



Cheadle Hulme School

1-2-1 Digital Learning Guide for Y10-13 Parents 2019-20

Students at CHS experience a broad and rich engagement with technology. Our one-to-one iPad policy for Y7-9 has enhanced the curriculum in ever more creative and collaborative ways, affording access to a wealth of online information in each and every classroom. As students move through the senior school and sixth form, we expect them to build upon this positive momentum and continue to embrace technology as an integral aspect of teaching and learning.

Whilst iPads were the ideal choice for KS3, we recognise they are designed primarily with *consumption* of content in mind; larger, laptop-styled devices afford more opportunities for *creation* of content. As the depth and duration of work broadens out at GCSE and A Level, a device with a physical keyboard, trackpad and larger screen affords a more robust working environment than a tablet. Whilst the nature of tasks will therefore remain similar, the complexity of tasks will increase *significantly*.

The device options we ask students to consider for Y10-Y13 are:

- **Chromebook** (our **firm** recommendation)
- Laptop (Apple or Windows)
- iPad (**Y10 only - all Y11-13 must have a laptop-style device**)

Chromebooks

A **Chromebook** looks like a regular laptop and features Solid State Drive (SSD) storage, resulting in **excellent** battery life. 'Under the hood', they are quite different from laptops, featuring little more than the Google Chrome web-browser as onboard software (Chrome OS). Chromebooks are designed purely for internet access, online working and office-styled tasks. They afford students with a cheap, reliable and smooth experience without making compromises that could adversely impact their studies. For as little as £150, students can transition from the confines of a tablet touchscreen to a fully-fledged keyboard, confident in the fact the School's cloud-based platforms (G Suite and Office 365) will be **fully** accessible from these simple, hassle-free devices. Chromebooks are making **huge** inroads in the education sector the world over and we anticipate this trend will continue. Software updates are free and all Chromebooks are capable of holding their charge for a **full day** of regular usage.

A list of presently available Chromebooks can be found [here](#). We recommend a basic model in the £200-£300 range. The Google Pixelbook is unnecessarily expensive and touchscreen/hybrid/flip versions are not required either.

Laptops

Portable devices with a keyboard, running **Windows** or **Mac OS** are classed as laptops. More specifically we recommend **strongly** that laptops with solid-state-drives (SSD) are purchased given they boot-up almost instantly and their batteries last significantly longer than laptops featuring traditional hard-disk-drives (HDD). We cannot stress enough the importance of selecting a device with a good battery life capable of lasting a full day of regular use. Devices incapable of sustaining their battery for a full day's use **will** have a negative impact upon learning.

[MacBook Air](#), Windows-based [Ultrabooks](#) or laptop variants of [Microsoft Surface](#) are the products students should consider in the laptop category. Prices range from around £600 to £2000, although there is **no requirement a high-end device be purchased**. Cheaper Windows-based *Netbooks* should, however, be **avoided** given they struggle to run Windows in a smooth and efficient manner and will hamper learning and progress in the classroom.

Remember these are relatively fragile devices students must care for and, with our move to cloud-based computing and storage, there is significantly less need of a particular brand of hardware or software. These devices should be seen very much as a 'window to the internet' where students' documents and apps are stored. In short: please do not let your son or daughter convince you the most expensive brand or product is necessarily the best option for school. All that's essential in a laptop is a physical keyboard, touchpad, screen size of 11" or more, good battery life and an internet connection. Even the cheapest laptop options (*excluding netbooks*) provide these features.

Case Studies

Student A - I have a Chromebook. I wanted a laptop-style device as I find the iPad awkward and limiting for extended essays but my parents didn't want to spend a lot on something that may only last a few years going back and forth to school in my bag. It's really quick to start up and feels just like a laptop when you're working on it - but for £250! The online versions of the Google and Microsoft apps are just like the offline ones, but I generally use Google's apps as they are very user friendly and powerful. I don't have to worry about saving or losing my work as everything I do is stored in the cloud and I can always go back to a previous version or recover a deleted file if I need to. This is particularly useful for coursework – no accidental deletions of vital work! I can only really use the Chromebook for work but I have a PlayStation at home so wouldn't want to use it for games anyway. The Wi-Fi in school is really good so I never have problems accessing my files in the cloud. I can also use my phone as a hotspot if I need to when I'm on the bus.

Student B - I bring a laptop into school because I like to type on a physical keyboard and I do lots of essay-based subjects. It is the only device I own so it needs to be able to do everything. I use it for school work, but I also use it for games and video editing at home. The battery lasts all day as I bought an Ultrabook with an SSD. My old HDD laptop wouldn't last for more than an hour or so on battery alone!

It's less portable than the tablet I used to have but I can use my phone if I want to take photos or videos and upload them to the cloud. I can then edit them using the laptop. I have to look after my laptop carefully though, so I make good use of my locker.

Student C - I bring an iPad into school because it's easier than carrying a laptop around with me and I only got a new one last year. I'm allowed to use the iPad in Year 10 so I thought I may as well. The battery lasts all day and it's easy to get out, even if it's only for a small part of the lesson. I can type fairly well on it as I use an external Bluetooth keyboard. I also like the ability to take photos of the board or make videos of practical work. Storage is a bit of a pain so you need to be careful not to let it fill up with photos, but I can keep my work on Google Drive anyway so it doesn't take up space on the device. I have access to a family laptop at home so I can do longer pieces of typed work on that, continuing with work created at school using the iPad as it's all saved in the cloud. It is a struggle with essays in English and History as I need to have many apps open at once, so I may switch to a Chromebook soon as I'll have to get one for Year 11 anyway.

Summary

<i>Product</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Pros</i>	<i>Cons</i>
Chromebook	£200 - £350	Physical characteristics of a laptop; cheap; lightweight; excellent battery life; reliable; free software upgrades; student-focused; no hidden costs; a pure work tool.	Limited use without a constant internet connection. Not designed for computer-intensive tasks such as gaming, video-editing, animation, audio-editing etc.
Laptop	£600 - £2000	Full-sized keyboard; mouse or touchpad; wide range of additional software available; powerful; able to be used without an internet connection; wide range of products and price points on offer.	Must be looked after very carefully as expensive and fragile; may take longer to start up than Chromebooks; we live in a world that is increasingly moving away from hardware and software brands to online services.
iPad	£350 - £550	Familiarity; compact size; touch screen; useful in mobile situations; in-built camera and microphone; instant on; durable with an appropriate case.	Designed more for consumption of content than creation of content; no physical keyboard so requires a Bluetooth keyboard attachment; small screen; uncomfortable with extended use; will hold students back in lessons with the increased demands in English and History.

Who should I contact if I have any queries?

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