



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Castlebar Educate Together National School

Assistive Technology Policy

Introduction:

This Assistive Technology policy was written and implemented in the school year 2023/2024. It was drafted in consultation with staff, pupils and parents of Castlebar ETNS and our visiting teacher for the visually impaired.

Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance around the use of Assistive Technology (AT) at home and in school. Assistive Technology may mean any device which has been recommended by the NCSE (in accordance with Department of Education Circular 10/2013) as being essential for pupils who have been diagnosed as:

- having a serious disability;
- and/or sensory or communicative disability to the extent that their ability to communicate through the medium of speech or writing is materially curtailed;
- where it is clear that existing equipment in the school is insufficient to meet the child's needs;
- where, without such equipment, it will not be possible for such children to access the school curriculum

OR (under special circumstances and in line with the Castlebar ETNS Mobile Phone and Smart Devices Policy and Acceptable Use Policy) any device that is purchased by a parent or carer, following a professional recommendation, to be used to support a child's learning.

Any equipment purchased by the school under the Department of Education Guidelines will remain the property of the school, should normally be kept in the school and is subject to inspection by the Department of Education. However, in certain circumstances, the school may allow the use of the equipment in the pupil's home. Such circumstances are where it is agreed that the pupil could potentially benefit from, or achieve a degree of improvement to their academic and educational performance, their learning and their completion of homework through the use of technical support or equipment such as a school laptop/tablet. This policy endeavours to ensure the safe custody and handling of the equipment when in the care of the pupil outside of school. This policy also endeavours to provide guidance in the case of those limited circumstances when children may use a device purchased by parent(s)/carer(s).

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the use of any such specialist equipment. **This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Digital Learning Plan, Acceptable Use Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.**

Who can use Assistive Technology?

Student access to the use of AT will be considered and decided upon if one or more of the following applies:

1. If a student has a recommendation for AT in a professional report, an application may be made to the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), as per the terms of Circular No 0010/2013.



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

2. In limited circumstances, as outlined in the school's Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy, a decision may be made by the ISM team to allow the use of a device purchased by a parent or carer.
3. In addition, some professional reports recommend that students have some access to AT in the school. Students may have access to these resources during the school week, but the school cannot guarantee that AT will be available.

Terms and Conditions

NCSE-Purchased Assistive Technology will remain the property of Castlebar ETNS, in accordance with Circular 0010/2013. The following sets out the terms and conditions, as well as the procedure for the home use of school-owned devices.

(a) Laptops and Tablets

The Home Use of School-Owned, NCSE-Purchased Assistive Technology (See Appendix A).

1. The laptop/tablet remains the property of Castlebar ETNS and as such will be monitored and safeguarded as part of a management system with Zuludesk (Ipads) or other administrative systems when additional devices are purchased(Laptops)
2. The laptop/tablet will be used solely by the designated pupil and will not be used by or transferred to a third party.
3. The parent/carer will remind and teach their child to take due care of the laptop/tablet at all times when handling, transporting and using the laptop/tablet
 - It is not to be left unattended in a public place
 - It is not to be left unattended in a classroom or other place in the school
 - All laptop/tablet leads must be unplugged from sockets and all accessories are to be stored safely and securely in the laptop/tablet case with the laptop/tablet when work is complete.
 - It is not to be left in plain view in an unattended vehicle, but should be kept out of sight in the locked boot.
 - It is not to be interfered with, tampered with or altered by a third party
4. The laptop/tablet will be used solely to assist with typing skills and other school related activities. Only school approved programmes, packages/applications and websites may be used.
5. The Assistive Technology is to be returned to the school each day and may not be taken home on Fridays or during short school breaks without the prior agreement of the school. The laptop/tablet must be returned to the school in good working order on or before the last day of the school year, or earlier, if requested by the school.
6. The laptop/tablet is covered under school insurance when on school property. However, the equipment must be covered by the home insurance if taken off the school premises. Pupils and parents must take reasonable care to avoid damage or loss.
7. Use of the laptop/tablet, including all internet usage will be supervised by a parent/guardian and will be of an appropriate nature, in line with the school's Acceptable Use Policy. The school will make



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

- regular checks to update the laptops/tablets, ensuring that anti-virus software is kept up to date and also to check for inappropriate use.
8. The laptop/tablets will be used lawfully and in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use Policy regarding the ethical use of technology, use of legal software, use of the Internet and the protection of personal data.
 9. The following are deemed as completely unacceptable and will result in the equipment being re-claimed:
 - Accessing, transmitting, or receiving obscene or pornographic material
 - Engaging in cyber cheating or plagiarism (taking material created by others and presenting it as if it were one's own)
 - Engaging in cyber bullying
 - Downloading or loading software or applications that are not approved by the school.
 10. The laptop/tablet will be kept in good working order. All laptop/tablet faults, defects or malfunctions while in the care of the pupil are to be reported to the Principal or Class Teacher who will inform the member of staff with responsibility for the servicing and upkeep of the laptop/tablet.
 11. Any repairs necessary due to damage caused to the laptop/tablet while in the care of the pupil will be arranged by the school and paid for by the parent of the pupil.
 12. The laptop/tablet will not be sold, assigned, transferred or otherwise disposed of.
 13. Any laptop/tablet markings, tags or plates or engravings will not be removed, concealed or altered. The laptop/tablet must not be marked in any way that will reduce the value of the laptop/tablet.
 14. If the laptop/tablet is lost, stolen or damaged the parent will advise the Principal and the Gardaí as soon as possible.
 15. Due to current software licensing arrangements covering home use, the laptop/tablet package cannot be used for any commercial purpose.
 16. If any of these terms or conditions are breached, the Board of Management may at any time revoke this arrangement.

Parent/Carer Purchased Devices (See Appendix B)

In limited circumstances, in accordance with the Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy of Castlebar ETNS, children may use devices purchased by their parent(s)/carer(s) to support their needs at school, following on from the recommendation of outside professionals. In such circumstances, for reasons of safety, ease of administration and continuity, any such devices will be treated as assistive technology and will be administered as same by the school, in agreement with the parent(s)/carer(s).

The device will remain the property of the parent(s)/carer(s), but by signing the agreement below, they will agree to abide by numbers 3-19 of the above terms and conditions and will consent to the use of the school's management system for the device.

(b) Other types of Assistive Technology

The above outlines Assistive Technology use for laptops and tablets.

The following are examples of other types of equipment which will also normally be provided:



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

- Audiology Supports for children with hearing impairment i.e. FM Radio Systems, Soundfield Systems, Hearing Aids and classroom hearing supports;
- Equipment to assist children with visual impairment including Braille Equipment/Braille Keyboards/ CCTV Equipment with Distance Camera, computer equipment for enhanced text reading and online library and audio equipment for audio books;
- For children with physical or severe communication disabilities: laptop/tablet computers with associated modified software, joysticks, keyboards, touch pads, where it has been outlined that the equipment is essential to access the curriculum.

The same terms and conditions that apply to laptops and tablets also apply to the above types of Assistive Technology. In addition, the same transfer of equipment procedures must also be followed.

The following equipment is not provided for under this scheme:

1. Telephones/Smart phones, iPhones, televisions, furniture and fittings, TVs, internet access or phone connectivity charges.
2. Communication devices or medical or therapy related devices which are not specific educational interventions, or equipment specifically required as essential for school educational access, and which have a general application outside of school, which are normally provided for children with disabilities by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and which are provided for through the HSE Aids and Appliances scheme are not provided for under this scheme.

Student Email

For the administration of some devices (EG Chromebooks), it will be necessary to provide students with a @castlebaretns Google Workspace email address. The decision to create any such email address will be made by the ISM team. Any student email addresses must only be used for school purposes and their usage is governed by the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

Transfer of Equipment

In accordance with DES Circular 10/2013 Section 14, although equipment is sanctioned to support a particular pupil, the equipment is sanctioned to a school and will, as a general rule, remain the property of the school and be available for allocation to other or subsequent students with similar disabilities.

Where the equipment is of a specialised and individualised nature and may not be suitable for other students in the school it is not efficient that such equipment be retained in the school. Should the student in respect of whom the technology is sanctioned change school, including proceeding to post-primary school, Castlebar Educate Together National School will consult with the SENO/ Visiting Teacher with regard to its transfer with the student where it is still appropriate for the students assessed needs. This will ensure there is no gap in support for the student and enable the student to continue to use suitable and familiar resources in their new setting.



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Retention of technology in the school may be considered in certain circumstances outlined in Circular 10/2013 Section 14. Finally, where the school or the student has no further requirement for the equipment, the SENO or visiting teacher in conjunction with the SENO, may allocate it to another school. Terms and Conditions are set out in Appendix 3 of this policy to facilitate the responsibilities of Castlebar Educate Together National School under Circular 10/2013 An application form requesting transfer of equipment provided, when a student is changing school, including proceeding to post-primary school is attached to this policy. Appendix 4

Consultation and communication regarding the plan:

This policy was drawn up in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The attention of all new families will be drawn to this policy upon registration in the school. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Principal and Deputy Principal.

This policy will be published on the school website and provided to the Parent-Teacher Association (Home/School Association). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school on request.

Ratification of the plan:

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14th December 2023, and will be reviewed in Term 1 2028. It may be reviewed at an earlier date, to reflect changes in legislation or in other school policies (e.g. review of Child Safeguarding or Data Protection policies).

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, BOM)

Signed: _____ (School Principal)

Date: 14th December 2023



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Appendix 1 - Agreement related to the use of NCSE purchased Assistive Technology

Laptop/Tablet Make/Brand	
Laptop/Tablet Serial number	
List accompanying equipment (e.g. microphone, headphones etc.) please describe each item (brand etc.)	
<p><i>I confirm that I accept responsibility for taking into my occasional possession a laptop/tablet which is the property of Castlebar Educate Together N.S., which will be used by my child at home, for school-related activities only.</i></p> <p><i>I confirm that I have read, fully understand and accept the Terms and Conditions attached to this policy and agreement and other relevant policies (Acceptable Usage, Mobile Phone and Smart Devices, Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying), as determined by Castlebar Educate Together N.S.</i></p>	
Name of Pupil (Block Capitals)	
Pupil's Class when this agreement was signed	
Pupil's Teacher when this agreement was signed	
Signature of Pupil	
Name of Parent/Guardian (Block Capitals)	
Signature of Parent/Guardian	
Date	
Signature of Principal	



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Appendix 2 - Agreement related to the use of NCSE purchased Assistive Technology

Laptop/Tablet Make/Brand	
Laptop/Tablet Serial number	
List accompanying equipment (e.g. microphone, headphones etc.) please describe each item (brand etc.)	
<p><i>I confirm that I consent to the privately purchased device being used by my child at home, for school-related activities only. I confirm that I consent to this device being managed by the school device management system, in accordance with numbers 3-19 of the Terms and Conditions: Re: The Home Use of School Owned Assistive Technology</i></p> <p><i>I confirm that I have read, fully understand and accept the Terms and Conditions attached to this policy and agreement and other relevant policies (Acceptable Usage, Mobile Phone and Smart Devices, Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying), as determined by Castlebar Educate Together N.S.</i></p>	
Name of Pupil (Block Capitals)	
Pupil's Class when this agreement was signed	
Pupil's Teacher when this agreement was signed	
Signature of Pupil	
Name of Parent/Guardian (Block Capitals)	
Signature of Parent/Guardian	
Date	
Signature of Principal	



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Appendix 3: Transfer of School Assistive Technology to Another School with a Student

Terms and Conditions: (Ref: DES Circular 10/2013 Section 14)

The 'School' in these terms and conditions is Castlebar Educate Together National School

1. The Assistive Technology/Equipment is sanctioned to the School and will, as a general rule, remain the property of the school and be available for allocation to other or subsequent students with similar disabilities.
2. Where the equipment is of a specialised and individualised nature and may not be suitable for other students in the school it is not efficient that such equipment be retained in the school.
3. Should the student in respect of whom the technology is sanctioned change school, including proceeding to post-primary school, Castlebar Educate Together National School will consult with the SENO/ Visiting Teacher with regard to its transfer with the student where it is still appropriate for the students assessed needs.
4. Retention of technology in the school may be considered in certain circumstances outlined in Circular 10/2013 Section 14.
5. Where the school or the student has no further requirement for the equipment, the SENO or visiting teacher in conjunction with the SENO, may allocate it to another school.
6. Castlebar Educate Together National School may contact the school to which the student is transferring while processing any application for Transfer of Equipment.
7. The Board of Management will consider each application for Transfer of Equipment, in respect of any student to whom the technology is sanctioned who is changing school, including proceeding to post-primary school separately.
8. Following the Transfer of Equipment with a student to another school, Castlebar Educate Together National School will no longer have responsibility for the equipment named in the application.



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Appendix 4: Application for Transfer of School Assistive Technology to Another School with a Student

As the parent(s)/carer(s) of _____ (Student's Name) we/I wish to apply for transfer of the following equipment provided for under the Department of Education and Skills scheme of grants towards the purchase of essential assistive technology equipment for students with physical or communicative disabilities, to:

_____ (School Name)

_____ (School Address)

_____ (School Contact Number)

Make and Serial Number: _____

Value of Equipment and Software: _____

This equipment will be used to continue to support my child in his/her new school setting. I confirm that I have read, fully understand and accept the Terms and Conditions attached to this application as determined by Castlebar Educate Together National School.

Name of Student: _____

Class: _____

Name of Parent/Carer (BLOCK CAPITALS): _____

Signature of Parent/Carer: _____

Contact Numbers: _____

Date:

Signature of Principal: _____

Date: