ICT Policy

Purpose and scope

At Portavogie Primary School, we use digital technology to enhance teaching and learning and develop confident, responsible and creative learners. This policy covers curriculum use of ICT, digital and home learning, and the practical safe use of equipment. It applies to Nursery and P1–P7, with activities adapted to age and stage.

Online safeguarding, incidents, acceptable use and technical security are covered in the separate Online Safety (E-Safety) Policy. External publications and social media are covered in the Social Media Policy.

Curriculum and progression

Using ICT is a cross-curricular skill within the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Staff plan opportunities to Explore, Express, Exchange, Evaluate and Exhibit. Technology is used purposefully within Areas of Learning rather than as an end in itself.

In Nursery and Foundation Stage, children encounter age-appropriate digital tools through play, modelling and guided exploration. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils become increasingly independent in finding and evaluating information, creating and presenting work, communicating appropriately and solving problems.

Coding and computational thinking are developed through age-appropriate projects and school development priorities. Pupils learn to question online content, recognise advertising or misleading material, and understand that AI-generated answers and images can be inaccurate.

Teaching, inclusion and assessment

Teachers select suitable tools and activities that support clear learning intentions. Screen-based activities are balanced with reading, writing, practical tasks, physical movement and outdoor learning.

Technology may be used to support communication, accessibility and pupils with additional learning needs. Learning is adapted to individual needs and available equipment. Lack of home internet access must not prevent pupils from participating; reasonable non-digital alternatives will be offered.

Progress is assessed through pupils' work, developing competence and independence, and teachers' professional judgement. Digital projects, saved work and classroom evidence may be used without imposing a fixed quota of ICT tasks.

Digital learning and home learning

School-approved platforms, including Just2easy where appropriate, can support practice, creativity, assessment, sharing learning and communication with families. Staff check suitability and privacy arrangements before introducing new tools; use of a platform does not mean every child must access it at home.

Where home learning is set, instructions will be clear and manageable. Parents will be advised how to seek help, and teachers will provide reasonable alternatives when access is difficult. Online communication with pupils and families takes place through approved school channels; personal staff accounts must not be used for individual pupil contact.

Any remote learning arrangements during exceptional closures will be communicated by the school and adjusted to pupils' needs and family circumstances.

Photographs, video and pupil work used in digital learning must be handled in keeping with the school's safeguarding and data protection arrangements. Before any image or recording is shared beyond its agreed use, staff check the individual choices recorded on the annual Digital Images, Photographs and Video Consent Form. Permission for an internal classroom display does not mean permission to use the image on the school website, Facebook or elsewhere.

ICT equipment and physical safety

Staff supervise the use of tablets, laptops, computers, interactive displays and other equipment. Pupils are shown how to carry, store and use devices safely and do not plug in, repair or move heavy equipment without an adult.

Staff should check that screens are positioned at a comfortable height and viewing distance for each pupil. Children should be encouraged to sit with their backs supported and feet supported where possible, without stretching to reach the keyboard or screen. The height of chairs, tables and screens should be adjusted where practicable to suit the age and size of the child. Screens should be positioned to reduce glare and reflections.

Teachers will balance screen-based learning with practical activities and movement, and allow children to change position and rest their eyes. Children who report discomfort or fatigue should be helped to adjust their position or take a break. Work areas must be tidy, with cables kept clear of walkways and food and drinks away from electrical equipment.

Damaged devices, overheating, faulty cables or other hazards must be reported promptly and equipment taken out of use where necessary. Repairs and electrical checks are undertaken through authorised arrangements. The school's general Health and Safety Policy and risk assessments also apply.

Roles and review

The school has three pupil Digital Leaders drawn from P5, P6 and P7. With staff guidance, they help to promote positive and responsible use of technology, support suitable classroom or school activities and encourage other pupils to develop confidence and digital skills. Digital Leaders do not supervise other pupils independently, manage accounts or passwords, access confidential information, or deal with online safety concerns. Any concern is passed to a member of staff.
The Board of Governors has strategic oversight. The Principal oversees implementation, staff responsibilities, resources and links to safeguarding and health and safety.

The ICT Coordinator, Miss Joanne Johnston, supports curriculum planning, progression, staff professional learning, appropriate resources and policy review. She is not automatically responsible for technical repairs or safeguarding investigation.

Teachers and other staff supervise pupils, select suitable digital learning activities, implement safe practice and report concerns. The policy is reviewed annually or sooner if practice, technology or guidance changes.

Related documents and guidance

Read alongside the Online Safety (E-Safety) Policy, Social Media Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, Addressing Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Policy and school data protection arrangements.

Guidance considered: Northern Ireland Curriculum (Using ICT); relevant Department of Education and Education Authority guidance on digital learning, online safety and safe use of equipment. The school reviews current guidance when updating this policy.