Personal Devices for Learning

WHAT TO BUY?

Students are individuals and have very different needs. One student may find a netbook quite suitable for their purposes, especially if they walk a long distance to school, but another student may want a larger screen, more powerful device and be prepared and able to carry it around.

We make the following purchasing recommendations to parents:

• The majority of students find a netbook with a 10 to 14 inch screen the most convenient.

• Don't pay any more than you feel is necessary- an inexpensive, basic device is all that is needed. CD or DVD drives are not necessary for student devices. You should be able to purchase a device that is more than adequate for under $500.

• Windows is the most common operating system used by students, but others such as Apple, Android or Linux are also suitable.

• Consider battery life. Paying extra for a larger battery or a device with a longer battery life is worthwhile. It may mean that students are able to avoid taking a charger to school.

• We encourage the use of open source software, for Windows based PC's, this software can be loaned from the library for installation on Windows devices.

• Think about transport to or from school, and how far the student will carry the device. Large laptops can get very heavy if carried any distance. Smaller ones are much easier for students to handle and fit comfortably on desks, although there is a trade off as far as screen size.

• The addition of a hard case for laptops or netbooks will help provide some water proofing against spills in the student's bag.

For more information contact:

Tasmania
Explore the possibilities

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INTRODUCTION

We believe that all secondary school students need access to their own device to support their learning. Every student needs internet access for communication, research, and learning management, as well as planning, word processing, spreadsheets and presentation tools at all times at their fingertips throughout the day. Increasingly our students are accessing a range of online learning tools to support their work. Although significant parts of a student's day are spent on practical activities (e.g. Sport, Home Economics, MDT etc), there is a need for access even in these subjects. For example, in Home Economics a student may need to access a video that shows them how to perform a particular technique, or access to information on food nutritional values. Across the school, access to technology to support learning needs to be available at a student's fingertips for 'just in time' learning.

We want to take advantage of the technology that many of our students already own, including laptops, tablets, iPod touches, smart phones etc., in some cases better than any the school can offer.
As we move towards a situation of anytime, anywhere learning, regardless of whether the device is supplied by the individual or the school, it is important for students to have 'ownership' of the device and to be able to use it for learning anywhere, anytime.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The school has full wireless access coverage. Students are encouraged to bring a device that they own, including Windows, Android, Apple, or Linux devices and a range of smartphones. Since the program's inception, we have found that students have more benefit from devices with a larger screen than a smart phone or iPod can offer. The Department of Education provides filtered connectivity to the Internet once students and their parent/guardian have signed an acceptable use agreement.

Because the intention of the program is to enable students to have quick and easy access from their desk in any lesson to locate information and to perform tasks using word processing, spreadsheets and other basic tools, only an inexpensive, low end device is necessary. The school will continue to provide high end desktop computers, laptops and tablet pc's to enable students to do multimedia work such as graphics, video and audio editing and specialised applications for option learning areas.

Student owned devices have filtered access to the internet. External devices do not have direct access to our network drives for security reasons. Access to school printers directly from student devices is not permitted. This has the positive effect of reducing unnecessary printing and encouraging electronic transfer of documents. If printing is necessary a student can save a file to a usb drive or clouddrive and then print from a school based device.

Students have responsibility for saving, managing and backing up their own files. This is a fundamental 21st century skill - we want all our students to be skilled in this.

Technical support and maintenance of student owned device is the student's own responsibility. Guidance from school based IT staff is available for initial connection of personal devices. The school has a well-equipped student managed IT help desk which students can access for assistance if required.

Students are not required to purchase any additional software. We encourage the use of open source software, for Windows based PC's, this software can be loaned from the library for installation by the students.

Students are asked to charge their devices at home overnight. In most cases, particularly with netbooks, that means they do not need to be charged during the day at school.

WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS WHO DON'T HAVE THEIR OWN DEVICE?

Not all students will have their own device for a range of reasons. We will continue to support these students just as we do now. The school has a substantial fleet of desktops, netbooks, notebooks and tablet PC's and these are accessible to students.