

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy

The Nursery recognises the rapidly changing world of ICT and the role technology plays in our media rich environment.

We believe ICT includes all current technologies in the world around young children today; it is therefore not exclusively about computer use but includes everyday technologies such as answer phones, washing machines, programmable toys and remote controls as well as other technological tools such as digital cameras, laminators and scanners.

By creating opportunities to investigate, try and experience technology in the Nursery, and outside environment, children will learn for themselves whilst being taught skills and knowledge to enable them to build on what they know. By carefully planning our play areas to reflect the world in which we live, children will, through play, gain experience and an understanding of ICT.

We believe:

- ICT is a tool for learning
- Technology is part of children's worlds and a relevant curriculum includes investigating technology as well as using technology to learn
- Working in partnership with parents is vital for enriching children's experiences with appropriate technology both at home and in the Nursery. We believe this partnership is a two-way process that we can all learn from for the benefit of the children
- ICT is more than computers and their experiences of ICT in everyday life are used as a basis for learning
- ICT is not an add-on to the curriculum but embedded across all areas of learning
- Technology needs to be appropriate and accessible for young children
- Children can be confident users of technology

Our aims in teaching and providing opportunities for ICT are:

- That we build on each child's previous experience
- To cultivate the skills that are essential for the children to gain access to developing technologies
- To promote the children's enjoyment of ICT, building on their experience in everyday life as a basis for learning
- To evaluate resources and update and add to them as necessary
- To undertake ICT training and opportunities for all staff
- To allow for differentiation with pupils that need additional help to access learning
- To be aware of current developments in ICT
- To employ initiatives from central and local government authorities and other bodies to support ICT in the Nursery
- To ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors with regard to using ICT
- To develop ICT capability in finding, selecting, and using information
- To use ICT for effective and appropriate communication
- To apply the children's ICT skills and knowledge to their learning in other areas

- of the curriculum
- To develop the children's understanding of everyday uses of ICT
- To develop technological literacy through a range of products which children will be familiar with and which will be easily understood and accessed
- To encourage children to work collaboratively, sharing knowledge, skills and enjoyment
- To develop a skills-based approach to computer use which puts the child in control of the equipment rather than the other way around
- To encourage children and staff to use the Internet to gain knowledge and support learning
- To use technology as a means of additional communication with families and the community

To ensure our aims are met, the following strategies will be employed:

- Ongoing monitoring and recording of children's achievements and areas needing support and development
- Through planning, following observations to ensure a broad and balanced approach to ICT
- To have an environment in the Nursery which reflects our present technological world and where children can access equipment, computer and programmable toys with ease and confidence
- All children will have equal access to technological equipment
- Software availability will address language needs of pupils
- ICT equipment will be used to record the progress of children, for example, use of the Nursery digital camera and video camera
- ICT equipment will be used to display children's work and to enhance interactive displays
- Develop staff skills so that they are confident about when to use ICT for effective learning
- Use ICT tools to improve efficiency of Nursery management and communication both within the Nursery and with external communities – for example: using e-mail to communicate with parents, committee and other professionals
- Take advantage of government and retail initiatives to improve school resources.
- Health and safety procedures regarding computer use and the use of all electrical equipment will be adhered to as set out in the Health and Safety Policy, for example, regular testing of electrical equipment
- The Internet is available in the Nursery with a Policy and Procedure in place to safely support its use

Aims and Legislation

It is our aim to ensure that all digital information that is used, recorded, transmitted or archived is managed in a way that will provide an environment in which children, parents and staff are safe from incorrect or inappropriate use. By so doing this will eliminate the following concerns:

- The inappropriate use of recording devices around children.
- The inappropriate use of Information Technology or other digital media.

This policy lays down clear guidelines which will ensure that everyone connected with the Nursery adheres to what we would deem as acceptable use of technology and media. In putting together this policy we have been mindful of the key objectives of the following legislation:

- The Computer Misuse Act (1990)
- The Copyright, Design and Patents Act (1988)
- The Data Protection Act (1998)
- Defamation Act (1996)
- Obscene Publications Act (1959)
- The Protection of Children Act (1978)
- The Criminal Justice Public Order Act (1994)
- The Telecommunications Act (1984)
- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Discrimination Act (1975)
- The Race Relations Act (1976)
- The CCTV Code of Practice produced by the Information Commissioner;
- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000;

There is far too much information contained in these acts to disseminate here. Furthermore, we cannot be held liable if a parent / carer or visitor to the Nursery is in contravention of the law in this regard and we have exercised all reasonable care to ensure digital data is used in a responsible manner. Please refer to the Media Policy for staff and internal use for a complete view of how technology is deployed within the Nursery.

Learning and Teaching

We employ a range of strategies and use our professional judgment to decide on the most appropriate styles of teaching and learning. To enable the child to become a confident and independent user of ICT, we use a balance of:

- Demonstration, modelling, discussion, presenting and sensitive intervention
- Peer to peer teaching and collaboration
- Planned learning opportunities
- A learning environment that encourages and enables children's spontaneous use of ICT
- Time for independent use with opportunities to experiment and explore
- Opportunities to play with all forms of appropriate technology

Curriculum Organisation

Technology adds another dimension to children's opportunities to learn. The staff and management team take responsibility for continually researching these opportunities by finding new resources, replacing resources and by finding ways in which we can extend the children's learning:

- ICT tools are resourced and planned for and are to be used across all areas of learning
- ICT is used in indoor and outdoor learning

- Children are encouraged towards independently choosing and using ICT appropriate for purpose
- Through role play with ICT resources, children will begin to understand technology in the real world, for example, playing with non-functioning keyboards as “rocket control panels”, using a cardboard box as a pretend TV or playing with a till in the maths area
- By operating real electrical devices – for example, using the cassette recorder to listen to stories
- Through a planned programme of activities on the computer where the staff have placed emphasis on the development of ICT capability or on the area of learning which is being supported by ICT
- Through the use of programmable toys
- Through walks in the local environment to encourage children to observe and talk about ICT – for example, looking at traffic lights or telephone boxes
- Through computer use: children are able to choose from a core of planned software, they are able to access the software independently and their previous experience is recognised and built on. They are encouraged to work together sharing and helping each other, adults interact and scaffold children’s use and learning at the computer. All areas of learning, as well as discrete ICT, are provided for through appropriate software. Children are encouraged to see and use the computer as a tool to support their learning and links are made with experiences away from the computer – for example, the computer may be used to design a bug to be made in play dough, or photos to add to Family

Access to ICT

We aim to have:

- Suitable PC games and DVDs
- Two children’s digital cameras
- Programmable toys
- A CD player
- Non-functioning pieces of technology which children can use for role play

Equal Opportunities

It is our aim that:

- All children should have equal access to ICT in order to develop their personal ICT capability and understanding
- We ensure all ICT applications are free from violence and stereotyping
- We reflect the world we live in, with our cultures and races, in our choice of ICT applications

Our learning and teaching provides assurance that:

- Through planned experiences, all children have equal access to ICT applications
- Individual needs are observed, monitored and planned for providing appropriate access for all children

- All groups of children will be monitored so that no one group miss's opportunities – for example, ongoing monitoring ensures girls have the same opportunities as the boys to use the computer
- Activities are planned which allow for different levels of achievement by children or that incorporate possibilities for extension work
- Gifted and talented children will have opportunities that will challenge them and allow for development. The SENCO advises on the IT support that can be provided to individual children with particular educational needs, including high ability children

Observing & Recording

We endeavour to ensure that not only do children acquire skills and are able to use computer programs, but also, they increase their levels of confidence and independence.

ICT resources and experiences are identified within long, medium and short-term planning across all areas of learning. Both discrete ICT experiences as well as using ICT across areas of learning are planned for.

Staff Development

The Nursery recognises the need for ongoing training at a variety of levels and for a range of purposes:

- A record of each member of staff's training will be kept and updated on (office database)
- Individual training needs will be discussed at appraisal meetings

These experiences are observed and evaluated and next steps are built back into planning.

Protection from Online Access

It is recognised that access to the Internet can enhance a child's development but that strict controls are necessary to deal with any undesirable material. To ensure these controls are in place, the following measures are taken:

- Access to screens is always in a visible area.
- Hardware should be switched off when staff are monitoring the use of the PC.
- The use of the Internet should always be supervised.
- An information Ethics Policy will be developed.
- De-fragmentation and scan disc to be run when required.
- Virus protection – up-dates are ongoing.
- Firewall installed to protect from unwanted materials.

Health & Safety

We are aware of various health & safety issues when using computers with young children and the need to form good habits from the beginning:

- Computers need to be set at the right height so that the child can sit comfortably without putting strain on back, neck or arms
- Chairs need to be adjusted to the right height so that the child looks at the monitor straight on
- Backs should be supported and feet flat on the floor, or on a block
- Children should hold their hands above the keyboard and in line with their wrists
- Children should be encouraged to have short turns at the computer so that they are not staring at the monitor for too long. We can use sand timers to enable children to self-monitor their time and to take turns

Additional safety issues that we are aware of include:

- Locating computers so that air can circulate around.
- Ensuring that children have clean hands when using the computer.
- Taking care that no liquids or paints spill onto the keyboard.
- Teaching awareness of electrical safety and keeping cables and sockets out of reach or covered.
- Keeping magnets away from the computers.
- Allowing only one child to hold the mouse and operate the keyboard at a time.

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