



POLICY REGARDING THE USE OF ICT/ ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION 2023

INTRODUCTION

Information Communication Technology (ICT) can have an exponential impact on education for pupils with special education needs (SEN). It enhances their access to the curriculum, enables them to improve the presentation of their work and heightens motivation levels, ensuring significantly higher achievements. It is therefore important that teachers and pupils in Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh gain the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT in order to optimise learning potential for pupils with SEN. It is envisaged that ICT be used in any subject where it is appropriate and is a viable support to the pupil's learning. The assistive technology provided to pupils can be in the form of a laptop computer.

RULES FOR USE

1. As per the Department of Education and Skills (DES) Circular (No 0010/2013 Scheme of grants towards the purchase of essential assistive technology equipment for pupils with physical or communicative disabilities, available on www.education.ie), assistive technology issued by the DES is the property of the DES. Should a pupil transfer to a new school then the principal of the new school must apply in writing to SSN for the device to be transferred for use by the pupil in the new school.
2. Parents/Guardians of each pupil who is granted access to assistive technology must sign a copy of the Assistive Technology Use Parental/Guardian Agreement Form (Appendix A) and agree to the school's terms of use.
3. Written notification will be issued to the parents/guardians of each pupil who is granted access to assistive technology. Permission to bring assistive technology off the school campus for the purpose of completing homework will be reviewed by the SEN Department and Management on an individual basis.
4. Pupils providing their own device(s) must show due care to have anti-virus software protection installed and updated as required.
5. There is a limit to how much printing the school can provide for pupils using assistive technology and this is at the discretion of the SEN Department and School Management. No homework will be printed using the school's resources.
6. Class teachers will be notified by the SEN Department of all pupils using assistive technology so they can determine, in conjunction with the pupil, Special Needs Assistant (where applicable) and the SEN Department, how the technology can be used.

HOW LAPTOPS (ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY) ARE TO BE USED

1. Permission for the pupil to use assistive technology will only be granted by the SEN Department on receipt of a signed copy of the Parental/Guardian Procedure for Use of Assistive Technology Form.
2. All school laptops must have anti-virus software installed. The school will undertake to update the anti-virus software when required. The pupils must not tamper with this, or any other, software installed by SSN.
3. Careful storage of all technology is required for safe keeping and due care must be shown to prevent unnecessary damage to devices, e.g. laptop must be stored in a protective case and put into locked storage when not being used.
4. The pupil must endeavour to do no untoward damage to the assistive technology. They should treat it safely and respectfully. No food or drink should be consumed when using the equipment. Similarly, the identifying labels for each piece of technology must not be removed.
5. When the device/equipment is not in use on the school property, the assistive technology should be stored in a locked locker or in a storage space designated by the SEN Department.
6. It is the responsibility of the pupil and parent to ensure that their laptop is charged at home and has a full battery while in school.
7. All assistive technology must be carried between classes and between school and home by the pupil in a suitable protective carry case. It is the responsibility of the pupil or their parents/guardians to fund the cost of a carry case if one was not granted with the technology by the DES.



USE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY - PARENTAL/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT FORM

Date _____

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Name of Pupil: _____ Class: _____

Your child has been granted access to the following assistive technology by the Department of Education and Skills:

Your child has;

a) been given access to assistive technology for use at school and at home

or

b) been given access to assistive technology for use at school only

Assistive technology is expensive and there can be significant costs relating to upkeep, repair or replacement. Please read the following. If agreeing to it please sign and return it to the SEN Department. Access to the technology will be granted to your child on receipt of this completed form.

1. The assistive technology is the property of the school and remains so for the duration that your child is in the school. Should your child leave the school, the technology is returned to the possession of SSN. When the technology, specifically laptops, is returned to the school at the end of use, there should be no personal information stored on it. The school will take no responsibility for deleting personal files. Your child's new school may apply in writing to have the device transferred to the new school.

2. The cost of rectifying any damage or loss of the technology must be borne by Parent/Guardian. Please inform the school immediately if the technology is lost or damaged.

3. Repairs to assistive technology must be undertaken by the school's IT provider. Parents/Guardians must not engage with any other IT service provider.

4. The technology should be solely used by the pupil and for the purposes of school work. No other individuals in the home should have cause to use it.

5. Homework, if completed on a laptop, must be printed at home or emailed directly to the teacher.
6. All laptops must have antivirus software installed. The school will undertake to update the anti-virus software when required. The pupils must not tamper with this, or any other, software installed by SSN.
7. The identifier labels on the equipment should never be removed.
8. Specific classes will be dedicated to support pupils in the use of their assistive technology. However, parents and pupils are responsible for developing and maintaining typing skills.
9. We ask that parents/guardians monitor carefully the use of laptops while in the home. They should be used mainly to enhance typing skills and assist with homework. Internet usage should be kept to a minimum and directly related to school activities.
10. When assistive technology is not in use on the school campus, it is to be securely stored and locked in a specific storage area designated by the SEN Department.
11. Laptops are to be charged every evening at home to ensure laptops can be used throughout the school day and avoid a pupil being without a laptop should it have to be charged.
12. If you need to supplement technology funded by the DES, you may be entitled to claim tax (VAT currently approx. 23%) back on assistive technology devices/software and the hardware required to use it. More information on the process is available at www.citizensinformation.ie

Please feel free to contact the school if you wish to discuss the use of assistive technology.

Please complete the agreement attached and return it to the Principal.

Once the completed agreement is returned to the school, your son/ daughter will be granted access to the technology.

Yours sincerely,

Bláithín Maguire Principal

Orla Garry/Niamh Kierans SEN Co-Ordinators

Parent signature: _____

Date: _____