



Information and Communication Technology Policy

The term Information and Communication Technology should be considered in this document to include any equipment which allows the user to communicate or manipulate information electronically. Such equipment might include:

- computers and peripherals such as scanners and printers
- assistive technology such as switches, joysticks, overlay keyboards etc.
- equipment in the Light and Sound Room such as sound beam and infinity tunnel
- microphones
- programmable toys & robots
- calculators
- various sensors and probes
- electronic musical instruments
- audio and video recorders
- television and photocopier
- telephone and fax
- digital still and movie cameras

Beacon Hill School has chosen to invest in a Research Machines package, pre-installed with a large amount of software. In addition, we have bought various switch-access software, and additional switch devices, to enable access to the ICT curriculum for all students. Currently, each Primary and Secondary class has one RM computer allocated to them. Every classroom has email and Internet access to these machines via a peer-to-peer network. Post-16 Department has two PCs installed with software appropriate to the needs of Post-16 students, to encourage familiarity with non-RM software used in the wider world. Email and Internet access for these students is available at Tynemouth College, within which the Post-16 base is situated.

Beacon Hill also has some equipment based on other platforms, notably Acorn and BBC. Although this equipment has been largely phased out due to technological advances, we have a range of access devices and software designed for these machines, and those devices still working are proving very useful in allowing access to the curriculum for some students.

In addition, there is a large amount of equipment in the Light and Sound room, including:

- sound beam
- infinity tunnel

- various types of switch
- projector
- bubble tube
- ultra-violet lamp
- mirror ball
- fibre-optics

There are 3 digital still cameras available, and 1 movie camera. A scanner is available in the technician's room, and a fax machine is available in the Head Teacher's room.

Pupils will have access to the most relevant key stage content. This may not be their age appropriate content. Teachers, however, will ensure that wherever possible pupils will receive their entitlement to age appropriate content.

Even given the above work will be presented in age appropriate contexts.

Pupil access to this subject will not be restricted on the basis of race, gender or ability.

Pupils will have access to a range of materials resources and techniques across all key stages. The % of time spent on this area of the National Curriculum will differ for all key stages.

The advice of the physiotherapist will be sought where necessary in terms of positioning and seating.

Recording of pupils whatever their rate of learning or level of achievement.

Achievements in this area will be variable, but will always be valued and celebrated where appropriate. Pupil achievement will be recorded in their end of key stage file.

Back up copies of all programmes area available in the back library which is kept in the Technician's room with documentation and programme instruction manuals, etc.

A collection of hardware and software catalogues area available in the ICT library. A range of educational ICT magazines is available.

A voluntary hour after school on a weekly basis is made available by the ICT Co-ordinator to assist staff with hardware and software familiarisation.

Pupils are time tabled for visits beyond the school on a weekly basis, and two minibuses are available. Educational components of these visits include understanding and using ICT in the wider world.

Examples of ICT in the outside world include washing machines, tumble driers, food processors, fridges and other food technology equipment, light switches and dimmer switches, optical mark readers, photocopiers, minibus tail-lift, pedestrian crossings, burglar alarms, automatic sewing machines, etc.

Use of computers in everyday life include travel agents, hospital and doctors' reception, opticians, theatre and other bookings, banks and building societies, National Lottery centres, cinema and sport and recreation centres, teletext, libraries, school organisation and finance, business applications, retail settings, automation in industrial settings.

These principles fit into the agreed Aims of Beacon Hill School in the following ways:

To foster and maintain in parents a sense of belonging to the school community.

Many parents now have computers at home, and are keen to use this technology to support their children's learning. Beacon Hill offers advice and support to parents on the use or acquisition of ICT and the suitability of programs for their children. In addition the Beacon Hill website, currently under construction, will be accessible to any parent with computer technology, and will keep parents informed about many aspects of school life.

To maximise the potential of every member of the school community by raising standards and offering a high quality education.

Raising standards in ICT capability will be important in raising standards and the quality of education provided as a whole.

Creates a happy, secure and healthy environment.

ICT creates a safe and secure way to explore and learn about the world. A wide range of stimulating activities are available on the computer screen, in the Sound and Light interactive room and in other settings.

Gives each person a sense of his/her own worth and the opportunity to develop self advocacy.

ICT provides motivating and rewarding experiences where programs are tailored to individual needs. Success and achievement through ICT activities and the production of good quality results enhances in pupils a sense of their own worth. Development of ICT capability enhances pupils' self advocacy skills by enabling them to present effectively.

Acknowledges and celebrates everyone's achievements.

ICT allows pupil achievements to be presented in the best possible light. Hard copies of the students' work will be presented in their records of achievement, on display around school, and in work records.

Challenges discrimination and promotes citizenship for all.

Beacon Hill School reviews and updates access devices and software regularly, thus providing opportunities for every member of the school community to access ICT, regardless of race, disability, gender, age or any other factor.

Creates an environment where friendships are developed.

Popular software programs on the computers often provide a stimulus for pupil comment and discussion. For some students, ICT devices serve a vital role in communication with peers and others, allowing friendships to develop.

Values individual roles and promotes teamwork and co-operation.

Many ICT programs are very flexible and can be used for individual, pair or group work. ICT is often highly motivating for students, and thus encourages active involvement in each member of a team. The Sound and Light interactive room can also be used for individual and co-operative activities.

Acknowledges and celebrates everyone's right to communicate effectively.

Handling and communicating information features highly in the ICT Programme of Study, and is taught throughout the school. For pupils with complex learning disabilities, ICT devices can provide a means through which effective communication can take place.

Extends the inclusion of Beacon Hill within the whole community.

Symbol writing programs and communication devices provide an effective means of communication between pupils at Beacon Hill and the community as a whole. The Beacon Hill website, currently under construction, can be accessed by the whole community, and will be used as a means to relay information about community events and activities.

"ICT expands horizons by shrinking worlds".

David Brown, Motorola Ltd.

Principles of the ICT Curriculum

All pupils regardless of ability, age, gender or race will have the opportunity to develop ICT capability on a regular basis and have opportunity to gain confidence in their ability.

For pupils with severe learning difficulties ICT provides a viable means of access to the curriculum. It heightens motivation, gives access to experiences which pupils might otherwise not receive, improves accuracy and appearance of pupils work and assists the development of creativity. The teaching of ICT will create an ethos in which all pupils are expected to achieve.

The teaching of ICT capability requires a whole school approach in order to create an environment which provides for progression, continuity and age appropriateness throughout Beacon Hill School. This is reflected in the scheme of work.

ICT capability will be taught in a developmental way and this is reflected in the Scheme of Work. Pupils will be given well focused learning opportunities which are built upon their previous knowledge, skills, experience and aptitude.

In addition, peripheral devices will be used to provide access to pupils with physical and learning difficulties and enable them to develop their capability in an appropriate way.

The cross curricular aspects of ICT are clearly stated in all of the National Curriculum subjects, and also appear in the access statements of each subject. In addition ICT is one effective means of delivering many aspects of Beacon Hill School's "Enhanced Curriculum". All teaching staff therefore have responsibility for decision-making planning and teaching ICT as part of their role as curriculum co-ordinators.

Control Technology is an important aspect of ICT. Micro-electronic devices are built into many everyday devices. At the simplest level a single switch is an ICT device. All pupils will utilise a wide range of ICT devices over and above computers and their peripherals. The interactive room at Beacon Hill provides one excellent environment in which these skills are developed as does the wider environment beyond the school. The presence of ICT in the wider world is integral to the programme of study.

Communicating and handling information is an integral part of learning and is integral to the subject of ICT. ICT is used as a normal part of children's everyday learning.

Pupils who are learning to use speech synthesisers are taking part in an activity central to the ICT programme of Study for Communicating and Handling information.

Pupils at Beacon Hill School will be learning at a level working towards KS1, at KS1 and at KS2. Whilst the Scheme of Work focuses upon this part of the National Curriculum it is also the case that for pupils at KS3 and KS4 the programmes of study are considered for each pupil and any aspects relevant to the pupils are taught.

For pupils in the Post 16 Department, ICT is a Core Skill Curricular area. It is taught as a separate subject and as part of the students Vocational and Complementary Curriculum where appropriate.

For pupils in the Nursery, ICT is taught as part of children's development of Knowledge and Understanding of the World, In addition it has cross curricular application to the other curricular areas.

For pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, relevant aspects of the National Curriculum have been identified in the Scheme of Work. In addition all other elements the programmes of study are considered and any aspects relevant to the pupils are taught.

Teachers who use ICT on a regular basis for their own needs tend to be confident teachers of ICT. Beacon Hill School encourages the use of ICT amongst its' teachers for a wide variety of their work related activities.

Aims for the Information and Communication Technology Curriculum

- ◆ To develop proficiency and confidence and ICT capability to communicate and handle information and to control and model as far as the ability of pupils allow. To acquire the skills to operate micro-processors peripherals and control technology equipment, from the simplest touch or movement to more complex ICT capability.
- ◆ To use ICT to develop, support and enhance the curriculum at Beacon Hill School to facilitate concepts, skills, attitude and knowledge within the National Curriculum and the Enhanced Curriculum.
- ◆ To increase pupils understanding of and use of ICT applications in the world beyond the school.
- ◆ To use ICT to allow pupils to present, record and review their work effectively.
- ◆ To plan and teach through ICT in a cross-curricular way, and where appropriate teach ICT capability in a modular way.
- ◆ To harness the power of ICT to help pupils with special needs or physical difficulties to increase their independence and develop their interests and abilities.
- ◆ To encourage the idea (through the safe environment of ICT) that making mistakes is not a negative activity but that positive learning develops from this.
- ◆ To develop decision making and facilitate choice-making.
- ◆ To encourage co-operation and teamwork.