ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, NEWRY

Digital Learning Policy
Revised: January 2025

Introduction:

Digital Learning prepares students to become fully engaged in a rapidly changing world in which education, work and other activities are increasingly transformed by access to varied and developing technologies. In St. Mary's we recognise that Digital Technology is an important tool in the learning and assessment cycle and in the society in which we live and work in.

Students use Digital Technology to find, explore, analyse, exchange and present information. Students learn how to employ Digital Technologies to enable rapid access to ideas and experiences from a wide range of sources. Increased use of Digital Technology promotes initiative and independent learning; with students being able to make informed judgements about when and where to use such technologies to best effect.

This policy document sets out the school's aims, principles and strategies for the development of Digital Learning. The policy is influenced by the current developments in Digital Technology in education, employment and in society in general.

Context:

The stated vision of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) is '*To ensure that every learner fulfils his or her potential at each stage of his or her development.*' (DENI 2010)

This has been enunciated in the overall aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (DE 2008), which state, *'The N Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives.'*

Vision for Digital Learning:

In St. Mary's High School, Digital Learning makes an unique contribution to learning and teaching.

It is our vision that we will offer students opportunities to use Digital Technology across curriculum areas. We strive to keep pace with developments in Digital Technology and have a commitment to the ongoing professional development of our staff, helping them to be confident and capable of creating effective and creative learning experiences for all students.

It is the school's aim to ensure that students and staff are able to use digital and online technologies appropriately, effectively and creatively to acquire and develop their knowledge skills and competences as:

- Individuals;

- Contributors to society;

- Contributors to the economy;

- Lifelong learners

Rationale
In St. Mary's we value and seek to develop:
- students, who use technology to achieve independence in their learning, attain high standards, work creatively, and develop broad, transferable competencies for employment and lifelong learning;
- teachers and support staff, who can effectively employ education technologies in a range of approaches within the learning and assessment cycle;
- strong links with external agencies and the local business community to support digital learning.

Aims
The overall aim for Digital Technology is to enrich learning for all students within a well-resourced learning environment where they are confident and competent in the use of such technologies to enhance all aspects of their learning experience.   The aims of this policy is to:
- support learning and teaching across the curriculum at all levels;
- provide ongoing professional development for all staff to increase understanding of Digital Technologies;
- enhance and individualise the educational experience, helping students to enjoy learning, improve their performance and raise standards;
- improve standards in literacy, numeracy and other areas of study;
- advance student's creativity, developing their digital and visual literacies;
- personalise learning and support assessment for learning strategies;
- develop the skills needed to be economically active in the local and global economy;
- facilitate the celebration and showcasing of achievement;
- effectively use the school's computer management system to promote and enhance the effective management of administration, information gathering, analysis, decision-making and communication;
- develop good attitudes and practice in relation to the safe and appropriate use of Digital Technology.
- Promote the safe and acceptable use of digital platforms, educational resources and the whole school digital infrastructure;
- Improve the access to Digital technology for all learners.

Objectives:

Digital Learning should:
- develop student's digital understanding and capabilities;
- develop student's skills in using Digital Technology to enable them to access, manipulate and present information;
- develop their ability to apply Digital Technology to support their use of language and communication;
- promote social interaction and collaborative working;
- support inclusive and innovative approaches to learning;
- allow learners to study at any time and remotely, e.g. using a range of devices and online platforms;
- provide access to high quality learning materials;
- develop positive attitudes and practices in relation to the appropriate use of Digital Technology and Internet Safety.

Digital Technology should:
- ensure that all staff are motivated and skilled in the use of Digital Technology;
- foster a culture of continuous development of Digital Technology skills;
- enable teachers to access a wide range of multimedia and digital resources;
- enable Digital Technology to be used in a wide range of learning experiences;
- enable staff to make full use of a range of approved online platforms to support home/blended learning;
- enable teachers to create, use and adapt teaching resources;
- support planning, assessment arrangements, and monitoring academic and pastoral progress.

Digital Technology for Management should:
- allow for the efficient administration of all aspects of school life;
- provide secure access to student's pastoral and academic data and information
- facilitate the analysis of data to support whole school target setting and exam analysis;
- support communication with parents;
- enable secure transfer of data with other schools;

Digital Technology for Parents/Carers should:
- provide opportunities for parents/carers to participate in their daughters' education through the use of social media and online platforms;
- provide access to information and resources to support learning out of school using the online platforms;
- enhance on-line opportunities for parents/carers to engage in effective communication methods including virtual meetings;
- provide information on the wide and varied aspects of social media.

Digital Technology Infrastructure, Connectivity and Technical Support should:
- strive to put in place high standards of Digital resources and equipment;
- give effective access to the Internet and high quality digital resources;
- ensure appropriate and efficient technical support will be in place to ensure the daily availability of the Digital Technology resources;
- facilitate the efficient and effective online booking of Digital Technology resources

Curriculum Provision and Organisation:

In St Mary's, we aim to ensure through curriculum provisions and effective learning and teaching the needs of all students are met and they reach their full potential. Across the curriculum, at a level appropriate to their ability, students will be given opportunities to develop their digital skills to:

Explore
- access and manage data and information;
- research, select, process and interpret information;
- investigate, make predictions and solve problems through interaction with digital tools;
- understand how to keep safe and display acceptable online behaviour.

Express
- create, develop, present and publish ideas and information using a range of digital media
- manipulate information and multimedia products using a range of assets.

Exchange
- communicate using a range of contemporary methods and tools;
- share, collaborate, exchange and develop ideas digitally.

Evaluate
- talk about, review and make improvements to work, reflecting on the process and outcome;
- consider the sources and resources used.

Exhibit
- manage and present their stored work;
- showcase their learning

Key Stage 3 IT:

Students receive descrete IT lessons at KS3 and follow a structured programme of study:

Years 8 (One Period per week)	Years 9 (One Period per week)	Years 10 (One Period per fortnight)
• Introduction to IT • E Safety • Email Software • Word Processing Software One • Presentation Software • Spreadsheet Design Software • Programming One	• Introduction to IT • E Safety • Word Processing Software Two • Desktop Publishing Software • Database Design Software • Website Design Software • Programming Two	• Fundamentals of Information Technology • Components of a Computer System • Hardware and Software • Input and Output Devices • Storage Devices • Types of Information Processing Systems • Ergonomics

Curriculum Pathways

Digital Technology based subjects at Key Stage 4 and Post 16 allow students to develop their digital skills. Students use Digital Technology tools to find, explore, analyse, exchange and present information responsibly and creatively. They learn how to employ Digital Technology to enable rapid access to ideas and information from a wide range of people, communities and cultures. Increased capability in the use of Digital Technology promotes initiative and independent learning; with students being able to make informed judgements about when and where to use Digital Technology to best effect.

Subjects:

Key Stage 4   OCN NI Level 2 Certificate in Information Technology Applications
                         GCSE Business and Communication Systems

Key Stage 5   OCR Cambridge Technical Level 3 Introductory Diploma in IT

Learning and Teaching:

All subjects in St. Mary's High School recognise the unique contribution that the effective use of Digital Technology (DT) makes to learning and teaching. It is our aim to ensure that students should be able to use digital and online technologies appropriately, effectively and creatively across curriculum areas to acquire knowledge, to practice skills and to develop competencies.

The overall aim for Digital Learning is to enrich the learning experience for all students and to ensure that teachers develop confidence and competence to use Digital Technology in the effective teaching of their subject. All subject areas provide students with opportunities to acquire, develop, understand, demonstrate and apply Digital Technology concepts and processes appropriately in a variety of contexts. This involves providing opportunities to transfer knowledge, understanding and skills in meaningful ways across all curriculum areas.

Through the use of Digital Learning Platforms students are encouraged to work independently and further develop links between school and home. Communication and the celebration of success is promoted through the medium of the School Website and App, Facebook and Twitter accounts. Heads of Department ensure Digital Learning is embedded in Schemes of Work and Digital Technology is widely used to support Learning and Teaching.

Digital Resources and Access:

Classrooms:
All classrooms have an Interactive Whiteboard connected to a laptop or PC. Nine Classrooms have an Active Panel. Each corridor of classrooms has access to a printer/photocopier.

Digital Suites:
There are five fully equipped IT suites in St. Mary's High School:
Room 4: 23 Networked PCs; Room 21: 22 Networked PCs; Room 22: 22 Networked PCs; Room 23: 24 Networked Laptops with Wifi access; Science 3: 21 Networked laptops with Wifi access; Technology: 12 laptops with WIFI access

The Digital Suites are available to students before and after school until 4:30pm. An on-line booking system is used through Google Drive. This system facilitates the tracking of Digital Learning and the use of Digital Technology across the curriculum.

Library/Study Hall:
The Library has 6 networked laptops and 20 Microsoft Surface SE laptops for pupil and teacher use, offering Internet and library search facilities.

Digital Equipment:
51 Microsoft Surface SE laptops, 20 HP laptops, twenty-six iPads, 8 Dell Chromebooks, 5 Asus Chromebooks and 3 Lenovo laptops available to all staff for classroom use.
Each teacher has an iPad.
The Maths Department has 15 iPads.

Internet Access:
Students are encouraged to access the rich information sources available on the Internet and develop appropriate skills to analyse and evaluate such resources. On-line resources offer a broader range of information for student use. Teachers give students opportunities to develop their skills in using the Internet for research purposes.

Leadership and Management:

The Senior Leadership Team, including the Whole School Digital Leader, Digital Learning Team and Head of IT are responsible for the management of Digital Learning in St. Mary's.

The Digital Leader (Mr Twohig) is responsible for the whole school development and coordination of Digital Learning. The Digital Learning Action Plan develops the targets for whole school improvement in line with the School Development Plan:

- ❖ to promote and enhance Digital Learning and skills across all key stages to support whole school improvement in Digital Learning.
- ❖ to develop a consistent approach to raising awareness and promotion of Digital Technology across all curriculum areas

There is ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Digital Learning Action Plan with feedback given to the Senior Leadership Team.

Heads of Departments are responsible for ensuring that they embed Digital Learning in their Schemes of Work and encouraging members of their Department to implement the use of Digital Technology in their everyday teaching. All subjects explore meaningful opportunities for students to apply their Digital skills. All members of staff, therefore, have a responsibility to develop and promote Digital Learning within their subject area.

The Head of IT is responsible for the development, resourcing and monitoring of the Key Stage 3 IT lessons. The Head of Department is also responsible for the development of the subject at Key Stage 4 and Post 16.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Senior Leadership Team:

The Senior Leadership Team has overall responsibility for developing Digital Learning within the school. The Senior Leadership Team will:
- monitor, evaluate and review the whole school Digital Learning Action Plan policies;
- identify key priorities in Digital Learning as outlined in the School Development Plan which includes relevant professional training;
- ensure the school meets all statutory requirements in relation to Digital Learning across all Key Stages;
- make effective use of the school's Management Information System for Data Analysis, Curriculum Modelling, Personnel, Behaviour Management, Examination and Assessment to support the decision making process.
- analyse assessment data to monitor pupil attainment and progress against whole school targets;
- ensure assessment systems are effective and disseminate data throughout the school to facilitate self evaluation and target setting;
- monitor, evaluate and review the whole school Digital Learning Action Plan in line with school policy and statutory requirements.

Digital Leader:
- provide leadership, guidance and direction for the delivery and development of Digital Learning across the curriculum;
- in consultation with SLT take a lead in Digital Learning Policy development;
- devise the whole school Digital Learning Action Plan and ensure the actions are fully implemented and monitored, supportive of the targets within the School Development Plan;
- coordinate the implementation of Digital Learning related projects between relevant departments;
- organise and plan relevant Professional Development;
- coordinate the assessment, recording and reporting of Digital Learning across Key Stage 3.

Head of IT:
- provide leadership, guidance and direction for the delivery of IT at Key Stage 3 and as a curriculum subject at Level 2 and Level 3;
- effectively use assessment and whole school data, both internal and external, to facilitate target setting and self evaluation within the IT Department;
- identify relevant training opportunities for department members in relation to all aspects of IT;
- collate and analyse relevant formative and summative assessment data within the IT Department and report to the Principal and SLT in relation to all aspects of assessment when required.
- support whole school Digital Learning strategies.

Heads of Department:
- ensure Digital Learning is embedded in their subject area Schemes of Work and encourage members of their department to use Digital Technology effectively within learning and teaching;
- effectively use assessment and whole school data, both internal and external, to facilitate target setting and self evaluation within their department;
- identify relevant training opportunities for department members in relation to the use and development of Digital Technology;
- develop effective department Digital Learning strategies and approaches;

Subject Teachers:
- promote meaningful opportunities for students to apply Digital knowledge and skills and to develop Digital Learning within their subject area;

Learning Support Co-ordinator:
- working with other staff, develop appropriate learning and assessment strategies to support students on the Learning Support Register;

Digital Learning Technician:
- maintain all Digital/C2K equipment in school;

- liaise with C2K and Northgate in relation to all aspects of C2K equipment and software issues;
- manage the school's social media platforms including: School Website, School App, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as effective means of communication and to promote the schools successes and achievements;
- support the Digital Leader in the effective use of Digital Technology as a cross curricular skill;
- promote e safety in line with current Child Protection guidelines;
- liaise with the SLT, Head of IT, Digital Leader and Staff in the development of Digital Learning at whole school level;
- develop the effective use of online platforms to promote independent and home learning;
- attend relevant INSET training;
- identify training needs and liaise with the Head of IT, Digital Leader and SLT regarding relevant staff development and training;

Professional Development:

The school aims to 'Build Digital Capacity' to empower teachers to develop their own Digital skills and those of their colleagues. All staff are positively encouraged to develop their competence and the Professional Development needs of staff are met in the following ways:
- Whole School Digital Learning INSET
- Subject specific Digital INSET
- Sharing Good Practice within school and across the Area Learning Community
- Links with external agencies e.g. AMMA

Related Whole School Policies:

This policy is set within the broader school context of the Curriculum and as such should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:
- e Safety and Internet Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Blended Learning Policy
- Marking and Presentation Policy
- SEN Policy
- Literacy Policy
- BYOD Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Professional Development Policy

All policies are available from the school website www.stmarysnewry.com.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

The Vice Principal, Mr Fitzpatrick and Mr Twohig, Digital Learning Leader are responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the whole school Digital Technology Policy to ensure:

- the effective implementation of this policy;
- that the policy is updated in the light of new developments in Digital Technology
- the implementation of the policy is reviewed and advise the Principal and SLT on a regular basis.

As Digital Leader Mr Twohig is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the development of Digital Learning across the curriculum. The Digital Learning Action Plan will be revised on an annual basis in line with whole school targets and any relevant statutory requirements. Mr Twohig will report annually to the Principal and SLT on the development and progress of Digital Learning based on the success of the Action Plan and targets set.

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Principal: _____

Date: _____

Date of Review: ___January 2028_____