DEVICE STRATEGY - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are we introducing a device strategy?

The use of devices brings a number of advantages in school as outlined below:

- We have been developing our use of goal setting around students being able to action plan and promote their independent learning and self-improvement. To support this work, we want to make frequent use of an online platform, which is currently very difficult across multiple year groups with limited laptop access.
- To support student learning but also make sure that students have a voice within our school and beyond, we take part in a range of survey opportunities. These explore preferences around different ways of learning, engagement in charities or contribute to projects such as the review of sporting provision in NW Leicestershire. Access to devices is a barrier to student engagement in this currently.
- There are a range of online platforms that effectively support different aspects of curriculum study. For example, the use of Seneca within Science recall, Memrise within language learning or accessibility to GISystems in Geography. The benefits these platforms can bring to learning alongside other learning activities is immense and is currently limited by our technology access.
- Devices can bring the real world into the classroom. We can visit the British Museum in History, the Cern laboratory in Science and the Madi-Gras in our study of world music. These are experiences that we cannot facilitate in real time for our students but the opportunity to explore learning independently is hugely beneficial.
- A number of KS4 courses have non-examined assessments (NEAs or coursework) contained within their assessment criteria. Student devices make delivery of these elements more time efficient whilst also ensuring that where students can work on elements of these projects independently, they can do so effectively.

Why have we chosen Chromebooks?

Chromebooks are educational devices rather than a smart technology. This means that they are used to run educational programmes and software rather than Apps. They do allow access to e-mail and the internet through a filtered service; however they do not allow access to social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or WhatsApp. This makes Chromebooks a sensible and affordable choice for school use.

Why are you introducing a device strategy when there are so many concerns about screen time.

In education, we appreciate more than many the impact that social media can have on young people. We also appreciate that an unrestricted amount of time looking at screens can have physical and mental impacts. Device use in school will be a sensible amount and will inevitably vary day to day due

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to timetables and topics under discussion. Home learning set will not always involve devices and will also be a reasonable amount. Therefore, we do not consider that the use of devices through school directed usage will have a detrimental impact on student's screen usage.

It will be possible for students to use devices at home for other purposes such as research into areas of interest, engaging with current affairs or learning new skills. We encourage parents to put sensible limits on screen use at home as we do for students' use of smart devices and also to have a sensible time limit for device use to promote healthy sleep habits. You can find resources to help you support sensible screen use in our Safeguarding support for parents and student's page.

I have children in other year groups, when are they receiving devices?

In order to effectively spread the cost and set-up workload of moving to a device strategy, we are spreading the introduction of Chrome books out by year group broadly as follows:

- Around Christmas 2026 – Year 8 & Year 10
- Early spring 2027 – Year 7
- By Easter 2027 – Year 9
- Every autumn – issued to new Year 7 intake

Will my child be able to use their device on public networks?

Yes, students will be able to log onto the Wi-Fi networks in public places like libraries or eateries. However, regardless of which Wi-Fi network they are on, filtering and blocking will still apply.

Can I add hardware to my child's device?

Students will be able to add hardware like a mouse to their device or cast to a large screen at home if they wish to. They are also able to link their devices to home printers alongside being able to print in school. Students are not able to personalise their devices with stickers etc. as if their device needs repair, they will be issued with a new device to avoid having to be without it for the duration of the repair.

Is my child expected to charge their device at home?

Yes, students are expected to arrive to school each day with their device charged. Chromebooks require very low power to recharge costing just pence to perform a full battery recharge. Students will be able to leave their chargers at home as well as there will not be chance to recharge their devices in school.

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What will happen if my child's device no longer stays charged all day?

Chromebooks are very reliable devices and have a good battery life history. If a battery is not performing as expected, then IT will support with rectifying this issue.

What happens if my child forgets their device?

Students need to take responsibility for bringing their device every day and will have to complete work by alternative means such as handwriting should they forget their device. We will also be sanctioning students through our behaviour system for not bringing their device in the same way as we would for other items of forgotten equipment.

How will you ensure my child is not accessing inappropriate content?

All school issued devices are filtered in the same way that IT use in school is. This means that certain websites are blocked and that certain key search terms issue an alert. We also routinely filter all e-mails to, from and between school e-mail addresses and block and flag any of concern.

If a concern is registered, then this is passed to our team of in-school DSLs who will be able to discuss this with your child the next school day. Please be aware that concerns will not be responded to outside school hours but will also be picked up on the next school day. There will be no response to concerns generated in holidays or during weekends. Any students who are found to be circumventing our filtering will be sanctioned accordingly.

What safeguards are in place to support safe use by young people?

Students are taught about safe and sensible use of devices and the internet in school during CREW, Personal Development and within Computer Science lessons. There are also a range of resources available on our website to support parents & carers with these messages at home.

My child has Special Educational Needs. How will the device strategy work alongside this?

The SEND team will be working bespokely with SEND students and parents to support students to transition to using their devices. If you wish to contact them about this, then please e-mail SEND@ashbyschool.org.uk. If your child is issued with a different type of device to support their learning needs, they will continue to be able to use this device instead of a Chromebook.

What happens if my child damages their Chromebook?

If a Chromebook is damaged, then it will be repaired in school and a new Chromebook issued in its place. If damage is small for example a missing key, then there will be no charge. However, if the damage is more significant for example a broken screen or an entire replacement keyboard is needed

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then there will be a flat rate charge of £30 which will be payable via Wisepay. In the first instance, this will not prevent your child collecting another device, but unpaid charges may impact future use.

To support careful use of Chromebooks, all devices are issued with a protective neoprene sleeve which should be used at all times. Replacements of these items can also be ordered through Wisepay and collected from the library. You can also order new chargers through Wisepay which will be costed competitively at the time of purchase.

I do not want my child to bring their device home.

Whilst we understand there may be a very small number of individual circumstances that mean it may not be sensible for students to bring their device home, we expect that the majority of students will bring their device back and forth to school on a daily basis. If this is a concern, please contact the SEND team or your Year Team Leader to discuss this further.

What happens if my child loses their Chromebook?

A replacement device will be issued and a cost of £150 issued to parents to be paid through Wisepay. Unfortunately, where replacement costs are not met, this will restrict students' ability to engage in other paid activities within school until this bill has been settled.

What happens to the device at the end of Year 11?

At the end of Year 11, Chromebooks should be returned to school when they will be repurposed to support the device strategy moving forwards. However, if students are intending to continue into Ashby Sixth Form, they may retain their device for use in their KS5 studies. Devices will not be 'unlocked' at the end of Year 11 so they will not be a suitable device for use in other schools or colleges outside LiFE Mat and will only have limited use within homes.

If you have any further questions, please e-mail our enquiries@ashbyschool.org.uk address with a subject line of 'Device strategy.' We will not be able to respond to individual enquiries but will adapt this FAQ document on a regular basis with any further information required.

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