

# BYOD FAQs

## Why G Suite for Education?

G Suite is now commonly used amongst a number of schools and businesses. It offers similar functionality to its Microsoft counterparts; IT skills that have been developed can be transferred easily. Google Classroom allows staff and students to share resources easily, efficiently and in a cost effective manner.

## Is the school's WiFi capable of working for everyone?

In summer 2019 we invested a significant amount of school funds in upgrading our ICT infrastructure. We now have a total of 110 Wireless Access Points and two 500 Mbps broadband lines ensuring coverage in all classrooms and enough bandwidth for all of our users.

## How often will my child use their Chromebook?

Students will use their device in core subjects (English, mathematics, science, French and/or German) at least once a week. Students will use their device in non core subjects at least every other week. Practical subjects will require the use of a device at least once a half term. Students will use their device twice a week during form time.

## Do I have to purchase a device?

All students require access to a device each day. Parents can choose to source a Chromebook through the School scheme or you may have a Chromebook at home already that you can bring in to school; in the latter case you will be required to purchase a Chromebook License (£17) from the School.

## What if I can't afford a device?

Parents who decide to source a Chromebook through Rickmansworth School can take advantage of the monthly repayment scheme which spreads contributions over a longer period of time.

Parents of children eligible for Pupil Premium funding should contact the Finance Office via [BYODfinance@rickmansworth.herts.sch.uk](mailto:BYODfinance@rickmansworth.herts.sch.uk) should they require support to access the scheme.

## How will you ensure my child is safe on the internet whilst using their Chromebook at school?

All devices are filtered through the school's firewall and internet filtering systems to ensure all usage is appropriate and safe. Students are required to log-in daily, once connected to the school BYOD network.

## **If we purchase our own Chromebook, what software is provided and are the security measures different?**

Parents who choose to source their own Chromebook will be required to purchase a Chromebook License Fee (£17) which will allow your child to access their Rickmansworth School account. This allows us to monitor and filter the content, as well as provide access to a range of applications. When students are logged on via their home WiFi network it will be the parents' responsibility to monitor their child's usage.

## **I want to purchase my own device, what specification should I be looking for?**

Most Chromebooks have very similar hardware in them. As a rough guideline, we would advise the following for the best experience:

- **Make / Model** - stick to a well known brand (e.g. Asus, Lenovo) and try to get one with at least 2 years manufacturer's warranty
- **Memory** - minimum of 4 GB RAM
- **Storage** - minimum of 16 GB storage; 32 GB is preferable
- **Battery life** - minimum of 5 hours usage
- **Display** - minimum 11" screen, minimum resolution of 1280 x 720 (HD)

## **What does the School insurance cover?**

The insurance covers accidental damage, liquid damage, fire damage, flood damage and malicious damage. The insurance also covers theft, although there are exclusions (such as theft overnight from a motor vehicle). Please see the Insurance Policy on the School website for full terms and exclusions.

Please note that the devices should be kept in a slip case when not in use under the terms of the insurance policy. These are not provided with the device but can be purchased yourself for approximately £7 or £8.

## **What do I do if I have a problem with my Chromebook?**

If you have sourced the Chromebook yourself, you will need to resolve any warranty or insurance issues yourself. Your child can still seek support from the Google Gurus and IT department who will be happy to offer advice, but any repairs must be completed privately. Any problems with school-sourced Chromebooks should be reported to Edde who will provide the appropriate support and where necessary arrange for any repairs.

## **How long will it take for a repair to be completed, if we sourced our Chromebook through the school?**

Repair times can vary depending on the fault. Warranty repairs are posted to the manufacturer so they can complete their testing and repairs. If the problem isn't covered under the warranty, it will be sent to the insurance company repair centre. A simple repair may be back with you within a week or a more complicated repair could be slightly longer. The School's Google Gurus and IT department will be able to provide help and advice on any Chromebook issues. We will also provide students with a temporary loan should a device need to go in for repair.

### **Do students get lessons on how to use their Chromebook and G Suite?**

Yes. They have an introductory lesson, plus their Computing lessons utilise G Suite extensively. All subjects make use of G Suite in lessons and for home learning, which ensures students are proficient in using their Chromebook. All teachers receive training on G Suite in order to support students.

### **I don't know how to use a Chromebook or G Suite. Do I need to, as a parent, and if so, how can I learn?**

We recommend that parents have a basic understanding of G Suite in order to support their child. Parents are therefore invited to attend G Suite and Chromebook workshops\* to enable them to support their children. We will also be publishing a G Suite Parent Information Pack and tutorial films in the autumn term.

\*Please note that parent workshops will be subject to COVID-19 government guidance for schools.

### **Will examinations still be handwritten?**

Yes. We are not expecting students to use their devices in all lessons. We are very aware that there needs to be a balance for a number of reasons, including that examinations will continue to be handwritten. We encourage devices to be used as a tool to supplement and add to the curriculum being taught.

### **Is there a case to be made for too much 'screen time'?**

The devices are to be used along with current teaching techniques to augment learning. There is no expectation for your child to use a device for the entire day. The use of mobile phones is prohibited during the school day to allow students to interact socially and devices are only used during lessons and form time.

### **Will students still have exercise books?**

This will vary from subject to subject, as indeed it did before the School started BYOD. Students will still need to handwrite their work during lessons and home learning. You can expect your child to still have exercise books for most subjects

## **Will students still have textbooks?**

This will vary from subject to subject. Some subjects may start using electronic textbooks. Some subjects may keep textbooks in the classroom and leave the electronic version for students to use at home. Some subjects may keep paper copies of textbooks, especially if they have them already.

## **What happens if my child forgets their device?**

Your child will be required to borrow a device from the Learning Resource Centre, which will then be their responsibility for the day. He or she will be expected to return it at the end of the school day.

## **My child has a long walk to School every day: a Chromebook, exercise books and PE kit mean this is a heavy load to be carried. How can the impact of this be mitigated?**

Students should only bring into school those exercise books they need for the day. The School offers rental lockers which some students may wish to use to store Games kit in. We recommend using a backpack designed to carry a laptop, as this type of backpack helps distribute weight evenly across the shoulders.

## **Can my child charge their device at school?**

All students should bring a fully charged device to each day, with the capacity to last at least 5 hours (one full day of lessons). Chromebook batteries typically last up to 8 hours. There are limited charging stations in the Learning Resource Centre.

## **Are Sixth Form students required to use a Chromebook?**

No. Whilst Sixth Form students do require access to a personal device each day, they are able to use any device of their choice, excluding a phone or tablet.

## **Why aren't you offering a device with a touch screen?**

The previous Chromebook that we offered featured a touch screen and flip functionality. These features are rarely used by users, and the current price increase on laptops means it is more cost effective for us to offer a cheaper model without these features. If you want a Chromebook with these features, you can still source your own device outside of Rickmansworth School.

**I bought a Chromebook from Rickmansworth School earlier this year, what does this new scheme mean to me?**

Nothing. We are simply offering a newer model of Chromebook. This will have no impact on your previous device or BYOD experience.