

**Digital Learning Plan**

**Policy and Procedures**

**Gorey Central School**

# Introduction

The development of this plan was set out as a priority area by the school to comply with the Department of Education publications ‘Circular 0001/2017’ and ‘Digital Strategy for Schools’. The school staff chose to engage in the Digital Learning Planning Guidelines to create a Digital Learning Plan for our school, to support individual teacher planning and to promote digital learning at programme and cross-curricular levels and ultimately to embed digital technologies into all areas of school activity. This document records the outcomes of our current digital learning plan, including targets and the actions we will implement to meet the targets.

# School Details

Gorey Central School was founded in 1975 and is a Co-educational school under the patronage of Church of Ireland. In 2020, we have 223 pupils between the ages of 4 and 12 attending the school, from Junior Infants to 6th Class. There are currently 14 teachers – Principal, 8 mainstream class teachers and 4 Special Education Teachers and 1 Team Teacher and a shared post teacher, we also have 4 Special Needs Assistants working in Gorey Central School. The school has an active Parent-Teacher Association who regularly fundraise for school resources. Each teacher also has their own laptop and an interactive whiteboard and digital projector in their classroom.

# School Vision for Digital Technologies

In line with the guidance provided by the National Council for Technology in Education (NCTE), the approach in Gorey Central School is to emphasise the integration of digital learning across the curriculum, in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore Digital Learning (previously ICT) is not a subject or a curriculum in its own right. It is a tool that can add value to the teaching and learning process when it is used appropriately. The purpose of computer literacy is the same as all teaching and learning, to awaken and to support the development of intellectual curiosity.

Gorey Central School places great importance on the use of digital technologies in the teaching, learning and assessment across the curriculum, in both classroom and support contexts. We see Digital Learning as enabling children and teachers to engage with the curriculum in a deep, child-centred and creative way. Members of the wider school community also recognise the vital role that digital technology plays in educating the children in our care. We aim to identify the barriers which prevent full access to digital technology in our school context, in order to provide children with access to current and future digital technologies. We also recognise the ever-evolving changing nature of the digital society and are keenly aware of the importance of equipping our pupils with the skills and strategies they need to safely use these technologies.

Gorey Central School recognizes that a wide variety of opinions regarding the value that digital technologies have in education exist in our school community. Some parents and teachers can over value the benefits of the use of digital technologies in learning for children, while others can undervalue it.

Pedagogically, digital learning can be highly motivating for the learner and particularly for those children who find the more traditional methodologies of the school setting constraining. In that light, we will strive to maximize the potential for children’s learning using digital technologies, where appropriate.

Our vision for digital learning in Gorey Central School, centres on a balanced approach – ensuring that digital technologies are integrated into lessons, when appropriate, and used only to enhance the pupil’s learning experience. We also aim to ensure that our pupils begin to develop a critical appreciation of the role of digital technologies in society and develop habits which reflect an ethical and responsible use of these technologies. Gorey Central School aims to integrate digital technologies into the student experience and foster an environment of support and innovation.

School leadership will provide resources and cultivate a supportive and collaborative teaching and learning environment for integrating technology as a meaningful and effective part of the educational process. Students will leave our school as confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, including digital technologies, and understand the impact of those technologies on society.

Gorey Central School recognises the partnership between the school and parents as being imperative for providing students with life-long skills. Digital technologies will play a part in maintaining the links with home and regularly educate and inform parents of the best practices for digital learning initiatives at school and at home. Links with home are easily implemented via e-newsletters, e-mail, website news, and texts to parent. Digital Technologies are used for projects, when appropriate. The school website, Twitter and Facebook accounts provide parents and the wider world with an up-to-date view of daily activities and sports events such as GAA matches.

**Brief account of the use of digital technologies in the school to date:**

Here in Gorey Central School pupils have engaged with digital technologies in the following ways:

* Sourcing information when researching for projects using various web browsers
* Engaging in typing programmes
* Use of a variety of educational websites and software to support learning across the curriculum
* The creation of powerpoint presentations and word documents
* Recording and publishing video content
* Engaging with interactive software on interactive whiteboards
* Engagement in online platforms to assist with teaching and learning for homework (Seesaw)

In addition to these, the Staff also employs the use of digital technologies in the following ways:

* Use of cloud technology for document sharing and collaborative work
* Use of a whole school roll system (Aladdin)
* Use of laptops and interactive whiteboards to create and source teaching materials
* Updating class pages on our school website

# Digital Technology available in Gorey Central School

* All classrooms have a Promethean Interactive Whiteboard and a Teacher’s Laptop with internet access (and access to the network).
* Each class pairing has 7/8 iPads that they share.
* 2 networked digital coloured printers and photocopies are located in the school, along with a networked Black & White photocopier.
* We have 5 SEN rooms – each SEN Teacher has their own laptop.
* Our SEN teachers share 1 iPad
* We have 4 SNAs and each SNA has a laptop
* All teachers have a Samsung Galaxy Tablet
* Our SNAs share a Samsung Galaxy Tablet
* 2 Visualizers
* The Principal has a laptop and a desktop
* The Secretary has a desktop
* Digital Name Tag Printer
* Bluetooth Speak
* Portable Speaker System with two microphones
* 6 Bee Bots robots
* A number of children with additional needs use laptops
* The School has 140mb fibre optic Broadband
* The School has a website and Facebook
* We currently use ‘Aladdin’ to keep records and communicate with parents
* The school’s admin team and principal use Surf accounts to record income and expenditure
* The school’s admin team and principal use Receipt Bank to maintain invoice and receipt records

# Digital Learning Plan Focus

As the development and integration of IT, in order to enhance the teaching and learning in our school, is our focus in SSE, we aim to upgrade our current technologies in a staged manner in order to provide pupils with the opportunity to engage with appropriate and modern devices which best suit the teaching and learning needs within our school context. We plan to focus on student use of digital technologies to foster active engagement, to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills and to support research activities within the areas of SESE and during project work sessions.

We undertook a digital learning evaluation in our school during the month of March 2020. We evaluated our progress using the following sources of evidence:

* Digital Learning Team: A focus group of teachers established to work on developing our digital learning plan. The DLT Team group includes Mrs Lynne Copeland (ISM Representative), Ms Kate McDermott and Mr Isaac Porter. The group will link in with Mr Matt Bater (Principal) termly. The group is supported by Paul – IT support provider to the school.
* Teacher Digital Learning Survey: Online digital survey was carried out among the staff. The main areas of focus were:
* Reflection on learning, teaching and assessment practices
* The use of digital technologies in the classroom
* Professional collaborative review

Below are the statistics gathered:

* 71% of school staff rated the number of computing devices (desktops, laptops, tablets) we had as Very Good
* 64.3% of school staff rated the age and condition of computing devices (desktops, laptops, tablets) we have as Good.
* 85.7% of school staff rated Availability of digital devices such as whiteboards, digital projectors as at least Good
* Only 40% of school staff rated Availability of digital tools such as data sensors, cameras, assistive devices, robotic tops (e.g. BeeBots, visualizers) as good
* 50% of school staff rated Awareness of suitable software for teaching and learning as good
* 57.1% of school staff rated Availability of suitable software for teaching and learning as good
* 50% of school staff rated Broadband connection/speed as satisfactory
* 92.9% of school staff rated Technical support and maintenance as Satisfactory or below.
* 69.2% of school staff rated Staff's overall level of knowledge and skills in using digital technologies for teaching and learning as Good
* 64.3% of staff rated Staff's overall level of use of digital technologies for teaching and learning as Good
* 71.4% of school staff rated Pupils’ overall level of knowledge and skills in using digital technologies for learning as Good
* 85.7% of school staff rated Pupils’ overall engagement with digital technologies as part of teaching and learning as Good or Very Good
* Parents’ Digital Learning Survey: Online survey was carried out to elicit the views of parents on the use of digital technologies in the classroom, access to digital technologies & internet at home and reflect, where possible on their children’s digital learning experiences.

Below are the statistics gathered 77 parents returned the questionnaire:

* 92.1% of parents have a computer at home
* 86.8% of parents informed us their children have the use of a Tablet at home
* 98.7% of parents have internet at home
* 41 parents agree Digital Technology can generally enhance the children’s learning
* 40 parents agree Learning skills in Digital Technology is important.
* 26 parents neither agree nor disagree that Using Digital Technology helps children to work together.
* 23 parents agree Using Digital Technology helps children to concentrate
* 35 parents agree Digital Technology can motivate children.
* 31 parents agree Digital Technology allows children to present their work well.
* 70 parents believe Setting rules or guidelines for my child’s use of the Internet and other digital media is Very Important.
* 69 parents believe Routinely monitoring my child’s use of the Internet, social media, and other digital media is Very Important.
* 70 parents believe Talking to my child about good digital citizenship (e.g., not bullying using technology) is Very Important.
* 23 parents believe Encouraging my child to use the Internet and other digital media to express herself or himself creatively is Very Important.
* 34 parents believe Encouraging my child to use the Internet and other digital media to learn about things he or she is interested in is Important
* 34 parents believe Encouraging my child to use the Internet and other digital media to learn about current events and news is Important.
* 31 parents believe Encouraging my child to use the Internet and other digital media to learn skills and information he or she need to succeed in school is Important
* Student Focus Group (Student Council): a focus group session was carried out to elicit the views of older pupils on the use of digital technologies in the school & classroom and to reflect on their digital learning experiences. Subsequently the focus group sought feedback from their classmates

# The dimensions and domains from the Digital Learning Framework being selected

**The dimensions and domains from the Digital Learning Framework being selected**

* Teaching and learning: Learner Outcomes

**The standards and statements from the Digital Learning Framework being selected**

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| **Standard**  | **Statement(s)** |
| Pupils enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and achieve as learners.  | Pupils use appropriate digital technologies to foster active engagement in attaining appropriate learning outcomes. |

**These are a summary of our strengths with regards digital learning**

* Pupils in the school are enthusiastic and motivated to use digital technologies.
* Some pupils have access to digital technologies in their daily lives and are proficient in the use of certain devices and certain software.
* Some staff members have advanced skills in certain digital areas.
* Members of the school community share a common motivation to maximise the use of digital technologies in both teaching and learning in the school.
* The funding of the upgrading of selected digitial technologies is prioritised by the BOM.
* Staff collaborate and share knowledge through staff meetings and informally, when possible.
* A healthy culture of collaboration and support exists and is fostered in the school.

**This is what we are going to focus on to improve our digital learning practice further**

* To further collaborate, information share and support colleagues in competence and confidence in embedding digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment.
* Staff will engage in CPD in order to facilitate a greater use of digital technologies by pupils.
* Design activities where pupils use digital technologies to support and enhance guided reading and other activities across the curriculum.
* Continue the review and upgrading process of hardware and software within the school.

**Our Digital Learning Plan**

We have recorded:

* The **targets** for improvement we have set
* The **actions** we will implement to achieve these
* **Who is responsible** for implementing, monitoring and reviewing our improvement plan
* How we will measure **progress** and check **outcomes** (criteria for success)

As we implement our improvement plan we will record:

* The **progress** made, and **adjustments** made, and **when**
* **Achievement of targets** (original and modified), and **when**

**Digital Learning Action Plan**

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| DOMAIN: Learner Outcomes |
| STANDARD(S): Pupils enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn and achieve as learners |
| STATEMENT(S): Pupils use appropriate digital technologies to foster active engagement in attaining appropriate learning outcomes |
| TARGETS: (What do we want to achieve?) Pupils will use digitial technologies to improve literacy and numeracy skills, firstly within a support setting and then within the classroom.  |
| ACTIONS(What needs to be done?) | TIMEFRAME(When is it to be done by?) | PERSONS / GROUPS RESPONSIBLE(Who is to do it?) | CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS(What are the desired outcomes?) | RESOURCES(What resources are needed?) |
| * Teachers will engage in CPD on using digital technologies to obtain a collection of resources to support the use of digital technologies during SESE sessions.
 | * 2020/2021-2021/2022
 | * Some staff members and feedback at staff meeting
 | * By June 2022 a number of teachers will have gained a knowledge of at least two digital tools to use to improve SESE skills.
 | * iPads
* Laptops
* Digital projectors
* Interactive boards
* Online tools
* Mobile devices
* IT grant
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| * IT grant to be allocated to the installation of upgraded interactive boards to interactive screens.
 | * 2020/2021-2021/2022
 | * BOM and school staff
 | * By June 2022 the school aims to have purchased a new portable interactive white board screen.
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| * Staff will share their experiences using Digital Technologies in their classrooms with each other and engage in peer support where appropriate.
 | * 2020/2021 – 2021/2022
 | * All staff and pupils
 | * Sharing good practice at whole staff meetings.
* Sharing knowledge, expertise and skills informally and collaboratively throughout the school year
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| EVALUATION PROCEDURES:(How are we progressing? Do we need to make adjustments? Have we achieved our targets?) |
| **Evaluation Procedures:** Feedback at staff meetings, Cuntais Míosula, evidence of pupil work completed using digital technology. |

This Policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents’ Association and is readily accessible on the school website at [www.goreycentral.com](http://www.goreycentral.com) or in paper format at parental request. A copy of this policy will also be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

# Ratification and Communication

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management September 2021.

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_