

Chromebook Requirement for Year 7 and 8

As part of our progressive Digital Learning and Technology policy, we have a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) scheme, where all students in Years 7 & 8 are required to have a Chromebook in school. In our opinion Chromebooks are just as versatile as laptops but much cheaper and able to cope with all the demands made in the classroom and for prep (homework), research projects and presentations.

Following a thorough research project several years ago, trying various different devices in class, we concluded that Chromebooks provide the best value for money. We appreciate the cost involved but we also know that they are an invaluable part of your child's learning experience. It will be a vital piece of school equipment to be able to learn. Transition into Year 9 will also be seamless as devices will already be registered on our system, and will provide a real advantage to pupils from the Prep School in already being familiar with the device.

Chromebooks work well with Google Classroom, which is a learning platform the staff are using in lessons. Pupils are able to store work on Google Drive, enabling your child to benefit from the many exciting educational opportunities at Felsted and be prepared for a world which expects effective use of technology. This will allow them to access the many electronic resources provided by the school (such as the Intranet, Google Docs, Google Classroom, podcasts and presentations) both in school and at home and allow them to work collaboratively using the exciting range of technologies:

- Email for sharing of information
- The School's Management Information System provides assessment data for their own use so they can check progress, targets, achievement and preps set
- Access to past papers and reference sheets
- Collaborative working software such as Google Apps for Education to connect with other students and their teachers.

Where to buy Chromebooks

Some might ask why the School is not providing them to buy and this is because of the insurance and repair responsibilities which must be that of the owner. Also very good deals are available for private purchase. Curry's, PC World and Amazon (there are plenty of other places also) have them easily available at a cost of between £150-180. A protective case is advisable, also available for a reasonable price.

We do not recommend any particular make or model of Chromebook but would advise you to purchase the latest operating system ChromeOS. We also recommend that the device is no bigger than 13"; an 11" model would be perfectly acceptable. Chromebooks do not require any specialist software as each student is provided with a Google Apps for Education account, which provides access to Google Docs, Sheets, Slides and Classroom for example. We will provide storage space for these devices in school but will expect charging to be done at home each night and any damage or loss of device will be the pupil's responsibility.

Whilst the School can carry out small fixes in the case of an emergency, we expect the student devices to:

- be clearly named in permanent marker or permanent labels for identification
- be fully charged each evening and to be in School each day
- be upgraded regularly in terms of operating system software and security releases
- be password protected
- be insured under a personal/household insurance scheme in case of damage or loss.

The IT department will be ready to connect all the devices to the school system during the first week of the Autumn term. The IT department will connect one device per pupil to the School network free of charge. In Year 9, should a pupil require any additional devices to be connected to the network then each will incur an additional bandwidth usage charge of £20.00 per academic year. This charge is to support the costs of running the network, and to provide basic IT support to pupils during the course of their time at the School.

The individual subject teachers will make clear when and how these devices are to be used in lessons. The expectation is that students will abide by the School rules and the ICT Usage Policy while their device is connected to the School network or used within the School and on external School visits. Before pupils are given access to the School network they will need to complete the 'Use of mobile devices in School by pupils' document which also requires parental agreement. We recommend that parents are familiar with these standards and encourage their children to comply with them both at home and in School.

If for financial reasons you may find it hard to provide your child with a Chromebook please feel free to come in and discuss this matter confidentially with me.

Should you have any technical queries, please email ictprep@felsted.org or contact myself on mcs@felsted.org to discuss the matter further.

Mr M C Stringer
Head of Courtauld House