St. Seton's Secondary School
Ballyfermot

Assistive Technology Policy
&
Procedures for the Use of Assistive Technology

December 2025

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1.0 Introduction:

The purpose of this policy is to inform students, parents and staff of St Seton's Secondary School, Ballyfermot about the school's policy on, and procedures for the granting and use of Assistive Technology (AT).

This policy has been developed in line with Circular 055/2022 and is also informed by:

- Guidelines from the Department of Education and the NCSE (National Council for Special Education).
- The Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools (NEPs, the Inspectorate, and Special Education Section, DES, 2017).

This policy recognises the principles of inclusion and equitable access to education, supporting students who require assistive technology to fully participate in teaching and learning.

2.0 Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to outline the process by which students may be granted assistive technology for use in school.

Assistive technology is provided to students in order to:

- Support access to the curriculum
- Remove barriers to learning caused by disability, medical conditions, or significant and persistent learning needs.
- Ensure students can participate equitably in school life.

Applications for AT may be initiated by the school, parents/guardians, or the student (if over 18).

3.0 Granting Assistive Technology Support

Assistive technology may be considered for students who:

- Have a professional recommendation (e.g. Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist).
- Demonstrate significant difficulty accessing the curriculum without AT.
- Have persistent needs that remain despite targeted interventions and supports.

The school will consider the following evidence:

- Relevant professional reports and recommendations. (This may lead to an application being made to the NCSE for the student to receive a personal device, not belonging to the school.)
- Student Support Plans
- Records of assessments, interventions, and reviews.
- Standardised test results or other diagnostic assessments (such as DASH), where appropriate.

DASH is the standardised, diagnostic test used by St. Seton's Secondary School, Ballyfermot.

Dash is designed for students in order to measure handwriting speed under different conditions to see how quickly and fluently a student can write. Results are compared to age-related norms, which helps identify students who may have difficulties with handwriting that affect classroom performance and exams.
The test takes approximately 20-30 minutes and includes five areas:

1. Copy Best – copying a simple sentence as neatly as possible.
2. Alphabet Writing – writing the alphabet in order as quickly as possible.
3. Copy Fast – copying the same sentence again, but this time as quickly as possible.
4. Free Writing – writing on a given topic for a set amount of time.
5. Graphic Speed (additional) – drawing simple patterns (loops, shapes) to text fine motor speed without the pressure of spelling or sentence construction.

Scores from these tasks give a profile of handwriting performance.

Handwriting is a core skill in education, which is the reasoning behind carrying out this test. Slow handwriting can impact exam performance, written assignments and confidence.
Some students may have handwriting difficulties that aren't obvious until speed and fluency are tested. These may be the result of a diagnosis such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, developmental coordination disorder, ADHD or other learning needs.
The DASH helps professionals to:

- Identify handwriting difficulties.
- Distinguish between neatness and spead issues
- Provide objective evidence to support exam access arrangements (e.g use of a laptop) for RACE.
- Guide interventions (e.g, practice for handwriting fluency, use of assistive technology)

4.0 Transitioning from another School

The applicant Where a student transfers to St. Seton's from another school, parents/guardians are responsible for providing documentation of existing AT recommendations or NCSE sanction letters.

5.0. Procedures for the Processing of Assistive Technology Applications

The Board of Management of St Seton's Secondary School has delegated authority to grant assistive technology to the Principal working in collaboration with the SET Lead Team.

<u>The Applicant</u>

The applicant will:

1. Read this policy in full
2. Provide written consent for the School authorities to use all records or documentation in order to process the application and retain all documentation after the application
3. Complete an application on the appropriate application form (see Appendix 1)
4. Provide copies of relevant professional reports
5. Engage with the Principal/Deputy Principal and SET Lead Team during the application process.

The Principal/Deputy Principal will:

1. Record and acknowledge receipt of the application.

2. Discuss the application with parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
3. Confirm grounds for AT support and any available recommendations.
4. Inform the applicant about the possible implications and uses of AT,
5. Process the application in consultation with SET Lead Team and relevant professionals.
6. Convey the decision in writing within 21 school days.

The Decision

1. If approved, the school will confirm the arrangements for the use of AT, in line with the school's Whole School Inclusion Policy.
2. The use of AT will be subject to regular review.

6.0 Procedures for the Use of Assistive Technology

Students who require assistive technology to support their learning must use it effectively, responsibly and fairly, while safeguarding school resources and following the code of behaviour.

The following procedures apply to all students, teachers and staff involved in the use of school-owned assistive technology, including but not limited to, laptops, tablets, speech-to-text tools, communication devices etc.

1. Assistive Technology (AT) is collected daily from the designated storage area/trolley by SNA and/or the student.
2. The students are responsible for safe transport and handling of the device during the school day. Devices must be handled with care, stored safely when not in use and kept charged.
3. AT is to be used for education purposes only (i.e. note taking, writing assignments, accessing learning apps etc.). This means the device should not be used for gaming, social media or personal entertainment unless specifically approved.
4. AT use in formal assessments must comply with State Examinations Commission and school exam guidelines. Only approved functions should be active.
5. AT must be returned for inspection, updates and maintenance when necessary. Any damage or issues should be reported immediately.

<u>Staff Responsibilities</u>

The SET Lead Teachers /ICT Coordinator:

- Oversee AT allocation in consultation with the Principal.
- Review procedures annually

Class Teacher:

- Monitor appropriate use in classrooms
- Teachers should facilitate this by providing digital copies of worksheets or allowing typing where appropriate.

SNA

- Collect device from the trolley with students

7.0 Misuses of Assistive Technology and Consequences

The following are examples of Misuse:

- Using AT for non-educational purposes (gaming, social media, unauthorized browsing)
- Damaging or tampering with hardware/software.
- Sharing or accessing inappropriate content.

If any of the above occurs, there will be consequences and sanctions:

- First offence: reminder and training on proper use.
- Repeated misuse: loss of AT privileges (with continued learning support provided in alternative formats).
- Serious misuse: disciplinary action in line with the schools code of behaviour policy.

8.0 Review of Assistive Technology Provision

Assistive Technology support will be reviewed either:

- At least once per academic year
- Following recommendations from professionals
- If the student's needs significantly change.

Parent's/Guardians, students and teachers will contribute to these reviews.

9.0 Data Retention

All application forms, supporting documentation and review records will be securely retained in line with data protection legislation and may be made available to authorised officers of the Department of Education.

10.0 Review

The Board of Management of St Seton's Secondary School will regularly review the procedures to ensure that it is being used fairly and appropriately and in the best interests of the whole school community. This Policy will be reviewed annually, as part of the annual review of the School's Whole School Inclusion Policy or whenever it is deemed necessary by the Board of Management or as informed by revised Department guidelines. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, students, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association.

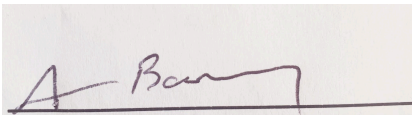
11.0 Adoption of the Phone Free Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 2nd December 2025.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, students and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Trustees, if requested.

Sarah Green

Principal / Secretary to the BOM Date 2nd December 2025

Signed: 

Chairperson of Board of Management Date 2nd December 2025

Appendix 1: Application Form for the Exemption from the Study of Irish in St Seton's Secondary School

Application for the Use of Assistive Technology

For completion by the parent(s)/guardian(s) on behalf of the student (or by a student who has reached 18 years of age)

Name of Student: _____-

Date of Birth: _____

Class: _____

Year Group: _____

I/We wish to apply for the use of assistive technology on behalf of

_____.

I _____ (student who has reached 18 years of age) wish to apply for the use of assistive technology.

Please indicate ✓ the grounds for use of assistive technology

1.	**Professional recommendation (Psychologist, OT, SLT, etc.)**	
2	**Significant literacy or learning difficulties requiring AT**	
3	**Medical or physical needs requiring AT**	
4	**Other_____**	

Please provide details of any supporting evidence

1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____

Does the student qualify for a personal laptop grant (i.e. Form 3 – NCSE Assistive Technology Application) or for the use of a school laptop?

Personal Laptop (Form 3) ☐
School Laptop ☐

For the purpose of this application the documentation provided will be assessed, by relevant school personnel and other professionals, where necessary, to determine whether there is grounds to grant the use of assistive technology in school.

Tick the box if you wish to proceed. ☐

Signed:_____ Date: _____

Signed:_____ Date: _____

For school use only

Date of receipt of application:_____

Principal:_____ Date:_____