-KS3) to reflect the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Staff continue to attend training sessions organised by CCEA and in-house training in preparation for the new requirements of assessment and reporting of *Using ICT*. Monitoring and evaluation is carried out via PRSD.

3.4 Staff Support

It is recognised that one of the keys to the embedding of ICT into everyday teaching and learning is a continuing readiness of staff to keep their own skills up to date. The ICT INSET programme referred to previously is our primary means to achieve this. Another is the role carried out by the ICT Leader and other staff members in providing as required support to individual teachers.

3.5 Acceptable Use And E-Safety

The recent increase in the number of computers and tablets in the school and their deployment in all areas of the school is an invaluable asset in educational terms. However it also means that, while supervised student access to the Internet will be the norm, there may be occasions when students will be able to access the Internet without the direct supervision of a member of staff.

Children admitted to hospital are already attached to a school and should abide by the AUP and e-Safety policies of their own school. To reinforce the importance of eSafety, a set of guidelines are displayed in the ward classrooms and these are often used as a stimulus for discussion.

Belfast Hospital School has an Acceptable Use of ICT Policy (revised in February 2010) which provides a detailed set of guidelines for Internet use and outlines sanctions for failure to comply with these.

The school takes a proactive approach to e-Safety. Filtering on the school's Internet connection is managed by C2k. Additional websites or website categories which the school wishes to block can be filtered by C2k on request. Regular poster competitions are organised for the pupils to keep them up to date with e-Safety issues that affect them both inside and outside of school. Winning entries are displayed in the classroom areas. The School staff are very much aware of their responsibility in teaching children how to remain safe online as evidenced by the pupil work displayed throughout the school.

Anti-virus software is provided by C2k on the school network which supports safe use and firewall protection against spam and unsuitable web sites. Anti-virus software is also available for non-managed laptops and individual members of staff are responsible for ensuring that the laptop in their possession has appropriate anti-virus protection installed.

3.6 Use Of E-Mail

C2k has provided a filtered e-mail facility for use by staff, pupils and the school (the school mailbox can be accessed by the School secretary). C2k has the functionality to monitor and, where appropriate, unblock any e-mails blocked by the filtering process. The e-mail system is used by all members of staff. In order to facilitate communication within the school (and between teachers and pupils) staff are requested to use this e-mail service as the standard form of communication for school-related matters.

Pupils are sometimes encouraged to email coursework and homework to teachers. This is particularly important in the home tuition context since teachers often only visit pupils once per week. In order to safeguard all concerned, teachers at Belfast Hospital School are asked to include the email address of the Principal or of a Vice Principal on all electronic correspondence with pupils. Pupils are asked to do likewise.

4. Conclusion

The School remains strongly committed to the continued and increased use of ICT to further our vision, aims and objectives. We have significantly invested in the use of ICT, heavily supported by C2K to whom we remain indebted and extremely grateful for their continued support, and also by our investment in our staff.

Our ICT Policy is supported by the Board of Governors, the Principal, and our senior management team, and through the ICT Project Leader and the ICT Core Team, we will continue to commit to and to advance our use of ICT to the increasing benefit of the pupils we serve.

Appendix 1: ICT Development Priorities

CURRICULUM

Video conferencing

The school has been pro-active and has taken part in a number of video conferences this year with the mainstream schools of children who are in hospital long term. The feedback has been excellent and this work will continue as it helps to keep children up to date with their classmates and reduces the anxiety experienced on returning to school after a prolonged period of absence.

In September 2009, C2k published a case study featuring the use of video conferencing between Mitchell House Special School and the Belfast Hospital School.

The use of video conferencing has also been trialled with a pupil on home tuition and the French language assistant. Some technical difficulties held progress back but we expect to have a successful outcome next year.

Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)

Staff at the School are aware of the potential of on-line learning environments to serve the needs of children who are ill and unable to attend school for a prolonged period of time. Children in hospital are encouraged to access the VLE of their own school (where one exists) and this can be beneficial in helping to keep the child up to date with school assignments and coursework.

We are also aware that a VLE can support the work carried out by teachers delivering home tuition. Assignments can be uploaded, including audio and video resources. Children can make use of the discussion facility to work with peers and teachers between sessions. They can also submit homework electronically thereby freeing up more time during the session for teaching and learning to take place. This is an area identified by the SMT as a priority for development over the next few years. Most staff have received training in the use of LNI and/or Moodle to set up on-line courses. The ICT Leader completed RTU's OLTE (Online Learning and Teaching for Educators) programme and will pilot the delivery of online courses over the next two years.

RESOURCES

The school has benefited from the refresh of C2k desktop computers (January 2010). All classroom printers were reconnected and additional printers were purchased as required. Barbour Ward classroom received a new WAP (Wireless Access Point) enabling access to the internet and other curriculum software for children in the adjoining wards. A new WAP was also purchased for the classroom in Withers 2. The children have benefited from the purchase of these WAPs in that they increase accessibility to C2k curriculum titles and allow internet access for learning and teaching purposes.

A WAP was also purchased for Allen Ward.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff continue to benefit from training from various providers including Nerve Belfast and iTeach. All staff attended the iLearn event in 2016

It is also proposed to carry out a Staff Training Needs analysis this year so that future training can be tailored to meet the specific needs of staff.

PRSD - Impact on Pupil Outcomes

To help management evaluate the impact that ICT is having on teaching and learning, the whole school PRSD targets this year will be focussed on “Using ICT” at Key stages 1-3.

NACE – Self-Review framework

We have completed the self-review framework for the 2nd time and we have retained ICT Mark. The ICT team members agree that the process has been beneficial in helping to identify areas for improvement in ICT across the entire school. It has also provided invaluable guidance in how to implement change and bring about improvement for the benefit of all stakeholders.

School Website and social Media Account

The website will be reviewed and updated in 2016 after consultation with pupils, staff and parents. The ICT team will take responsibility for ensuring that it is regularly updated with new content.

DOCUMENTATION

Acceptable Use of ICT Policy

Reviewed and updated – May 2018

ICT Policy

Reviewed and updated – May 2018