**INFORMATION NOTE ABOUT ECDL EXAMINATIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Dear parents/guardians of **first-year Gymnasium** students,

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, responding to the challenges of our times and in the context of the reforms it promotes to upgrade the provided education, actively participates in the pan-European effort to address the lack of specialised staff in ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) skills. For this purpose, on 18 January 2016, the National Alliance of Digital Jobs was established and approved by the Council of Ministers, under the coordination of the Digital Champion of Cyprus.

One of the most important goals of the National Alliance is the certification and in general the connection of education with certification, as the modern working and socio-economic environment now presupposes the continuous improvement of IT skills.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, in collaboration with the other involved Ministries, having knowledge of the above, has introduced since the school year 2016-2017 the certification of IT skills, on a voluntary basis, for students of Secondary Education.

Taking into account the available certification standards, the international certification standard European Computer Driving License (ECDL) was selected, offered through the Cyprus Computer Society. The ECDL:

* is a recognised certification standard in 140 countries;
* is considered a measure to promote digital literacy in the Digital Strategy of Cyprus;
* is accepted by universities in Cyprus, in Europe but also internationally.

This important innovation of our educational system significantly upgrades the education provided in the field of digital skills, through the course of Computer Science offered at Gymnasium. It enables students to get their digital skills certified through the internationally recognised ECDL certification.

The certification is provided free of charge to all students in four modules. More specifically, the module on Word Processing **(MS Word)** is certified in the 1st grade of Gymnasium, the module on Spreadsheets **(MS Excel)** and Presentations **(MS PowerPoint)**in the 2nd grade, and the module on Databases **(MS Access)** in the 3rd grade. It is our great pleasure to inform you that so far, a very large percentage of our students who have taken these specific exams, have passed and managed to obtain this module's certification.

In case you want your child to take part in these exams**,** please provide at registrationan additional photo of them in passport size**,** with their name and surname noted on the back thereof**,** to be used in the **ECDL certification booklet.**