Children's World Academy

Information, Communication, and Educational Technology

Policy

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Our Philosophy and Practice

Given that in today's world the increasingly widespread use of digital technology is a daily reality, we have a responsibility as educators to ensure that our students benefit maximally from its use both in the classroom and in their lives outside the school. This is most certainly a challenge, and to do this well requires discussion, planning, and training in order that we understand not only the pedagogical applications of digital technology, but how its use affects our daily lives and the lives of our students.

Children's World Academy (CWA) strives to educate students and staff in the integration of technology in the 21st century classroom. The staff is well-trained, and able to implement the use of technology as part of daily instruction on a broad basis. However, given the rapidly changing nature of technology, we must continue to develop our skills and knowledge in view of new applications, new sources of information and new approaches.

Our teaching practices reflect these principles, as well as the principles of the Primary Years Programme (PYP), such as the elements of the Learner Profile, the eight key concepts, and that technology is used to support learning in our trans-disciplinary programme of inquiry.

At CWA, digital technology is used to help students develop the following skills:

- ✓ Investigating
- ✓ Creating
- ✓ Communicating
- ✓ Collaborating
- ✓ Organizing
- ✓ Becoming responsible digital citizens

(Taken from The Role of ICT in the PYP – pp 2-3).

It is the responsibility of all staff members to actively promote the responsible use of technology in manner that will achieve these broader educational goals. Some examples of this are:

- Our "DCP Club", an extra-curricular program that empowers students to take action in the school community while simultaneously focusing on specific aspects of digital technology – such as reporting on school-wide events through the use of digital media, and exploring programming websites.

- Our "Robotics Club", an extra-curricular program, which promotes coding skills, cooperation and problem-solving skills through team building challenges and competitions (robot sumo, search and rescue and First Lego League).

- Digital portfolios allow students to collect, collaborate, and reflect on their work on a daily basis. It encourages, connects, and broadens parent and community involvement.

- Technology is an integral part of the Grade 6 Exhibition project both in terms of conducting research for the project and in terms of the presentation of the final project. Students participate in a special presentation from a n external media technology consultant on how to carry out effective research on-line, and are also instructed on how to respect academic honesty on-line (plagiarism, copyright, proper citation). All research and reports are done through Google Docs to enhance collaborative planning and frequent feedback from the teachers and mentors.

At CWA, technology is used as a tool to promote students' learning allowing them to "…develop a combination of transferable skills and understanding so that they can actively participate in a digitally connected world." (From: the role of ITC in the PYP p. 4).

We have made a number of commitments to the effective use of digital technology in the school. Significantly, we have created a staff position – that of Computer Lab Technician - whose role is both technical and pedagogical. The Lab Technician's technical training and expertise is a vital support to the students and staff. Classroom teachers are present for the weekly computer lab sessions, since they are an adjunct to any classroom teaching. Teachers can schedule extra time for their students in the computer lab as the weekly schedule permits.

The Lab Technician also teaches information technology classes for Kindergarten to Grade 2 during the lunch hour. The focus of these sessions is to support classroom instruction, and the principles of the DCP through exploration of a variety of computer programs, on-line resources, etc.

Students are given every opportunity to learn, practice, and apply useful technological skills through the use of Google Apps for Education (GAFE), Web 2.0 tools, and devices. This platform also enables teachers to collaborate on any documents such as unit of inquiry planners, sharing of resources, policies, etc.

At CWA, the on-going development of skills, knowledge, and best pedagogical practices are critical with respect to digital technology. To this end, the staff at CWA has made a commitment to engage in regular professional development related to digital technology.

- **Information technology**: Since many teachers have different levels of knowledge, we wish to emphasize the importance of on-going responses to individual local needs. We also wish to continue to create opportunities to take advantage of "in-house" expertise to facilitate building skills and knowledge.
  (Excerpt from the CWA Professional Improvement Committee's statement of goals).

Digital Information, Communication and Educational Technology and its appropriate use to support student learning ought to permeate all aspects of the school. The 4Cs (Connect, Collaborate, Create, and Communicate), digital portfolios, the digital cataloguing of books in the library, support of students with special needs, use of digital report cards, regular

communication with the school community are some examples of our use of technology. Responsible use of Digital Information, Communication and Educational Technology is a collective objective that is a continuous endeavour at CWA.

Technology Committee

Children's World Academy has established a Technology Committee. The members consist of:

- A teacher representative from each cycle
- The computer lab technician
- The PYP coordinator
- The school principal

The mandate of the committee is as follows:

- ✓ Promotion, implementation and periodic review of the school's technology policy.
- ✓ Establishing priorities / managing resources in terms of acquisition of new hardware and software.
- ✓ Establishing practical policies for the use of technology in the school.
- ✓ Creation of pedagogical guidelines for using technology.
- ✓ Promoting the philosophy of the "Digital Citizenship"
- ✓ Establishing school-wide goals and objectives as well as strategies for implementation, timeline etc, with respect to the promotion, use, and development of digital technology as set out in this policy

The committee consults and reports to the staff as a whole. The principal informs the school's Governing Board.

Digital Citizenship

We strive to ensure alignment with the school board's goals in the implementation of a "Digital Citizenship Project". The Term "Digital Citizenship Project" or DCP refers to a set of guidelines or principles with respect to the use of technology. Our primary aim is to ensure that our students become good "digital citizens" who are not only knowledgeable regarding how to manipulate or use technology, but who do so responsibly and respectfully, following guidelines for appropriate behaviour and conduct. An important idea contained within the whole notion of Digital Citizenship is that there should not be a separation between "on-line" or "digital" behaviour and behaviour in other aspects of our lives. It is also important to note that the principles of Digital Citizenship echo the principles that form the basis of the IB program and the mission of our school.

There are many strands of Digital Citizenship. Ribble and Bailey (2007) define the following nine elements:

- Digital Access
- Digital Commerce
- Digital Communication
- Digital Literacy
- Digital Etiquette
- Digital Law
- Digital Rights and Responsibilities
- Digital Health and Wellness
- Digital Security

All of these elements are interrelated and require consideration in how we approach Digital Citizenship and develop it with our students. Although all are important, we place particular emphasis on those, which relate to "cyber-bullying". Insofar as prevention of and response to incidents of cyber-bullying are central to maintaining a safe school environment, a coordinated effort is required to address this issue with students. To this end, this is an issue that needs to be discussed regularly, in a variety of forums and formats (classroom, assemblies, after-school daycare, extracurricular programs), and any reported incidents of cyber-bullying must be addressed in a timely manner. This issue is dealt with in more detail in the CWA Anti-Bullying Policy.

Please refer to the following documents for more guiding principles of the DCP:

- Digital Rights and Responsibilities
- Agreement for the Appropriate use of Digital /Communication Technology at School

Parent Involvement

Our partnership with parents is a crucial component of our success as an educational institution, and it is essential that we involve them in the development and application of our technology policy. Parents recognize the expertise that the school staff has in this area, and in our parent survey conducted in April 2012, parents identified the daily use of technology as an important strength of the school. A new survey will be conducted in the current school year (2017-2018) to direct and make necessary amendments to our policy. Part of our responsibility as educators is to assist and support parents with learning about and using technology with their children at home. We believe the learning that takes place outside of school must be a natural extension of what takes place in the classroom, and this applies especially to Digital Technology. In the era of the "Digital Native" the promotion of good Digital Citizenship is an educational imperative; to achieve this, working cooperatively with parents is essential.

Some of the strategies that we routinely employ to achieve the goals of parent involvement are:

- ✓ implicating parents in the development of the policy,

- ✓ ensuring that the parent community is informed of the policy
- ✓ enlisting parent expertise where applicable in order to benefit from their knowledge, skills and experience
- ✓ communicating regularly with parents by digital means:
    - Emails
    - Social Media
    - Websites
    - Newsletter
    - Portal / classroom communities
    - Electronic portfolios
    - GAFE (Google Applications For Education)
    - Blogs
- ✓ Providing them with suggestions of helpful resources to support learning outside of school (i.e. useful educational websites)
- ✓ Providing them with information to help them make informed decisions as parents about how their children use technology at home

We welcome parent feedback and comments regarding any aspect of technology and provide forums to make this possible.

General Inventory / Procedures

- Computer lab with 28 terminals
- Five mobile labs (chromebooks)
- Chromebooks: Grades 5 and 6 students have a ratio of 1:1
- SMART Boards in all classrooms, computer lab, resource room, daycare room, and staff room
- Ipads
- Laptops
- Digital Video Cameras
- Wireless network
- SMART doc cameras
- Digital Cameras
- SMART bracelets

Computer Lab Procedures (*as per the CWA Essential Agreements*)

Everyone must respect school equipment and keep the lab environment tidy. Students must visit authorized sites, are trusted to use sound judgment, and not download questionable content. Every student is given opportunities to learn and to practice a variety of skills. Students are encouraged to help one another by sharing and modeling their abilities.

Printing Procedures

In an effort to reduce waste, students ask permission before printing. Various apps are used in place of paper such as Prezi, Google Drawing, Padlet, and electronic portfolios, to name a few.

Mobile Lab Procedures

Each grade level has access to a mobile lab unit (Chromebooks and Ipads). In cycle three (Grades 5 and 6) each student is assigned a Chromebook.

Students are expected to take proper care (sign-out procedure, troubleshooting, handling and charging of equipment, etc.) of their assigned Chromebook and its related equipment.

Digital Rights and Responsibilities

Digital citizenship involves understanding the social, ethical and legal issues relating to all aspects of technology, in order to use it appropriately and effectively. Rights and responsibilities are listed below and apply to all users of the Lester B. Pearson School Board Network.

I have the **RIGHT** to:

- learn and work in a safe, appropriate, and secure environment free from harassment
- use the school board network for educational purposes
- be respected as an individual
- express opinions, ideas and feelings, while keeping in mind the rights of others
- have my digital identity protected from unauthorized use
- have managed access to the internet
- report any action interfering with a safe learning environment to the appropriate authority

I have the **RESPONSIBILITY** to:

- contribute to a positive learning environment
- use school/centre space and equipment, as well as personal devices, in an appropriate responsible and respectful way
- respect others and their rights to privacy
- practice safe, appropriate, legal, and responsible use of information and technology
- protect my personal information and that of others
- report misuse of equipment and inappropriate conduct
- engage in the use of technology for educational purposes and have respect for its educational value

Digital Citizens and the IB Learner Profile

To be a responsible digital citizen in the IB virtual community, you demonstrate being …

…**Inquirers, Knowledgeable and Thinkers by**

- Actively participating as a member of the virtual community and acquiring the necessary IT skills to use the online services available.
- Acquiring and sharing knowledge of a subject. Contributing valuable information and supported opinions to the other members of the group.
- Carefully considering how to present concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance according to your audience.
- Acting in a grade-appropriate manner, as a scholarly member of the IB learning community, and reflecting this in tone and content whenever online and using media technology.

…Communicators by

- Collaborating effectively and willingly with others.
- Using appropriate and culturally sensitive language.
- Communicating only with persons within groups in which one is a member and with persons that are accepted as friends or acquaintances.
- Using proper writing etiquette with consideration to punctuation and word choice.
- Reviewing postings prior to contributions to avoid redundancy, spelling errors and unnecessary acronyms (i.e. LOL).

…Principled by

- Demonstrating ethical behaviour towards other members by respecting individuals and their opinions.
- Keeping personal details private.
- Keeping passwords secret therefore not sharing them with anyone else.
- Requesting permission of any individuals (in photos or videos) before posting.
- Being aware that when posting large files (i.e. images, videos) the internet access might be slower.
- Citing the source of information (pictures, texts, music, videos, etc.) used in order to respect copyright laws and academic integrity.
- Immediately reporting any information online that you find as unacceptable or makes you feel uncomfortable to the appropriate adult responsible for your group (teacher, parent, daycare monitor, etc.).

…Open-minded by

- Sharing one's own perspectives in order that other members of the group gain a greater awareness.
- Evaluating carefully the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals in regards to digital media.
- Understanding that people have various and differing ideas and how exposure to these ideas is a valued part of the learning experience.

…Caring by

- Making a personal commitment to be actively involved with groups to which you belong.
- Demonstrating empathy, compassion, and respect towards the feelings of others in your postings. For example, being respectful, and mindful of each other while maintaining diplomacy when suggesting the editing of a post.

…Risk-takers by

- Communicating opinions and ideas with courage and forethought.
- Exploring new roles within groups (i.e. creating a group, leadership, etc.), new ideas and strategies when using media technology.
- Defending your viewpoint with factual information.

…Balanced by

- Recognizing that a balanced and diverse point of view is desirable and fosters a broader perspective and understanding.

…Reflective

- Posting relevant content to a group.
- Creating appropriate headings that encourage and guide positive conversations.
- Giving thoughtful consideration to the cultural diversity of a virtual community and rereading postings to avoid misinterpretation.
- Understanding that there will be varying points of view and respect opinions of others. Before posting a comment, consider whether you would be willing to make the same comment to the person face-to-face.
- If you find a discussion and/or posting offensive or difficult to understand, ask for clarification before you respond with your perspective.
- Keeping in mind that anything that would be inappropriate in a traditional classroom is also inappropriate in a virtual community. **Everything** you write, post, or click will leave a permanent digital footprint.

Barbara Stefanics, Head of OCT, International School of Vienna

References:

- The Role of ICT in the PYP – International Baccalaureate Organization 2011
- Ribble, M. & Bailey, G. (2007). *Digital Citizenship in Schools*. Washington D.C.: International Society for Technology in Education.
- Digital Citizenship Curriculum Map – Lester B. Pearson School Board Department of Educational Services 2011