



Our Lady of Good Counsel School
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Chairperson of the Board of Management: Leo Murphy
Principal: Siobhan Allen.

Policy: Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

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Amendments / Reviews

Ratified by Board of Management : September 2011

Reviewed: January, 2013 (email and internet usage included)
December 13 – iPad policy included.
Jan 16 (Chairperson change)

Aim of Policy: Our school vision is one where technology is a natural and essential part of school life and an integral and ubiquitous part of learning for all students and curriculum areas. It accommodates individual learning rates while taking into account diverse learning styles.

Benefits of using ICT

- Provides a multi-sensory approach to the teaching of essential skills and concepts in a variety of contexts and settings.
- Reinforces the concept of "cause-and-effect" and pre-reading and pre-number concepts.
- Can be used to introduce and reinforce simple concepts e.g. matching, sorting, etc. as well as basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Facilitates the development of motor skills, eye tracking and hand-eye co-ordination.
- Facilitates communicative situations and language development.
- Facilitates social interaction and gives students an opportunity to experience turn taking and co-operative situations
- Promotes independence and communication since for some, technology may be the only method they have to communicate with the world around them.
- Provides motivating and stimulating learning experiences and gives instant feedback to students' responses.
- It is non-judgmental and allows students to work at their own pace.
- It is highly stimulating and motivational.

Considerations when using ICT

ICT is a tool which can greatly enhance the learning environment of students with moderate and multiple disabilities. ICT should be used in conjunction with instructional methods that assist students to circumvent some of their disabilities while accentuating their abilities.

In Our Lady of Good Counsel School (OLGC):

- The ICT coordinator will take responsibility for the installation and maintenance of all hardware and software.
- Consultation will take place with teachers other professionals to decide on appropriate hardware and software for the students.
- Software and peripherals should meet the needs and abilities of the students and should be compatible with classroom teaching.
- The students should have the necessary pre-requisites to use the technology. Students need time to learn how to access the computer in the initial stages e.g. hitting the switch, touching the screen. A skills training program should be included in the curriculum so that the students can be independent users of the technology as much as possible.
- Students need to learn cause/effect i.e. pressing the switch or keyboard, or touching the screen causes a reaction on the screen or produces a sound.
- ICT should be used to enhance the curriculum and integrate the use of technology into lessons in a purposeful and meaningful way.

Using Software

For the student with moderate and multiple disabilities, the use of spoken, written, and picture communication symbols, helps them construct meaning and test their understanding through active exploration. Students can use the technology as tools for analysing the world, accessing information, interpreting and organising personal knowledge, and representing what they know to others. These tools are intended to engage and facilitate cognitive processing.

Integration of ICT into the curriculum needs careful planning and consideration so as to ensure it meets the educational and curricular goals of each individual student. Students

require well designed instruction tailored to their needs if they are to realise their true learning potential. The teacher is crucial in effectively evaluating software. Programs and apps suitable for the student with moderate /multiple learning disabilities focus on the following:

Concepts Development:

These programs focus on basic skills and concepts such as cause and effect e.g. (touching the screen, clicking a mouse or switch to make something happen). Focus is on

- Developing auditory and visual discrimination
- Developing mouse /keyboard skills
- Exploring emotions, body awareness
- Matching, sequencing, categorising, recognition games

Examples include: Identification Skills, Flash card apps for the iPad, etc.

Sensory Stimulation:

Some programs and apps are specifically designed to provide visual and or auditory stimulation. These programs invite a reaction (an action or sound forces the student to notice and focus attention) and most can be accessed with a switch or touch screen on the iPad. Examples include: Percy Suite of Games, Sherston Young McDonald's Farm, sensory apps, etc.

Literacy and Language Development:

- Multimedia resources: One of the best uses of ICT for students with moderate or multiple disabilities is to create resources using symbols, pictures, sound and photos that can be used to support literacy and language development. Multimedia authoring tools such as Writing with Symbols and Boardmaker can be used to create personalised articles and stories by combining text, pictures, video and animation. A digital camera can be used to record outings or events which can then be used to make meaningful student resources. Pictorial grids can be used to create a range of teaching and communication materials such as a communication book or nursery rhymes with words and pictures. Book making or visual schedule apps can be customised for a particular child on the iPad.
- Reinforcement software can be used to reinforce and consolidate basic literacy skills. Programs are available that target the following areas:
 - Early literacy skills (examples include Tizzy, Leaps and Bounds, Oxford Reading Tree app for the iPad).
 - Letter Recognition (examples include ABC Talking Animated Alphabet, Percy ABC, HWT and iWW apps).
 - Sight vocabulary (examples include Identification Skills, Flashcard apps).
 - Phonological Awareness (examples Oxford Reading Tree app).
 - Spelling (examples include Percy World of Words, Dolch words apps).
 - Reading Comprehension (examples include Fuzzbuzz, Oxford Reading Tree, Kids Reading Comprehension apps).
- Interactive stories can be used to promote communication activities and lots of class discussions. This type of software bring books to life for non-readers as the computer can read the story to them highlighting the word as it is being read. Animation and sound effects provide stimulation and maintain interest. Some programs allow the listeners to interact with the story and choose alternative storylines. Examples include Living Books, Oxford Reading Tree Series app for the iPad.
- Word Processing is an invaluable application for both teachers and students. It allows students who might unable to hold a pencil to type their name. This can be used for class news and for example; personal books, social sight reading folders, also students

typing their name and address, letters, reports and display work. In OLGC we use Writing With Symbols and Microsoft Word. Ghostype app is used to teach keyboard skills.

Numeracy Skills:

Pre-number to basic addition and subtraction programs numeracy software can provide students with an opportunity to practice and basic numeracy skills such as counting, sorting and basic addition and subtraction. Many software programs use visual representations or on-screen manipulatives such as pictures, number lines, and grids. Examples include Percy World of Numbers, First Numbers, Primary Maths, Telling Time and Country and money apps.

Life Skills:

Life skills are central to the overall development of students with special needs. Exploratory software can be used to broaden the experiences of students by putting them in real life settings that are non-threatening. Programs such as Out and About and the Functional Skills Systems apps can be used to reinforce skills that are needed for every day, real-life situations. The iPad is used by the home economics/life skills teacher to show step by step recipes.

Collaborative Work:

Word processing programs, use of scanned pictures and clipart all combine to produce visually stimulating projects e.g. class tours, special occasions, parties etc. Using scanned photos, videos or pictures the students have chosen and a publishing or presentation package such as Powerpoint can help design simple presentations such as the leaving ceremony slideshows. Collaborating on an ICT activity can encourage students to extend their use of language as well as promoting social skills such as turn taking. Collaborative projects such as the School Calendar promote communicative exchanges.

Using Hardware

There is at least one PC and/or laptop in each classroom, most have two. There is also at least one iPad in each classroom and many of the students have their own that are used in school. All classrooms have an Interactive Whiteboard, these assist the teacher in producing highly motivational visual presentations of classroom software including word processing. The vast resources of the Internet and specialised software can also be used. OLGC are committed to the technology and each teacher will be offered the opportunity to avail themselves of this resource now or in the near future.

The following pieces of hardware are often referred to as peripherals (computer additions) and can be used to develop personalised student resources. Using pictures of students, their families, their friends and their local environment can be highly motivating, especially for students with special needs.

- Printer and scanner, each laptop is connected to the network printer
- Digital camera and video camera, included in the iPads

Augmentative Communication Devices: These are electronic devices that can be used to store and create voice messages. They help to overcome communication difficulties by supplementing speech and are invaluable to the non-verbal student.

Classroom Management Issues

- Using the mouse and keyboard needs to be directly taught. These skills do not come naturally and students with fine/gross motor problems should ideally be given regular 1:1 tuition.

- Students should be encouraged to use the Interactive Whiteboard pens and software. However, the pens should not be stabbed into the board or used roughly.
- Good habits should be instilled from the onset. Students must learn not to continuously bash the switches or keyboards or indiscriminately touch the screen. Food or drinks should not be left near the computer. Time, practice and patience on the part of both pupil and teacher is essential.
- Design and layout the room to facilitate a good working environment. With the exception of Interactive Whiteboards, locate the computers facing away from other students to avoid distractions.
- School iPads must have the 'Survivor' covers. Pupils should be encouraged to treat them with respect and care.

Staff Training

Teachers need to be familiar with all aspects of the technology; they will be offered in-school training sessions via the ICT coordinator and out of school training sessions via the local Teacher Training Centre. When introducing new hardware and software the ICT coordinator will offer initial training and advise on set up options which allow them to be used with students across a range of ability levels. Specialist training in particular devices may be offered by suppliers.

SNAs will be offered relevant training via the ICT coordinator.

AAC training will be offered via the Speech and Language Therapist.

WEBSITE, INTERNET & EMAIL

WEBSITE

The school's website provides information and promotes the school for prospective parents. The school blog is regularly updated by teachers.

THE INTERNET

The Internet in our school is firewalled through the DES but should still be closely monitored. Students should not be given free access to the Internet or e-mail. E-mail accounts for teachers and students can be set up via the ICT Co-ordinator.

The Principal, the office, each class and therapists have access to the Internet. Such access enables staff users to obtain information specific to their role within OLG and enables two-way communication with sites appropriate to that role. Many of the internet's activities are for recreational and private use and are unrelated to OLG.

Internet Rules

1. OLG's internet connections are intended for activities that either support OLG business or professional development of employees. Web surfing unrelated to these activities is strictly forbidden. Staff members who have abused this will be subject to disciplinary sanction.
2. Internet usage is monitored on a systematic basis by the school.
3. To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the system there will be no unauthorised downloading of any software/music/files. All software downloads will be done through the IT Co-ordinator.

4. Pupils should not have unsupervised access to the internet either via laptop, school iPad or their own iPad.

EMAIL

Email is a personal computerised and efficient communication system which enables the sending and receiving of messages between OLGc staff and others. Documents and materials can be attached to emails. The email can effectively by-pass typewritten documents, faxes and the need to post documents. There are, however, risks attached to sending emails and these include:

1. Messages may go to persons other than the intended recipient and if confidential or commercially sensitive this could be damaging to OLGc.
2. Email messages can carry computer viruses which are particularly dangerous to OLGc computer operations generally.
3. Letters, files and other documents attached to emails may belong to others and there may be copyright implications in sending or receiving them without permission.
4. Email is speedy and, as such, messages written in haste or carelessly are sent simultaneously and without the opportunity to check or rephrase. This could give rise to legal liability on OLGc's part such as claims for defamation, etc.
5. An email message may legally bind OLGc contractually in certain instances without proper authority being obtained internally.
6. It should be remembered that all personal data contained in emails may be assessable under data protection legislation and furthermore a substantial portion of emails to government and other public bodies may be accessible under freedom of information legislation.
7. Emails should be regarded as potentially public information which carry a heightened risk of legal liability for the sender, the recipient and the organisation for whom they work.
8. The school emails parents from time to time. However, we do not have the facility to respond to individual emails received from parents.

Rules of Email use

1. Our Lady of Good Counsel School's name is included in the heading carried with every message sent by a staff member. This reflects on the school image and reputation. Therefore, email messages must be appropriate and professional.
2. Email is not for private purposes nor should email be used for any purpose other than school business. All emails issued from the school will carry a disclaimer saying the email is intended only for school use and if used for any purpose a named person should be contacted immediately within the school.
3. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential or sensitive information.
4. Great care should also be taken when attaching documents as the ease with which employees can download files from the internet or "cut and paste" materials from electronic sources increases the risks of infringement of the rights of others particularly the intellectual property and other proprietary rights. Also attaching documents may give rise to the release of information not intended – hence the importance of vetting attachments.
5. Extra caution needs to be taken with email messages in respect of disparaging remarks that may be contained therein. An email should be regarded as a written formal letter the recipients of which may be much wider than the sender intended hence any defamatory or careless remarks can have very serious consequences as can any indirect innuendo. Avoid the use of indecent, obscene, sexist, racist or other inappropriate remarks whether in written, cartoon or other form.

6. Do not subscribe to electronic services or other contracts on behalf of OLG school unless you have the express authority to do so. Authority for subscriptions including electronic subscriptions such as these rest with the Principal and unless you are one of those delegated persons you have no authority to enter into any binding commitment on the school via email or internet.
7. If offensive, unpleasant, harassing or intimidating emails messages are received the Principal should be informed immediately. It is important that we trace such emails as quickly as possible.
8. Any important or potentially contentious communication received should be printed and a hard copy kept (e.g. confirmation of order, etc.).
9. Documents prepared by OLG school may be attached to emails. However, excerpts from reports other than our own may be in breach of copyright and the author's consent should be sought, particularly where taken out of original context. Reports received from clinicians should not be released to anyone without prior consent of the original sender.
10. OLG reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received or sent over the electronic mail system for any purpose. All computer pass codes must be provided to the IT co-ordinator. No pass code may be used that is unknown to the school.

Notwithstanding the school's right to retrieve and read electronic mail messages, such messages should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorised to retrieve or read any email messages that are not sent to them. Any exception to this policy must receive prior approval from the Principal. However, that confidentiality of any message should not be assumed. Even when a message is erased it is still possible to retrieve and read that message. If any breach of our email policy is observed then disciplinary action may be taken.

Internet & Email Summary

The Internet and email should not be used:

- For personal gain or profit.
- To represent yourself and/or the school as someone else.
- To post or download messages which contain political views.
- To post or download messages that contain inappropriate, obscene, inflammatory, intimidating, harassing, defamatory, disruptive or otherwise offensive language and anything that will reflect poorly of Our Lady of Good Counsel's name and reputation.
- To advertise or otherwise support unauthorised or illegal activities.
- To provide lists or information about Our Lady of Good Counsel School employees or pupils to others and/ or classified information without prior approval of the Principal.
- When it interferes with job responsibilities. This includes spending unreasonable and unwarranted time on the internet or on email activities.
- The use of social network sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. are not permitted in school by pupils or staff.
- Personal email accounts should not be used and personal emails should not be printed during school time.

Internet access is conditional on the following additional rules being observed:

- Internet is for OLG school business only. It should not be used for any private or other use.
- To access, download or send any indecent, obscene, pornographic, sexist, racist or defamatory or other inappropriate materials as well as the circulation of such materials will be a dismissible offence. This rule will be strictly enforced and is viewed as very

serious and potential criminal liabilities arising therefrom. The Gardai or other appropriate authority will be informed where appropriate.

Infringement – Breach of Internet & Email rules

Any breach of these rules will be treated seriously and will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The Future of ICT at Our Lady of Good Counsel School

ICT is becoming an increasingly integral part of our teaching and learning. At OLG we are committed to a programme of ICT development. We have made a significant investment in technology and staff training. We aim to consolidate and continue this investment if resources allow.

iPads

Aim: To clarify use of iPads in school for staff, parents and pupils.

Introduction.

iPads have recently been introduced into Our Lady of Good Counsel School. They are used to reinforce goals and targets in pupil's IEPs and general class lessons. Pupils find the iPads motivating and engaging. Teachers report that certain pupils have demonstrated increased levels of concentration when using an iPad to learn or reinforce some targets/goals. It is school policy that the use of iPads as a teaching or learning resource must be done in a balanced way and must not replace traditional teaching methods and strategies. It is best if the iPad is considered as an additional tool to be used alongside all other resources available in the school. However, their use must be 'managed' to remove or reduce any risks associated with them and to ensure that there are clear guidelines for staff and parents.

1. How do we fund iPads in the school?

To date the school has a combination of school funded iPads and pupils' personal iPads in use in each classroom. It is important to stress that it is school policy **not** to put any pressure on parents to buy these expensive technological aids. Parents are assured that their children will not be at a disadvantage if they decide not to buy them as (a) the school employs a wide variety of teaching methods and strategies using materials and equipment already available in school. These resources are constantly under review by school staff and the Parents' Association and deficits addressed according to agreed priorities and (b) each class has a school funded iPad that is for the use of any pupil that would benefit from using it. It is also important to stress that not all pupils like to use them or gain any additional benefit over and above available resources already in the school.

Should a parent decide to purchase an iPad for school use, the school will provide a letter to claim VAT back on form 61A available from www.revenue.ie

2. App and iTunes Store

The Principal or I.T. Co-Ordinator **must** be consulted before purchasing apps and music. The Board of Management has directed that an annual limit to the purchase of apps and music must be in place. Teachers should agree together which apps to buy and should take account of relevance, cost, apps already purchased etc. Where possible, 'lite' versions should be utilised to ascertain the

suitability of the app. The Principal will monitor the iTunes account monthly. Parents must pay and install apps for their own child's personal iPads.

3. What are the insurance implications?

The school's insurance policy does not cover iPads as the excess payable on any claim exceeds the individual cost of the iPads. Parents should insure iPads belonging to individual pupils. The school will not be responsible for any theft, damage, loss or otherwise to pupils' individual iPads in school or in transit to and from school. Parents are requested to buy appropriate covers suitable for pupils with special needs to protect the iPads from damage and mark them with the child's name and home phone number.

Teachers should note that school funded iPads may not be replaced if they are lost, stolen or damaged. Great care therefore should be taken of iPads whether they are being used in school or at home by school staff. Damage, loss or theft to iPads outside of the school building are the responsibility of the teacher.

4. Supervision of pupils using iPads

Pupils should be supervised when using iPads especially if they have access to the Internet. The level of supervision is at the discretion of the teacher but should take account of age, cognitive ability and proficiency. Behavioural issues may also need to be taken into account. In accordance with our Safe Usage of The Internet Policy, pupils under the age of 13 should not be allowed to use Social Networking sites at home. Such sites are prohibited and blocked in school.

6. Using iPads at lunch time and on school transport.

Pupils may not use iPads outside at lunchtime but may use them on wet days in class. However, active play with peers should be encouraged as a first option. Pupils may also use iPads on school transport especially if this helps to reduce incidents of challenging behaviour. However, only educational apps may be used. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that appropriate apps only are used on school transport.

5. Confidentiality

Camera, video and recording functions should be monitored very carefully especially on iPads brought into school by pupils. These functions should be locked and not available to pupils unless there is a high level of supervision and only then when it is necessary to progress an educational goal. Parents should be very aware that videos/photos from home could be inadvertently viewed in school and should take appropriate action to ensure that this does not occur. Pupils, staff or parents are not permitted to photograph, film or record others (staff or pupils) in school unless it is with their knowledge and to progress an educational goal. It is the responsibility of the parents to lock these functions on their child's iPad and report any unauthorised videos/photos/recordings taken of other pupils or staff. If this occurs such videos, recordings or photos must **not** be copied, forwarded, stored, shared or otherwise used without the knowledge of the school. This will be considered a serious matter and reported immediately to the Board of Management. See section 12 below regarding email accounts.

6. Storage

Teachers are responsible for the safe storage of the school iPads at their own homes and at school. Class staff are expected to take reasonable care of pupils' personal iPads but cannot be held accountable for theft, loss or damage that may occur during school time. School iPads should be transported in the boot of the car along with school laptops as they will not be covered, if stolen, by the teacher's own insurance unless they are locked in the boot. Parents are responsible for their own pupils' iPads. Should a school funded iPad be sent home with a pupil, parents are responsible for its safekeeping and will be asked to reimburse the school should it be damaged, lost or stolen whilst in the care of parents.

7. Using Cases

All iPads used in class should have covers suitable for pupils with special needs.

8. iPads and the Internet in School

Access to the internet by pupils is permitted only under strict supervision. Please refer to the school's Usage of the Internet Policy. As per the terms of this policy staff have restricted access to the Internet in school for the purpose of planning or progressing educational goals. Social networking is not permitted in school on school devices. Inappropriate use of the Internet, email or social networking sites by any member of the school community may result in disciplinary action being taken by the Board of Management. *The safest course of action is not to refer to the school or any member of the school community on social networking sites.* Any concerns regarding cyberbullying or inappropriate use of the internet should be reported immediately to the Principal.

9. Email Accounts

Staff and parents should be aware that personal email accounts on iPads may be accessible in school. It is better to have a separate email addresses for iPads.

10. Use of iPads by pupils in school – “7 Ps”

When using the iPad remember the Guiding Principles, 'The 7 P's of Using Mobile Technology in Therapy'. (De Curtis & Ferrer, 2011):

- **Preparation**- why is the iPad being used for this lesson/pupil?
- **Participants** – what is the pupil's cognitive level and age?
- **Parameters** - how much time will be spent using the iPad and in what learning environments?
- **Purpose** – what is the purpose of the app and how can it meet the pupil's needs?
- **Positioning** - what are the effects of sitting side by side versus face to face? How can the iPad be made more interactive?
- **Playtime** - how will the pupils interests be incorporated?
- **Potential** - how can the learning be expanded or extended to real-life experiences.

11. Types of Apps/Games permitted in School

Educational apps and age appropriate games only are permitted in school and in transit to and from school. Parents are expected to ensure that pupils cannot access non educational games in school if they are present on the iPad. If a pupil can access non educational games, the teacher may confiscate the iPad and send it home for parents to remove or restrict access to the game. Under no circumstances should pupils be able to access games/apps that are not appropriate to their age. Teachers will not take responsibility for removing or restricting apps on personal iPads. This is the responsibility of parents.

12. Speech and Language Therapy

The introduction of an iPad as an AAC device should be led by an SLT in consultation with other members of the School Team who will evaluate the pupil's cognitive, sensory and motor abilities. The Principal must be consulted if a device/app is to be recommended for use in school to ascertain if the necessary support is available to enable the pupil to use it effectively.

iPads – Guidelines for Parents

We use iPads to reinforce goals and targets and as an alternative to table top activities. It is important to remember that we have a wide range of different resources in the school and employ many strategies and teaching methods with our pupils. For most children iPads are just another tool to help us to do this. Every class has iPads to which your child has access in school. Some parents have opted to purchase iPads for their child which can be used in school but no parent should feel under pressure to do this. This policy was developed in conjunction with representatives of the Parents' Association and the following guidelines for parents and pupils have been agreed. Should a school funded iPad be sent home with a pupil, parents are responsible for its safekeeping and will be asked to reimburse the school if it is damaged, lost or stolen whilst in the care of parents.

Remember - iPads are great fun and a very useful tool for our children BUT they must not replace traditional methods of teaching and playing. (They are only beneficial if they are managed properly by the school and parents).

1. If your child has an iPad they can bring it to school but you don't have to buy one as we know they are expensive. Your child will not lose out if they don't have one.
2. The children can use them to play appropriate games on school transport if this helps them to settle and behave well in the vehicle – just make sure the game is appropriate.
3. Access to the internet on the iPad **must always be supervised** – at home as well as at school. Report to Principal or Deputy Principal any concern regarding cyberbullying immediately. Remember that children under the age of 13 should not use social networks.
4. Be very careful of the camera and video functions - you might not like us to see your home videos and photos!!!! If your child takes an unauthorised photo or video in school please do not copy it or forward and inform the school asap.
5. *Be very careful of your email account. If it is accessible on the iPad we probably can access it in school. We won't be checking it but I'm sure you would prefer that it was not available to us. It is better to have a separate email address for the child's iPad to be on the safe side.*
6. Please make sure your child's iPad has a cover that is suitable for children with special needs. Whilst our staff will endeavour to take good care of your child's iPad we cannot be held responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged iPads which may occur in school or on school transport. The school's insurance policy does not cover iPads. It might be a good idea to consider insuring the iPad for use outside the home if this is a concern. It is also a good idea to mark them with the child's first name and contact number for parents.
7. As previously mentioned only apps that are appropriate for school-going pupils should be available to the children. Access to apps/games with unsuitable content will not be allowed. This includes games containing violence, wrestling, explicit content, bad language etc. These games should not be downloaded onto an iPad that is coming into school with the child. Parents will be asked to download apps that are suitable for the child's educational programme from time to time. Such apps are usually either free or very cheap and are used instead of more expensive textbooks.
8. Speech and Language Therapy Apps: SLT's may prescribe apps for a very small number of pupils who are using their iPad as a communication device. This is a very different way of using the iPad and is suitable for a small number of pupils in the school. Such apps are for the use of the children for whom they are prescribed *only* and are not suitable for all pupils.