



EDMUND RICE COLLEGE, CARRIGALINE, CO. CORK

POLICY REGARDING THE USE OF ICT/ ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Information Communication Technology (ICT) can have an exponential impact on education for students 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 students in Edmund Rice College gain the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT in order to optimise learning potential for students with SEN. It is envisaged that ICT be used in any subject where it is appropriate and is a viable support to the student's learning. The assistive technology provided to students is 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 school and will remain in the school's possession once the student no longer requires the technology or leaves the school.
2. Parents/Guardians of each student 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 student 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. The student who is allocated the assistive technology gets first priority use of the equipment. However, when that student is not using the technology it is at the discretion of the SEN Department to use it for the benefit of other students.

5. There is a limit to how much printing the school can provide for students 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. Subject teachers will be notified by the SEN Department of all students using assistive technology so they can determine, in conjunction with the student, Special Needs Assistant (where applicable) and the SEN Department, how the technology can be used within their subject.

HOW LAPTOPS (ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY) ARE TO BE USED

1. Permission for the student 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. Edmund Rice College has installed anti-virus software on all laptops. The school will undertake to update the anti-virus software when required. The students must not tamper with this, or any other, software installed by Edmund Rice College.
3. The student 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.
4. When the 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.
5. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their laptop is charged at home and has a full battery while in school.
6. All assistive technology must be carried between classes and between school and home by the student in a suitable protective carry case. It is the responsibility of the student or their parents/guardians to fund the cost of a carry case if one was not granted with the technology by the DES.
7. Each student with access to a laptop must complete a one-to-one digital organisation class with a member of the SEN Department. This class will help the student to set up their digital subject folders in line with the specifications outlined by the SEN Department in Edmund Rice College, issue a username and password for www.typing.com and outline the general terms of use. Additional classes will be given to students using additional supports such as Read and Write Gold and Dragon Naturally Speaking.
8. If students have access to a computer or laptop at home they should practise their ICT skills on www.typing.com, our recommended free online typing tutorial.

9. Laptop users must print at home any typed homework. This should then be stapled into the relevant subject copy. No loose printed pages will be accepted by subject teachers for correction.

10. Students who are allocated assistive technology may be entitled to use all or part of the equipment to complete their State Examinations. The relevant application to be allowed to do so will be made to the State Exams Commission by the SEN Department. Strong keyboard and typing skills are beneficial when using assistive technology in State Exams and students are advised to practice these in preparation.

USE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY - PARENTAL/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT FORM

Date _____

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Name of Student: _____

Class: _____

Your child has been granted access to the following assistive technology (laptop computer) 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 and 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 Edmund Rice College. 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.
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 student 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. Each subject teacher will expect a printed copy and failure to have this will be deemed as not having homework completed. Likewise homework will not be accepted on USB. Printed homework must be stapled into the relevant subject copybook. Single typed sheets of paper will not be accepted.
6. Edmund Rice College has installed anti-virus software on all laptops. The school will undertake to update the anti-virus software when required. The students must not tamper with this, or any other, software installed by Edmund Rice College.
7. The identifier labels on the equipment should never be removed.

8. Specific classes will be dedicated to support students in the use of their assistive technology. However, parents and students are responsible for developing and maintaining typing skills. We recommend www.typing.com, a free online typing tutorial. UCC run workshops in assistive technology for students and parents. More information can be found on www.ucc.ie/en/dss/assistivetech/
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 the student's locker or 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 student 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,

Adele Flynn

Principal

Tara Cronin

SENCO

USE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY
PARENTAL/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT FORM

I _____ (parent / guardian) of _____
(student name) have read and agree to the procedures outlined in this letter regarding the use of
laptops and other assistive technology by students attending Edmund Rice College, Carrigaline.

Signature

Date