



SCHOOL LIBRARY GUIDELINES

Why ICT?

Learning to learn and learning to handle information are key points of the school curriculum. ICT can enrich and enhance both education and information provision. Young people need to acquire the skills and knowledge to get the best out of the new information and communications technologies.

Key curricular documents * require pupils to:

- combine information from electronic and other sources
- apply appropriate search strategies, question and discriminate between sources
- engage with a range of texts in a variety of formats

Why ICT in the school library?

“ The school’s ET development plan should ... give particular focus to the position of the library and the library staff as providing the hub of the information network within the school”

**A Strategy for educational Technology in Northern Ireland*

Research ** has shown that where ICT has been provided in the school library

- independent learning was fostered
- individual learners were motivated to higher levels of achievement
- staff learned alongside students
- learners with reading difficulties were motivated by interesting information presented in an imaginative way
- students gained access to sources of information well beyond the normal capacity of the school or college
- multi-media helped learners understand difficult concepts
- skills were transferred from ICT to other subjects
- collaboration had a positive impact on interpersonal skills
- critical skills and visual literacy were enhanced

* A strategy for educational technology in Northern Ireland. DENI, 1997

** Libraries of the future. A staff development pack. NCET, 1996

Equity of access

Pupils without access to a computer at home can be disadvantaged in acquiring and practising ICT skills. The provision of suitable ICT resources in a school library which is open and freely accessible throughout the day, can go a long way towards overcoming this disadvantage.

User needs

Information Services

These should include:

- database of all resources available regardless of format
- effective search facility
- computerised loans system
- CD ROM facility
- internet connection:
 - for information seeking, with filtered access and bookmarked sites
 - e-mail to communicate and exchange ideas
- presentation facilities:
 - word processing
 - graphics
 - multimedia authoring

Pupil needs

These include:

- easy access to ICT facilities which may require:
 - timetabling/booking system
 - extended opening hours
- easy access to stock and an efficient loans system.
- consistent training in information and research skills, as part of all subject studies. This would include:
 - basic IT skills to access databases
 - alphabetic and numeric skills for keyword/subject searching
 - skimming; scanning
 - evaluation to assess relevance; selection/rejection
 - collation - cut and paste etc.
 - presentation - word processing
 - graphics
 - multi-media techniques
- help in formulating queries, to avoid time wasting searches, especially when "on-line"
- guidance during searches
- supervised use of on-line services

Teachers' needs

These will include:

- training in basic IT skills, search techniques and multi-media authoring
- hands-on experience to develop their own competence and confidence
- to be kept informed/aware of hardware and software available to them
- to be familiar with the scope and coverage of the information sources for pupils
- technical support

Staffing

Trained and experienced school library staff can exploit ICT for the benefit of students and teachers by:

- helping students develop effective search strategies
- developing training packages for teachers and students on the effective use of ICT for information retrieval
- acting as gatekeepers to useful websites, bookmarking and validating relevant sites
- co-ordinating and sharing information across the curriculum
- supervising and monitoring on-line searches by maintaining site records and controlling inappropriate Internet use.

Training needs

All library staff need

- training in basic IT skills and search techniques
- time for hands on experience to develop competence and confidence
- opportunities and time to attend external courses, school-based courses, distance learning courses and/or peer support training
- access to competence-based ICT certification training

Teacher librarians and qualified librarians need additional training in

- multi-media authoring
- developing information handling programmes to include ICT

Technical Support

School library staff need to work in partnership with ICT co-ordinators and technicians to ensure:

- a coherent approach to ICT developments throughout the school
- technical support is available to underpin the effective use of the new technologies e.g. installation of equipment, troubleshooting, maintenance, helplines and practical support with group training sessions

Managing the library

Library resources must be organised properly, with systems in place to allow users to find information quickly and library staff to control, monitor and evaluate use. A computerised library management system can help.

Hardware

Minimum hardware components include:

- a dedicated PC for issue and return of resources
- at least one PC for users to search the catalogue
- a printer
- a bar-code reader
- optional networking components e.g. fileservers, workstations and connecting cables

Hardware should be compatible with National Grid for Learning (NGFL), Northern Ireland Network for Education (NINE) and "People's Network"¹ library systems

Software

Software components should include:

Cataloguing, to include

- list of all library resources
- keywording of resources
- bibliographic downloading from external sources
- add and withdraw resources

Enquiry, by

- author
- title
- Dewey code
- keyword
- series etc

¹ Report published by Library & Information Commission (LIC) October, 1997

Loans system, to allow

- downloading pupil details
- loan and return of resources
- loans information
- renewals and reservations
- overdues and reminders

Management information

- loan figures and analysis
- monitor use of resources
- statistics, lists e.g. most popular books
- reports e.g. profile of pupils' reading
- aid to stocktaking

Before you start

Some questions school managers need to consider:

- Has your school considered the role and function of the school library?
- Does this feature in the school's development plan?
- Is there a library development plan to support this role, showing what equipment, resources, technical support and staff are needed to deliver it?
- Have you done an audit of current ICT provision in the school?
- Have you identified costs and sources of finance for:
 - the purchase and installation of the system?
 - employing any temporary staff needed to help with bar-coding and data input?
 - covering long-term running costs, e.g. hardware maintenance, software upgrades, stationery, printing costs, licensing?
- Are library staff routinely involved in decisions about changes to curriculum and development of an ICT policy?

Getting started

In preparation for computerisation School Library staff need to carry out some key tasks.

- withdraw out-of-date resources
- insert bar-code labels into resources
- input catalogue records
- alter any imported catalogue information

This may require the temporary closure of the library.

Help!

Detailed advice and assistance on providing and using ICT in the school library is available from your local School Library Service.

Contacts

Tel. Nos.

BELB	02890-491058	
NEELB	02825-664117	
SEELB	02897-566400/566457	
SELB	02837-525353	
WELB	02882-244821	(OMAGH)
	02866-322886	(ENNISKILLEN)
	02871-272322	(LONDONDERRY)

These guidelines were written for LISC (NI) by librarians from the five Education and Library Boards, Northern Ireland.