

# Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Policy



## **Introduction**

Scoil Bhríde places emphasis on the importance of having an ICT Policy in place as a central teaching and learning tool. The central objective of this policy is to ensure that the pupils in the school receive a holistic education that encompasses the use of all means possible including the use of ICT in line with the Education Act 1998.

“Teaching at all levels of the educational system must keep abreast of the potential created by the new technologies for the process of teaching and learning.”

It is increasingly important that a basic appreciation and understanding of the modern information and communication technologies is fostered in young people, from their early years in the school up to the completion of their education.”

*1992 Green Paper on Education*

## **The school ethos**

Scoil Bhríde believes that the personal, social, moral and physical development of each member of the school community is important. Education flourishes in an environment where good relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and respected, and where there is genuine tolerance, fairness and support for those in difficulty. This philosophy informs and underpins all the work of the school and is central to this policy document.

## **Vision Statement**

The policy of Scoil Bhríde in relation to ICT is to promote the school as a lifelong learning centre for ICT, serving the educational needs of the children and the whole community through creative educational use of present and emerging information and communication technologies.

## **Mission Statement**

Scoil Bhríde aims to:

- Identify the educational ICT needs of both school and community
- Provide access to resources and the skills necessary to implement our vision of educational development
- Review our educational objectives in the light of developing strategies in ICT educational theory and practice
- Include all the stakeholders of the school community in the implementation of ICT in the school

## ***To evolve this mission it is proposed to:***

- Develop a profile of community resources
- Identify current educational ICT strategies
- Train teaching staff in ICT skills appropriate to the needs of the school
- Develop educational schemes appropriate to our junior school
- Provide the necessary ICT hardware and software to progress the policy

- Encourage the community to become an e-learning society engaged in lifelong learning

### **Rationale**

Scoil Bhríde is committed to addressing the needs of the school in relation to the provision of education for all children in the school. The school believes that teachers, parents, ancillary staff and the Board of Management need to work together to implement this policy.

It is recognised that the provision of ICT requires certain measures to be put in place:

- The necessary infrastructure to be installed in the classrooms, resource areas and general amenity areas
- Suitable ICT's for all members of the school community in Scoil Bhríde are paramount and every effort must be made to ensure this. To further this aim, every effort will be made to provide access to ICT's to all members of our school community as outlined in the procedures of this policy
- Constant monitoring and updating of equipment led by Special Duties Teacher for ICT
- Suitable and age appropriate software will be provided for all class levels across all areas of the curriculum
- Every effort will be made and supported to provide the necessary training on a needs analysis basis. Staff members will be encouraged and enabled in so far as is possible, to participate in Continuous Professional Development
- Scoil Bhríde will endeavour to work with the school community in the provision of access to training in the use of ICT

### **General Rationale for the use of ICT as an educational tool**

- To promote a positive attitude to Information and Communication Technologies
- To use ICT to enhance further learning
- To facilitate the teaching and integration of the curriculum
- To develop basic computer skills to help prepare the children to take their place in an e -friendly world
- To promote imagination and creativity
- To help develop problem-solving skills
- To motivate children to communicate and access information electronically
- To develop word processing and presentation skills appropriate to Junior School pupils
- To develop co-operative skills through group project work

### **School Organisation**

Scoil Bhríde is designated disadvantaged and is classified as DEIS Band 1. In keeping with the ethos of the school, ICT is central to the delivery of a holistic education to all pupils, delivered by professionals making maximum use of the most effective methodologies and educational aids.

The task of delivering ICT in the school is collaborative and is headed up by a Special Duties Teacher. The wider school community of parents/guardians, Board of Management, teachers, ancillary staff and pupils support the school's ICT policy. Parents/guardians are proactive in the

acquisition of ICT equipment i.e. collection and counting of Tesco tokens in cooperation with the Special Duties Teacher. Parents with ICT skills and links to local ICT industry, are supportive of the school e.g. library data-base

A recent development is the formation of an ICT Committee. This Committee is composed of the Special Duties Teacher (ICT), parent representatives, a classroom teacher, a computer technician and the Principal Teacher. This group consults on a regular basis. The Principal Teacher keeps the Board of Management informed of on-going ICT developments in her report at the meetings. Time is allocated for discussion of ICT at every staff meeting to include sharing of ideas and resources and useful websites and planning for future needs.

Since funding was received in 2004 from the DES, the school has been networked – all classrooms, SET rooms, staff room, general amenity areas, the Library and offices (Secretary and Principal Teacher). Each classroom is equipped with a PC and printer – some of which require updating. There are three digital cameras in use in the school at present. Since 2007, with the receipt of a grant from the Dormant Accounts, eight laptops were purchased for the school.

### **ICT Plan**

- v A laptop for every learning zone in the school including meeting room for parents/guardians.
- v The installation of a projector in each learning zone including SET rooms, the Library and the Hall
- v The necessary whiteboards for data projection
- v Wireless keyboards for each classroom including SET rooms
- v Intra networking of all computers
- v A school website
- v The provision of compatible hardware to maximise efficient use of ICT across the curriculum e.g. integrated sound system for concerts/choirs.
- v Group e-mail to communicate with parents and guardians having firstly made the provision for courses in the use of such technology for the wider school community through the H/S/C/L scheme in collaboration with statutory and non-statutory agencies
- v Supporting staff in CPD in as far as is possible
- v Ensuring that computer maintenance is carried out on a regular basis.

### **GOALS**

#### ***Long-term goals:***

1. Scoil Bhríde will provide the basis for its pupils to become adept at computer use to enable them to be proficient as e learners throughout their school life in primary, secondary and third level education. Collaborative ICT schemes of work in Scoil Bhríde and Scoil Cholmcille Senior will foster a seamless transition for pupils' progression in ICT.
2. The ICT Committee and staff will monitor and assess the school's ICT needs on a regular basis –
  - Weekly Needs Assessment Sheet distributed by the Special Duties Teacher
  - regular discussion of the progression of ICT at every Staff Meeting
  - ensuring the commitment of the Board of Management to the development of ICT in Scoil Bhríde following the yearly review of school's needs regarding hardware, software, technical contract and CPD
3. Scoil Bhríde will provide for the development of a knowledge base for the local community through the provision of ICT courses in the school in collaboration with statutory and non-statutory agencies i.e. H/S/C/L, VEC, local groups.
4. The pupils in Scoil Bhríde will be supported by a community that is proficient in the use of ICT technology as a means of communication and learning.

5. The potential of each pupil will be achieved through the provision of up to date hardware and appropriate schemes of work.
6. The community will become an e-learning society.

**Short-term goals:**

- That each class room has the necessary equipment to become an e-learning place i.e. data projector, whiteboard, PC/laptop, appropriate software
- That each teacher has the necessary skills in the use of ICT as a learning and teaching tool and will be supported to participate in ICT courses and support cluster groups which promote good practice – awareness of courses re. ICT, sharing of good practice evidenced in other schools.
- That computer, printers, laptops, cameras, projectors, etc. are maintained on a regular basis.
- That the pupils in Scoil Bhríde will gain familiarity with ICT through regular use in the classroom across as many curricular areas as possible
- That inclusion of pupils with special needs is supported by relevant training in ICT software and assistive technologies
- That ICT is used as an effective tool in lesson design and development through the use of the Internet, data projectors and Interactive whiteboards
- That reduction in the use of paper to be achieved through use of intranet communication in the school
- That all staff and visitors to the school are aware of Authorised User Policy and abide by it to ensure safety in Internet usage.
- That a school web site be set up and frequently updated – this task to be led by the Special Duties teacher (ICT) and members of the ICT Committee
- A scheme of work in computer education is in place for all classes and suitable software will be available to support progress in this area

**The Policy in practice**

The ICT policy is a component of the Plean Scoile of Scoil Bhríde. Certain aspects of the ICT policy are organisational while other aspects are curricular. Each staff and Board of Management member has a copy of the ICT policy and parents/guardians may access it by email or hard copy from the Principal Teacher – this is in line with the school’s approach to paper conservation.

The ICT Policy is in line with the Health and Safety Policy of Scoil Bhríde. Monthly checks are carried out and documented by the Special Duties Teacher (Health and Safety) and a report given to the Principal Teacher. The Principal Teacher supervises or arranges for any repair work that is subsequently required following the monthly check.

The Authorised User Policy guides the use of ICT in the school. However, due to the limited age profile of the pupils in Scoil Bhríde, Internet access is permitted only under the supervision of an authorised adult.

**Review and Evaluation**

The ICT policy is reviewed annually. However, it is monitored on a constant basis because of development of new technologies and software. Current updates are presented at each staff meeting of face-to-face and on-line courses, new resources for literacy and numeracy and sharing of new and useful websites.

**Acknowledgements**

Scoil Bhríde acknowledges the valued support of the Special Duties Teacher (ICT), the ICT committee, the ICT technician, the Board of Management, parent representatives and the Principal Teacher. The support of the parents who collected, counted and presented the school with Tesco tokens is greatly appreciated.