

St Colmans Digital Technologies Policy

An ICT Vision for St Colmans

The entire school community's work, learning and school experience is supported and enhanced by the appropriate and effective use of ICT. Engaging with the intrinsic qualities of ICT to improve work through maximizing collaboration, creativity, and communication between and within all the groupings of St Colmans School Community.

Our vision incorporates the following principles:

- Decisions on the use of ICT in school should be based on and integrated with the general aims of education and involves the entire school community.
- All teachers and students should have equity of access to appropriate ICT infrastructure, bandwidth and resources and online content to support the Irish curriculum.
- The Teachers in St Colmans are constantly engaged in enhancing how they teach, how their students learn and how learning is assessed and that this Teacher professional development in ICT is always supported and available whilst realising that teachers have different knowledge and skill levels in relation to using ICT.
- The integration of ICT to improve students learning and to prepare them for lifelong learning, should be an integral part of the school planning process.
- That digital technologies can enhance communication between home and school.
- ICT Planning is required to ensure ICT integration in teaching, learning and Assessment.

Rationale for ICT St Colmans Community College

Digital world

ICT is increasingly a integral part of everyday living, with ICT competence becoming essential for effective participation in society.

Education has the role of preparing students for adult life, and therefore it must provide students with those skills necessary to join a society where technology-related competencies are becoming increasingly indispensable. The development of these competencies, which are part of the set of the so-called '21st century competencies', is increasingly becoming an integral part of the goals of compulsory education. (OECD)

Economic

ICT skills are no longer only required for computing professionals or office workers many if not a all employment has introduced the use of technology in to some aspect of work.

Pedagogical

ICT can play a central role in transforming teaching, learning and assessment practices for teachers and students. potential of ICT to increase the depth and breadth of learning and the potential to introduce more varied teaching methodologies.

Technology can provide the necessary tools for improving the teaching and learning process, opening new opportunities and avenues. In particular, it could enhance the customisation of the educational process, adapting it to the particular needs of the student (OECD)

Social

ICT skill is a life-skill, same as literacy and numeracy. This skill allows access to information and greater opportunities for communicating with others.

Access to life-long learning opportunities

Providing the skills necessary for students to continue their learning in the years after their post primary education

Narrowing the digital divide

The digital divide in this sense being the gulf between those who have ready access/skills to computers and the Internet, and those who do not.

In a knowledge economy driven by technology, people who do not master these competencies may suffer from a new form of digital divide that may affect their capacity to fully integrate the knowledge economy and society (OECD)

Promote independent learning

Independent learning is when students take responsibility for their own learning. An independent learner will tend to be self-directed and self reliant. ICT is invaluable tool for promoting independent learning

Special Educational Needs

ICT has the potential to support inclusion enabling learners with special educational needs to participate more fully in their education.

The interactive nature of ICT has a positive effect on students' motivation and levels of interest. It enhances their confidence, and it increases students' enjoyment of learning. particularly those with special educational needs.

ICT has a particular role in Supporting literacy, Development of project skills, independent learning, social skills, and co-ordination or motor skills.

SSE, Literacy & Numeracy, Project Maths

Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media.

ICT is a principal enabler for children at risk of educational disadvantage, with low levels of achievement in the formal education system. When its appropriately embedded into an educational setting, ICT can enable students to learn in new and exciting ways, encouraging their engagement and making communication easier. Furthermore, there is evidence to indicate that the creative application of ICT in education can allow students at risk of early school leaving to connect with learning in new ways, resulting in improved motivation, attendance and application across subject areas. (Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 DES)

Description of current infrastructure and resources

Number of PCs, their location and operating systems

St Colmans currently has 172 networked computers
82 of which are very fit for purpose
The rest 90, are fit for purpose

102 PCs are located in computer Labs
14 in Administration
56 in classrooms

All Machines have
Windows 7
Access to Internet

Computer labs and brief description of setup

We currently have 4 computer Labs, one is a DCG room the other three have general access.

The DCG room is equipped with AB Tutor software, this allows the teacher to remotely control all 26 workstations from the main computer, it is a very effective classroom management tool and helps promote responsible use of computers at all times.

Description of the network

The wired Network is rated excellent with modern switches installed to industry standards. All Pcs access the wired network through industry standard connection points.

The topography of the Wired network is excellent divided into zones, reliability speed and troubleshooting are all well catered.

The wireless network

Has grown organically over time to fulfill requirements such as access from outside rooms from teachers devices laptops/tablets. We currently have 5 wireless routers which covers physically

approximately 50% of the school. This is an area which hopefully will be addressed in the new extension because the school requires a scalable, robust Wi-fi solution to facilitate anytime, anywhere learning.

Classroom setup

All classrooms have a PC and digital Projector and internet access

Visualisers were given to each teacher in the school

Staffroom setup

There are 3 PCs and 3 printers one of which is a cloud printer to which staff can print from devices and from home.

Specialist Rooms and Resources for students with special needs

The Special Needs Department are especially well resourced with all requests for ICT met.

Assistive technology for students with special needs

Laptops

All Teachers in the school on 2012 were given a laptop for their school work and upon Retiring/leaving these have been recycled to new teachers.

Cloud Computing

The schools is a Google Apps For Education School (GAFE)

VSWare is student administration System

Way to Pay is Parental Payment System

Google Apps For Education

This is used extensively throughout the school community.

All Teachers and Students have GAFE access. This is transforming how St Colmans's Operates. It is allowing in the school community to collaborate and communicate more easily using a collection of free applications and technologies.

Email

All Admin, Teachers and Students have a @colmans.ie Email address which works though GMail.

Various teaching and student groupings exist allowing very effective collaboration and communication.

Google Drive

All Admin, Teachers and Students have been given a colmans google drive meaning that files can be shared, submitted through cloud storage therefore no USB Drives which have their own inherent problems.

Google Docs/Slides

All Admin, Teachers and Students have access to these cloud productivity tools meaning no longer do we have software version issues between school and home.

Google Classroom

A number of Teachers have google classrooms groups running which is a VLE but when used in conjunction with Email, Drive and Docs/Slides becomes a complete learning and portfolio management system, which is not only facilitating teacher/student collaboration but also parental/guardian involvement. Google Classroom allows parents to engage with their children's learning.

Intranet Portals

A number of Portals are developing utilising GAFE, developed using google Sites.

There are currently three a main staff one termed " The Staff Portal" this is being used extensively as a electronic forum and delivering content communication and collaboration.

There is also the "Transition year portal" and the "PLC Portal"

Google Forms

Forms are used frequently when requesting information from staff it allows for data requests which are directed and confidential.

GAFE next developments

Support teachers in using GAFE

The School website

The school website is built with Google technologies and is integrated into our GAFE, which allows us to supply and collect information from the wider community. The website is Social Media enabled. All teachers have access to school face-book and twitter account and regularly post to these sites and this content immediately appears on school website.

Website next development

To continue to get content from departments and teachers

To further develop online communication with parents/guardians

Fully integrate way to pay system

VSWare

The school adopted VSware in september 2015, that academic year the timetable was done through CMIS and so we had a body of work to get through.

Where VSware implementation is currently

All teachers record Attendance at AM and PM bells

Most teachers record attendance at all classes

Teachers recorded all exam results 2015/16 through VSware

All student profile photos are inputted

Teacher/student timetables are very accurate

Student options are being completed through vsware

VSWare next development

Implement timetable with VSware

Text absent students parents

Grant parents web access to student reports

Continue Teacher Support

Role of ICT Coordinator

Promoting and supporting the integration of ICT in teaching and learning in St Colmans.

Technical

- Setting up email accounts for staff & students
- Monitoring/fixing/purchasing hardware & software
- Technical support to staff
- Maintaining website, Social Networking.
- Informed on current trends and advising mgt
- Organising shared resources
- Organising maintenance and servicing
- Induction of new staff – school's ICT systems
- Updating software and licences, antivirus
- H&S procedures, AUP, Cyberbullying

Pedagogical

- Supporting subject departments including ICT teaching and learning
- Organising and/or giving staff cpd
- Evaluation of the ICT Policy and advising management
- Ensuring ICT is regularly on staff and BOM agenda

Administrative

- Develop the role of the ICT Steering committee

- Procure ICT equipment and consumables for school
- Procure ICT for special needs students
- Develop ict solutions for Mgt
- Budget for hardware/software
- Short or long-term plans for development

ICT Subject Developments

The school was selected following a successful application to pilot short JC course in Coding, Colin Manning and Brendan McNulty attended the training, have secured the resources and are currently piloting the course with a first year group.

This Policy was collaboratively produced by the ICT steering Committee

ICT Steering Committee 2015-2016

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