Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr
Digital Competence and Digital Learning Policy

Introduction

This policy applies to all staff and learners at Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr. The Digital Competence Framework (DCF) provides the basis for planned progression from Year 7 to Year 11. In Years 12 and 13, learners will continue to develop and apply advanced digital skills appropriate to their subjects, qualifications, future study and employment.

Digital competence is one of the three mandatory cross-curricular skills within Curriculum for Wales. Every department has a responsibility to provide purposeful opportunities for learners to develop, apply and extend their digital skills through authentic learning experiences. This policy explains how the school plans, delivers, monitors and evaluates digital competence across the curriculum.

Vision

At Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr, our vision is to develop confident, creative and responsible digital learners who can participate positively in a rapidly changing world. Learners will think critically, communicate and collaborate effectively, create and evaluate digital content, understand data, and develop computational thinking and problem-solving skills. They will use technology safely, ethically and purposefully, recognising both the opportunities and risks of digital citizenship.

Digital competence will be developed progressively from Year 7 to Year 11 through meaningful opportunities across all areas of learning. Staff will support learners to apply and transfer their skills between subjects, while providing appropriate challenge, support and equitable access for all. As a Welsh-medium school, we will promote the confident use of Welsh in digital contexts.

This approach supports the four purposes by enabling learners to become ethical, informed citizens; enterprising, creative contributors; ambitious, capable learners; and healthy, confident individuals. Technology will enhance teaching and learning where it adds genuine value, without replacing effective non-digital approaches.

Principles

Digital competence is an essential element of every learner's education and is not the responsibility of one subject or department. It should be embedded meaningfully across the curriculum through relevant, authentic and increasingly challenging experiences.

Digital competence at Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr will:

- be developed through meaningful and authentic learning contexts;
- be embedded naturally within subjects rather than added artificially to lessons;
- provide clear progression and increasing challenge as learners move through the school;
- develop learners' confidence, independence and ability to solve problems;
- support creativity, innovation and effective communication;
- encourage critical thinking and informed evaluation of digital information and technologies;
- prepare learners for future study, employment and life in an increasingly digital society;
- promote safe, responsible, ethical and respectful digital citizenship.

The Digital Competence Framework

The DCF supports the progressive development of learners' digital skills from ages 3 to 16 across four strands.

Citizenship

This strand develops the skills learners need to contribute positively to the digital world. It helps them evaluate their place within it and prepares them for both the opportunities and risks of digital citizenship. Through critical thinking, learners become responsible and independent consumers and producers of digital content.

Interacting and Collaborating

This strand focuses on communicating, storing and sharing information, and collaborating effectively using digital tools. Learners explore formal and informal methods of communication, including email, social media and instant messaging, and learn to select methods appropriate to the context. They also develop an understanding of secure data storage, appropriate sharing and relevant data protection responsibilities.

Producing

This strand covers the process of planning, creating, evaluating and improving digital content for a clear purpose and audience. Learners work with text, images, graphics, audio and video, creating original content and adapting existing material both independently and collaboratively. As they progress, they combine multimedia elements in increasingly sophisticated ways and use more advanced tools.

Data and Computational Thinking

This strand develops learners' understanding of how data is collected, represented, stored and analysed, and how it is used within the digital world. Computational thinking applies logical reasoning, enquiry and problem-solving skills. Learners should understand a problem, break it into manageable parts, consider possible solutions and evaluate whether a solution:

- is accurate and solves the intended problem;
- is efficient in its use of time and resources;
- can be improved or adapted;
- can be applied to other problems or situations.

Curriculum Planning and Progression

The DCF is primarily a curriculum-planning tool. Digital competence is a shared responsibility and should be developed progressively through purposeful opportunities within subjects, rather than being confined to Computer Science or taught as a separate area of the curriculum. Planning should build on learners' prior knowledge and experience, with tasks becoming increasingly challenging, purposeful and independent.

Departmental Responsibilities

Each department will identify significant opportunities within its schemes of work where relevant digital skills are:

- introduced through explicit teaching and modelling;
- practised with appropriate guidance and support;
- consolidated through repeated use in different contexts;
- applied independently by learners;
- extended through greater challenge, complexity and creativity.

Departments should ensure that planned activities are appropriate to learners' age, ability, prior experience and individual needs. They should review provision annually, addressing gaps, unnecessary repetition and opportunities for greater support or challenge. Planning should identify purposeful digital learning without requiring every lesson or unit to contain a digital activity.

The Digital Learning Coordinator will maintain a whole-school overview to support coherence and progression, identify gaps or repetition, and target professional learning. Evidence may be drawn from departmental plans, representative examples of work, teacher observations, learner feedback and assessment information. This should inform next steps without creating excessive recording or portfolio requirements.

Progression will not always be linear. Learners may demonstrate different levels of confidence across the four strands and in different subject contexts; planning should therefore allow skills to be revisited, strengthened and extended where appropriate.

Classroom Practice

Teachers should provide explicit teaching and guidance when learners encounter new digital skills, tools or processes, model effective practice and reduce support as learners become more confident and independent. Teachers should:

- provide opportunities to practise and apply skills in different contexts;
- help learners select appropriate digital tools and approaches;
- give constructive feedback on both the outcome and the process used;
- encourage learners to evaluate, refine and improve their work;
- promote the transfer of skills between subjects and into unfamiliar situations;
- reinforce online safety, data protection, copyright, security and responsible behaviour;
- encourage creativity, problem-solving, collaboration and independence.

Teachers should not assume that familiarity with devices or applications demonstrates digital competence. Where a skill is essential to a task, it should be taught, modelled or supported appropriately.

Authentic and Purposeful Use of Technology

Technology should be used where it genuinely enhances learning, communication, creativity, accessibility or efficiency. It should not replace an effective non-digital activity simply to demonstrate DCF coverage. Digital tasks should, where possible, have a clear purpose, audience or connection to learners' experiences and the wider world. Examples may include animation in Art and Design, audio production in Music, data analysis in Mathematics or Science, collaborative writing in Languages and digital mapping in Humanities.

Assessment of Digital Competence

Assessment of digital competence should form part of normal teaching and learning rather than rely on separate tests or isolated activities. Its purpose is to identify what learners can do, the independence they demonstrate and the next steps required to support progress. Learners may demonstrate different levels of competence across strands and curriculum areas.

Teachers may gather evidence through observation, questioning, discussion, digital products, problem-solving, collaboration, reflection and learners' ability to select suitable tools, improve their work and transfer skills to new contexts. Assessment should consider both the final outcome and the process followed, including understanding, independence, decision-making and the ability to explain methods. A technically strong outcome may not demonstrate secure competence if substantial support has been required.

Feedback should be proportionate and provided through normal departmental approaches, including verbal or written comments, peer assessment and self-assessment. It should identify relevant strengths and next steps without detracting from the subject knowledge being assessed.

Departments should use a small number of purposeful examples from normal classroom work rather than require every skill to be formally assessed or every learner to maintain a separate portfolio. Representative examples should be reviewed and moderated at least annually to support shared expectations about task complexity, support, independence, problem-solving, transfer and next steps. The Digital Learning Coordinator will support consistency and use assessment evidence to inform planning and improvement rather than create unnecessary workload.

Staff Professional Learning

Effective implementation of the DCF depends on staff having the confidence, knowledge and skills to use technology purposefully. An annual audit of staff confidence and professional learning needs, together with curriculum reviews and departmental self-evaluation, will inform a programme of targeted support.

Professional learning will align with the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership in Wales and will develop understanding of DCF progression, effective digital pedagogy, Hwb and approved platforms, accessibility and inclusion, online safety, data security and the safe, ethical use of artificial intelligence.

Support may include whole-school and departmental sessions, workshops, peer coaching, collaborative planning, observation, team teaching and informal guidance. Staff will be encouraged to share effective practice and resources. The Digital Learning Coordinator will coordinate and signpost support, and leaders will review its impact through staff feedback, curriculum planning, classroom practice and evidence of learners' experiences and progress.

Learner Expectations

Learners are expected to use digital technologies safely, responsibly and purposefully in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use Policy. Responsible digital behaviour applies both within school and when using online platforms beyond the classroom.

Learners should:

- use digital tools, devices and online services safely, respectfully and ethically;
- protect their privacy, personal information, passwords and accounts, and consider consent, audience and their digital footprint when creating or sharing content;
- communicate appropriately, collaborate responsibly and contribute fairly to shared work;
- respect copyright, licensing and intellectual property, acknowledge sources and avoid plagiarism;

- use artificial intelligence honestly, appropriately and only when permitted, clearly acknowledging significant AI contributions;
- critically evaluate online information for accuracy, reliability, purpose and bias, and recognise misinformation, manipulation and inappropriate content;
- report cyberbullying, harmful content, security concerns or inappropriate behaviour to a trusted adult;
- make informed choices about when technology is appropriate and take increasing responsibility for applying and transferring their digital skills.

Technology, including artificial intelligence, should support rather than replace learners' own understanding, creativity, effort and independent thought. The school will promote digital resilience and provide appropriate support, adaptations and access arrangements so that all learners can participate fully.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence may support teaching and learning where it has a clear educational purpose and its use has been approved by the teacher. AI can help learners generate ideas, explore concepts, improve communication and receive feedback, but it must not replace independent thinking, creativity, problem-solving or the learner's own work. Staff will determine when and how AI may be used.

AI-generated information must be treated critically. Staff and learners should check accuracy, identify possible bias and verify important information using reliable sources. Use must be ethical, transparent and consistent with academic honesty, copyright, safeguarding and data protection. Personal, sensitive, confidential or identifiable information must never be entered into unapproved AI systems, and significant AI contributions should be acknowledged clearly.

Where work contributes towards an external qualification, staff and learners must follow current awarding-body and JCQ requirements relating to AI use, acknowledgement, authentication and malpractice.

Where AI is used to generate, adapt or translate Welsh-language content, users must check its linguistic accuracy, naturalness and cultural appropriateness.

Technology Access and Infrastructure

Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr will maintain a reliable, secure and appropriate digital infrastructure to support teaching, learning, communication and administration. Digital resources will be allocated according to curriculum need, equitable learner access and available funding.

The school will:

- maintain safe, secure and appropriately filtered internet access;
- provide suitable devices, software, connectivity and cloud-based services;
- use approved platforms that meet data protection and safeguarding requirements;
- maintain and support classroom technology effectively;
- review the condition, suitability and use of equipment regularly;
- plan strategically for replacement, upgrading and future investment;
- consider accessibility, sustainability and value for money when purchasing resources.

Infrastructure will be reviewed annually. Investment decisions will be informed by curriculum priorities, staff and learner needs, usage, technological developments and available funding.

Online Safety and Safeguarding

The school is committed to ensuring that learners and staff use digital technologies safely, responsibly and confidently. Online safety is a whole-school safeguarding responsibility and will be addressed through dedicated provision and meaningful opportunities across the curriculum, including Health and Well-being, Dysgu Byw, Computer Science and Languages.

Teaching and guidance will help learners understand:

- safe, respectful communication and the prevention and reporting of cyberbullying or harassment;
- passwords, account security, privacy, consent and the responsible sharing of images and personal information;
- digital footprints and the possible long-term consequences of online activity;
- how to evaluate information critically and recognise misinformation, manipulation, deepfakes and unreliable or AI-generated content;
- copyright, ownership and responsible content sharing;
- the safe, ethical and appropriate use of generative AI;
- digital wellbeing, healthy technology use and its possible impact on mental health.

The school will provide appropriately filtered internet access and suitable monitoring systems in accordance with safeguarding, privacy and data protection requirements. These arrangements will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain effective, proportionate and appropriate to learners' ages and needs.

Learners and staff must report online safety concerns, suspected data breaches, harmful content, cyberbullying or inappropriate use through agreed procedures. Concerns will be managed in line with the school's safeguarding, behaviour, data protection and acceptable use policies. Trusted national guidance and resources, including Hwb and 360 Degree Safe Cymru, will support teaching, staff development and review.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Digital Learning Coordinator:** Leads the implementation and review of digital learning and DCF provision; maintains an overview of progression; supports departmental planning and mapping; monitors consistency and impact; coordinates professional learning and effective practice; advises on resources and infrastructure; and reports to senior leaders and governors.
- **Senior Leadership Team:** Ensures that digital competence remains a whole-school priority; monitors standards, progression and consistency; supports improvement; allocates appropriate time, training and resources; holds relevant staff to account; and reports to governors on progress and priorities.
- **Teaching Staff:** Plan and deliver meaningful opportunities to develop digital competence; teach and model skills where required; assess learning through normal classroom work; provide feedback; adapt provision to learners' needs; review the effectiveness of digital activities; and undertake relevant professional learning.
- **IT Technical Staff:** Maintain secure and reliable infrastructure, support access for staff and learners, and contribute technical advice to digital planning and safeguarding arrangements.
- **Governing Body:** Receives reports on implementation and impact, monitors progress against strategic priorities, challenges leaders appropriately and seeks assurance regarding standards, learner experiences, staff development, online safety and resourcing.
- **Parents and Carers:** Support safe, responsible and balanced technology use at home, promote positive digital habits, discuss online behaviour and wellbeing, communicate concerns to the school and support access to digital learning where possible. The school will provide suitable guidance to families.

Monitoring, Review and Evidence of Impact

Digital competence provision will be monitored through an annual quality assurance cycle that may include curriculum mapping, learning walks and lesson observations, scrutiny of learners' work and digital outcomes, learner voice, staff confidence audits, departmental review and assessment evidence.

Leaders will review a representative sample of departments, year groups, learner groups and digital outcomes. This will support evaluation of progression and consistency without requiring extensive portfolios. Evidence of impact will include:

- the quality of learners' work and digital outcomes;
- progression and learners' ability to apply skills independently;
- evidence from lessons, curriculum plans and departmental reviews;
- learner feedback and experiences;
- staff confidence and classroom practice;
- the impact of professional learning;
- relevant assessment information.

Findings will inform whole-school and departmental action plans, resource decisions and targeted professional learning. The impact of agreed actions will be reviewed annually, with feedback gathered from staff, learners and parents where appropriate. This policy will be reviewed annually during its initial implementation, and sooner where required by national guidance, curriculum developments or identified need.

Inclusion, Equity and Accessibility

The school is committed to ensuring that all learners have equitable opportunities to develop and apply their digital competence. Planning and provision should take account of individual needs, prior experience, language, confidence and access to technology.

Reasonable adjustments and appropriate support will be provided for learners with additional learning needs. This may include assistive technologies, accessible resources, readable formats, captions, audio, adaptable text, alternative input methods or different ways of completing digital tasks. Learners who are more confident should be offered appropriate complexity, independence and challenge.

The school will seek to reduce barriers associated with financial disadvantage or limited home access to devices, connectivity or suitable study space. Where possible, school-based access, equipment or alternative arrangements will be provided. Provision will be reviewed to ensure that no group is disadvantaged and that all learners can participate fully and develop increasing independence.

Welsh-medium Digital Learning

As a Welsh-medium school, Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr is committed to developing learners' confidence in using Welsh within digital contexts. Staff and learners should use Welsh-language interfaces, software, terminology and resources wherever available and appropriate. Learners will be encouraged to develop a broad Welsh digital vocabulary and to create, communicate and collaborate through Welsh across a range of platforms. The school will also support bilingual digital competence, enabling learners to transfer their skills confidently between Welsh and English while promoting the use of Welsh in an increasingly digital world.

Related Policies and Supporting Documents

- Pupil and Staff Acceptable Use Policies;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- DCF mapping documents and audit tools;
- relevant awarding-body and assessment guidance.

Policy approved by Headteacher	Date:
Policy approved by Governing Body	Date:
Policy review date	July 2027