INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY PLAN

Vision Statement:

Gortskehy National School will serve the educational needs of its pupils through creative educational use of present and emerging Information and Communication Technologies.

We will access the resources and skills necessary to implement our vision of educational development. We will revise our educational objectives in the light of developing strategies and resources in ICT educational theory and practice. The mode of instruction will generate a sense of fulfilment while experiencing the benefits of ICT to facilitate creative expression.

General Rationale for the use of ICT an educational tool:

We aim to develop skills in our pupils to enable them to live and work in an ever-changing world. We, as teachers, recognise the potential of ICT as a cross-curricular resource at primary level. Our school's ethos demands the 'best' from each student. The motivation for excellence is fostered by providing opportunities to excel in a variety of subject areas including ICT:

- To promote a positive attitude to technology;
- To use computers as tools to enhance further learning;
- To facilitate cross-curricular learning;
- To develop basic keyboard skills;
- To promote imagination and creativity;
- To develop problem-solving skills;
- To motivate children to collect, enter and interpret data;
- To encourage children to communicate effectively;
- To generate international links through the use of Skype, Twitter and ItsLearning;
- To develop project management and presentational skills;
- To develop co-operative skills through participation in ICT projects that demand the pooling of skills and interactive development of ideas and material.

All children from Junior Infants to Rang 6 will have regular access to computers.

Aims of ICT in the Primary Curriculum

The aims of ICT in education are:

1. To develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable the child to use ICT to support his/her learning in appropriate ways.

2. To enable the child to acquire and apply ICT skills in the attainment of appropriate curriculum objectives across the range of subjects.

3. To enable the child to experience a wide range of ICT tools and resources in relevant curriculum contexts.

4. To encourage the child to use ICT critically and creatively and to be discriminating in the selection, analysis and presentation of information.

5. To enable the child to gain hands-on experience of a range of available technologies and to explore their potential in the classroom.

6. To foster confidence in the use of ICT through enjoyable collaborative learning experiences in which each child can experience success.

7. To raise the child's awareness of the significance and impact of modern technology on the social, economic, cultural and other dimensions of society.

8. To develop the child's understanding of ICT as a valuable "life-skill" that can enhance living and learning right throughout an individual's life.

Current School Profile and ICT Status (2018):

- Three classroom teachers & three classrooms;
- 67 pupils;
- Six desktops;
- Eleven laptops;
- One A3 network printer;
- 2 A4 network printers;
- Two scanners;
- Two visualisers;
- Three interactive whiteboard projectors;
- Three digital (video) cameras;
- Wireless Internet Connection throughout the school;
- Website, Facebook, Google+ and Twitter account;
- One Laptop Locker.

ICT Adoption to Date

The principal is the dedicated ICT coordinating teacher and the school has been a part of ICT development since 2001. Initially each classroom had been equipped with a PC and appropriate software in line with the NCTE's teaching skills initiative. By 2006 the school had three desktop computers in each room.

Adoption from 2009

In 2009 the school began to update its ICT infrastructure. The slow satellite broadband was replaced by *Three* wireless available under the National Broadband Programme. This was done at the school's expense as *Three* was not an approved NCTE provider and no other option was available. A school website, Facebook page and Twitter account were all set up with the website features developed on an ongoing basis to the present day.

In 2010, seven Fizzbooks and a charging trolley were purchased. Fizzbooks were chosen for their ruggedness and portability. An investment was made in two interactive whiteboard projectors, a video camera, visualiser and green screen. Headsets with integrated microphones were introduced so that the children could make their own podcasts. Document scanners were also purchased for each classroom in 2010.

Adoption of Wireless and Wired Connections

A wireless and wired internet network (ISDN fast connection) was also set up in each room in 2010. Numerous computers can be connected to the web through the wifi network. Pupils can update the school website themselves with all posts automatically pushed to our Facebook and twitter accounts. Two wireless network colour A3 printers were also purchased in 2011. The printers can be used wirelessly by laptop and mobile devices.

Adoption of the Acceptable Usage Policy

Once the school website was set up in 2009 our Acceptable Usage Policy was updated. New entrants are invited to accept the AUP on enrolment.

Adoption of Online Safety Settings

In 2010 the school adopted the free Microsoft Security Essentials program which is free and more than adequate in providing anti-virus protection. Our preferred browser is Google Chrome with Google strict Safe-Search enabled. YouTube is also available for educational purposed and also has strict Safe-Search enabled.

Adoption of the School's Software Collection

The school attempts to balance its use of licensed software with that of freeware. Microsoft Office is available on all units along with programs such as Know Your Europe, Know Your Ireland and freeware programs such as Audacity, Schoolhouse Bingo and WordPress. Website resources such as primarywhistle.com, Folensonline and MangaHigh are used regularly.

Digital and Photo Cameras

In 2009 a digital video camera was purchased. The school's photo camera was replaced in 2011 with another digital/video camera. A further digital video camera was won in a Primary Planet Video competition. All are used by the children in publishing their work, showcasing group activities and producing short films, Skype calls etc.

Adoption of Interactive Whiteboards

Two interactive whiteboard projectors were installed in March 2010. A visualiser was purchased for the senior room at the same time and for the Junior room in 2011. The ICT Infrastructure grant in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 has made it possible for the installation of the projectors and whiteboards in both classrooms. Following the appointment of a third classroom teacher in 2016 an extension was built and an interactive projector installed in the third classroom.

Adoption of the School's Website and Online Payment System

The school's website was launched in September 2009 along with a Facebook page, Google+ and Twitter account. Gortskehy won 'Best School Website' at the Junior Spider awards in 2014. The children publish their work on the website which is then automatically posted to the school Facebook, Google+ and Twitter accounts. In this way parents are kept updated on school events and the pupils' work. The website is responsive and every effort has been made to ensure that all features including audio and video give a consistent user experience across all mobile, pc and mac platforms.

In 2013 we integrated an online payment system into the school website. This is used by 85% of parents to pay for the private bus service, book rental, swimming, school tours etc. The system was set up 'in-house' so there are no monthly maintenance fees.

Adoption of Google Drive & Google Forms

In September 2013 the school adopted the use of Google Drive as a central access point for all school documents - (IEPs, Cuntaisí Míosúla, parent contact details, accounts, BOM minutes, Incident Book etc.). Relevant folders are shared among the Treasurer, Learning Support Teacher, Learning Resource Teacher, Classroom Teacher and Principal as appropriate.

Parents schedule their preferred parent-teacher meeting slot online using SignUpGenius and it works very well. Google Forms is also used for parent and pupil surveys.

Adoption of Health and Safety Rules

Children are only allowed access to the internet in supervised situations. They do not have their own e-mail accounts in the school and are not allowed to access their existing ones. Pupils are taught from an early age that they do not give out personal details like surnames, addresses etc. All laptops and cameras are stored in the charging trolley which is locked when not in use.

Future Management and Planning

These priorities will shape the school's focus over the coming years:
- One member of staff will continue to assume the role of ICT co-ordinating teacher;
- Regularly audit the software and hardware available and make teachers aware of this software and hardware.
- Catalogue software available in SEN classrooms with view to extending this
- ICT co-ordinating teacher helps out with general maintenance of the school's computers and associated hardware and software;
- Continue assessing the cost and usage of the printers;
- Continue to purchase laptops for use in classrooms when funds are available;
- Use the photocopier as a networked printer to cut down on printing costs;
- Replace headsets for all computers used by the children as required;
- Source and buy educational software and appropriate licences for specific curriculum areas as needed (e.g., SESE -Science, Geography, Irish etc.);
- Source and buy additional software titles to meet the needs of individual students, particularly students with special needs;
- Regularly audit the school's educational software;
- Assess staff training needs and raise awareness of ICT courses in the Education Centre.

Implementation Data:
This policy is effective from April 2018

Signed: _____ _____   Date: _____

       Principal   Chairperson