Galway Educate Together Secondary School

Our School

Galway Educate Together Secondary School is a developing school which opened its doors in 2019. Following the Educate Together ethos, our vision is to foster a love of learning and to build an inclusive community through sustainable practices that revolve around the building of respectful relationships and democratic participation. The activation and engagement of authentic student voice is central to our planning and practice.

Apple Technology

- **1:1 Apple iPad** devices
- **Apple TV** in **every classroom**
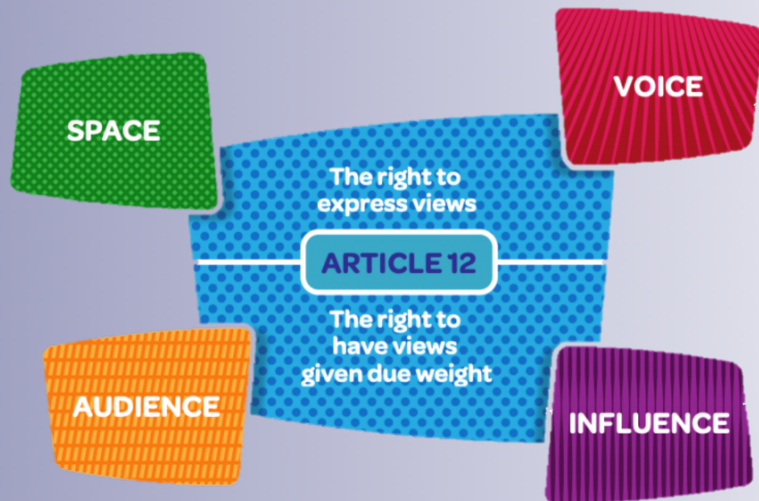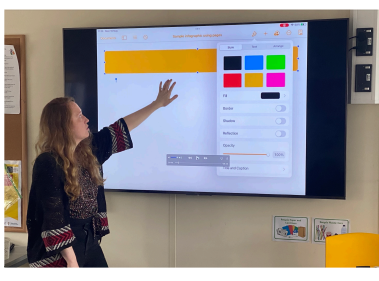- Teachers equipped with **Apple Pencils**

Vision

The culture of learning in our school centres around the pillars of Collaboration, Creativity, Flexibility and Critical Thinking.

Having 1:1 iPads allows us to engage the students in teaching and learning activities which support this progressive vision. In addition to this, using digital technology gives students the confidence to communicate, to collaborate, to reflect and to emerge as learners who will be able to respond and adapt to the ever changing world around them. Our staff actively facilitate students to express their views but they also give audience to that voice and allow it to influence future learning experiences. We encourage our students and staff not to be afraid of making mistakes, to be open to trying new things and to actively seek out new opportunities in order to reach their full potential.

SPACE

VOICE

The right to express views

ARTICLE 12

The right to have views given due weight

AUDIENCE

INFLUENCE

At GETSS we activate authentic student voice by adopting Laura Lundy's Model of Participation as illustrated above.

 Distinguished School

📖 Learning

[click here] **Collaboration** – iPads enable our school community to work together purposefully and effectively in an efficient manner which allows us to feel supported and nurtured in our learning journey. Through our Project Based Learning (PBL) approach student voice is activated.

[click here] **Creativity** – iPads open up the learning so that students can express themselves in a variety of different ways that are unique to their own creative flair whilst supporting innovation and exploration.

[click here] **Flexibility and Inclusion** – iPads support our Universal Design for Learning approach. The UDL framework recognises that all students are unique individuals that learn in different ways and it guides us to provide a more flexible, inclusive approach to learning and assessment to cater for this diversity. Having one to one devices gives endless possibilities in the three areas of the UDL approach – Representation, Expression and Engagement.

[click here] **Supporting Critical Thinking through Feedback** – iPads allow us to experience structured interactions through a variety of mediums that empower students to understand and take responsibility for their own learning by identifying their strengths and their areas for improvement.
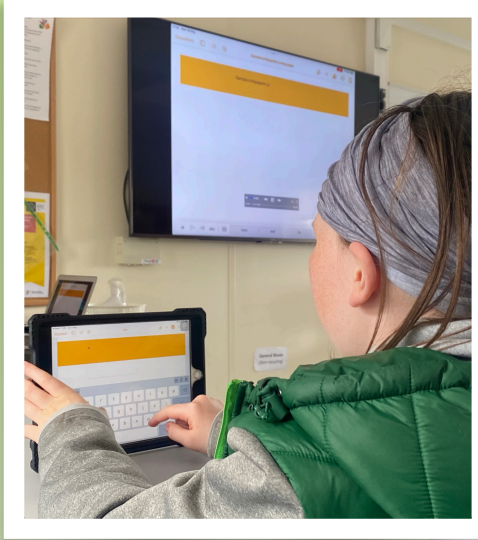
🏆 Success

Through our School Self Evaluation (SSE) process, feedback suggests that student engagement is heightened and enhanced by the use of iPads. Our students, teachers and parents have verified their satisfaction through the channels of focus groups and surveys and they can explicitly identify how the iPads help students directly manage themselves and their learning. The feedback also speaks clearly in terms of the ease of use, the ability to easily cater for the needs of all students, the robustness of the iPads as well as the endless opportunities for creative engagement.

SSE Process
- Identify focus
- Gather evidence
- Analyse and make judgements
- Write and share report and improvement plan
- Put improvement plan into action
- Monitor actions and evaluate impact

What Next?

As a developing school which will rapidly grow over the next ten years we need more sustainable practices. For example much of our data gathered from our SSE process is opinion based, we plan to review and refine our collection of data so that we have a balance of quantitative and qualitative. This will allow us to easily identify areas for improvement.

In addition to this, we are committed to develop learning autonomy. To support this, we have developed a template that equips students in their research process to be more robust in their critical thinking skills.

We continue to strive to increase engagement with student voice by empowering them to make decisions about and take responsibility for their learning in order to improve learner outcomes .