

# Report of ACCS Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Sub-Committee 2019/2020

**Members:** Mr. Paul Fiorentini, President, Mr. Paul Thornton, Chairperson, Mr. Tom Cash, Mr. Ciaran Stewart, Ms. Anne Smyth, Mr. Dermot Healy, Mr. Tom Lonergan, PDST Technology in Education, Ms. Deirdre Redmond, PDST Technology in Education, Ms. Sharon Connolly, Ms. Cleona McCann, Mr. Brendan O'Sullivan, Ms. Fidelma Foy, Ms. Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary and Mr. John Irwin, General Secretary.

The following represents the main activities and schedule of work agreed by the ICT Sub-Committee over the last year. The Sub-Committee meets in ACCS Head Office or via Microsoft Teams online.

## 1. Social Media Policies in Schools

Following extensive work by the ICT Sub-Committee, ACCS issued Social Media Guidelines to all schools in April 2019. Best practice recommends that each school should have an agreed policy on mobile phone, school and personal devices and the place of social media with respect to the school and its community. This advice was reiterated at the Essential Law Day in Autumn 2019 highlighting the requirement on schools to ensure that all stakeholders are clear about parameters, responsibilities and sanctions to be applied in the event of a breach of school rules governing this area. The draft guidelines published by the Teaching Council in Spring 2019 further set out certain principles/points for teachers to be mindful of when using social media [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie). Templates are available from ACCS website [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie) for schools reviewing their own policy documents in this area.

## 2. Reducing ICT infrastructure related 'stress' in schools

The ICT Sub-Committee was represented by Tom Lonergan, National Coordinator – Technology Integration, PDST Technology in Education in the ACCS November newsletter. Tom described how Principals, Deputy Principals or ICT coordinating teachers can feel overwhelmed when making decisions about certain aspects of ICT infrastructure in their schools. Over the last number of years using technology to support effective teaching, learning, assessment and school administration has become critical in the running of ACCS schools. To support these essential activities the underpinning school ICT infrastructure and technical support have also become critical. If the technology works well and is reliable, it becomes much easier to use, and this in-turn improves the teaching and learning experience for staff and students. When this happens, it reduces stress in the school as 'things work more smoothly'.

In an ideal world technology should always work and we shouldn't have to think about it. While issues can't ever be fully eliminated, there are useful strategies to reduce ICT infrastructure related stress and to manage situations more effectively. Here are some recommendations which may assist schools:

- Form a small team to review the issues, share the load and include different perspectives - working alone is not recommended
- Make a list of the main ICT infrastructure issues in the school
- Try to consolidate these issues into specific areas, e.g., networking, Wi-Fi and technical support issues may be inter-linked
- Initially select one or two short term 'priority' areas to address
- Set 'SMART' objectives – these are 'Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound'
- Distribute tasks among team members
- Meet regularly to review and update plans and actions
- If you need assistance, please contact PDST Technology in Education
- Take the School ICT infrastructure 'stress check-up'

PDST Technology in Education has developed a straightforward school ICT infrastructure 'stress check-up' to assist schools. After you take the check-up, PDST Technology in Education will provide your school with advice and specific recommendations. For more details on this please email at [ictadvice@pdst.ie](mailto:ictadvice@pdst.ie)

The PDST Technology in Education 'ICT infrastructure team' focuses on assisting schools in the areas of ICT infrastructure and technical support, and hopefully reducing the amount of time and stress involved in managing these areas in your school. Tom or his colleague, Deirdre Redmond will be glad to assist you. The website is [www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/Technology](http://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/Technology) or schools can email directly at [ictadvice@pdst.ie](mailto:ictadvice@pdst.ie).

### **3. Digital Media Planning Resources**

The ICT Sub-Committee is exploring and reviewing samples of resources available for schools and other sources with a view to creating a best practice pack for schools which will be made available in Autumn 2020.

### **4. The ACCS website ([www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie))**

The ACCS website is undergoing a major refurbishment and update at the moment and it is planned that the first phase of this refurbishment will be completed for Convention 2020. Working with website designer, Screenzest, the first phase will be to give the website a new fresher look more in keeping with the latest website development. The website will be easier to view on mobile devices as a great proportion of visitors to website nowadays access a website from a mobile phone or device.

It is intended to continue the overhaul of the website during 2020 to include helpful videos, guides and webcasts which can be accessed by schools and Boards of Management to assist them in the areas of management, governance and legislation.

The final phase of the development is scheduled to take place during 2021 when it is hoped that the website will developed to a level where it can host tutorials and shared/blended learning activities such as in the area of middle management and others types of CPD.

The Chairperson expresses his thanks to members of the ICT Sub-Committee for their active engagement, to Tom Lonergan and Deirdre Redmond, PDST Technology in Education for their ongoing support and engagement and to the ACCS Secretariat for all their support.

*Mr. Paul Thornton,  
Chairperson.*