ABINGDON BYOD
PARENT Q&A

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1.   What is a BYOD environment?

A Bring Your Own Device environment is where we ask students to bring a device into school, connect it to our network and use it to further their studies both in and out of lessons. Through allowing students to have access to the internet in lessons, we aim to support their learning by:
- Allowing access to more sources of information, promoting independence in their learning and enabling access to effective, personalised courses on Firefly.
- Increasing opportunities for collaboration and group work outside of the classroom and school.
- Supporting a safe and effective approach to living in a connected environment.

2.   Don't you do this already? My son has already has his device on the network.

We started rolling out the BYOD environment in a phased manner from September 2017 and, by the end of the Summer term, we had the 3rd, 4th and L6 years connected. In the past we looked at using mobile phones however it was clear that phones could not provide a productive enough platform from which to work, even causing too many opportunities for distraction.

3.   So what's happening with boys' phones?

As of September 2019, we are only allowing the Upper School to have phones on our network. This is in recognition of their senior status in the school and is a mark of the maturity we expect them to be applying to their work/life/technology balance by the time they reach Sixth Form.

Boarders will be subject to the same regime as above during the day, and we will be allowing Middle School boarders to use our network for their phones after the end of the school day and at weekends. Boarders in the 3rd and 4th year are also asked to hand in all their devices before they go to bed (to keep temptation out of their way).

4.   What do you look to see from the use of these devices?

In order to progress in embedding technology into the way we teach, we need to have **all** boys working from an agreed baseline of appropriate technology. Phones and tablets *can* be used for work but they have clear limits and compromises. In essence, we want to move boys from devices which are in large measure designed for play and entertainment onto devices whose primary purpose is work. Furthermore, we want **all** their work devices to have some common aspects, namely:

- Be able to access the internet and run a modern browser which can access the Google Suite of apps and Firefly.
- Have at least a 10.1" screen, camera, keyboard and battery that will ideally last 8 hours.
- Be accompanied by a durable set of headphones.
- Be able to boot up in 60 seconds.
- Be sufficiently rugged or protected to survive the day-to-day life of an Abingdon student.

At the moment, with a variety of devices in the classroom - some with keyboards and some without, some with strong battery life and others weak, some with headphones and some not - teachers cannot guarantee when planning lessons that each boy in the classroom will be able to work in the way the teacher would like them to do. Thus, the development of the helpful use of technology in teaching and learning has been limited. With an agreed baseline of expectation as to what boys have in the classroom, we will be able to make progress to much better effect. As with everything we do, though, we will keep our use of technology in the classroom under review and listen to feedback from boys, parents and staff to aid us in the planning of future steps.

5.   Are you recommending any particular device?

We recognise that boys may well already have an appropriate device, so this is not a call to parents to be spending money they do not need to spend. Our minimum expectation (given in Q4) is relatively low and we certainly support parents in resisting their sons' calls for ever better and more expensive technology. We are absolutely not talking about Abingdon demanding that boys arrive with high end machines boasting vast processing power and huge storage drives - these kind of machines are more suited to the kind of online gaming that we know many of our boys enjoy in their leisure time and we leave it up to you if you want your son to have such a machine at home.

We are talking about the modern kind of machine that is low on local storage, has decent (but not cutting edge) processing power and capitalises on its speed of start up and, crucially, its connectivity to exploit the increasing power of the cloud for its services. These devices are light, have very long battery lives and are interchangeable. All your emails and documents are stored in the cloud and can be accessed from any suitable device. No longer does a corrupted hard disc mean the loss of a term's work or a broken machine mean the inability to make progress whilst it is being fixed.

If you don't already have an appropriate machine and are looking to buy something, the guiding principle should be finding a device that is aimed for work rather than one that is aimed at entertainment as an iPad or tablet arguably is. Whilst it is clear that iPads etc. *can* be used for productive work, the temptation to add games and music may be too much of a distraction and they do seem designed to

beep and tweet every few seconds in an attempt to get you to pay attention to this or that game or social media site and stop concentrating on the task you were doing.

For us, Chromebooks seem to fit the bill very well and a perfectly decent one that meets our expectations can be bought for around £250. There are cheaper ones even than this on the market, but we'd caution against going for the very cheapest and/or somewhat out of date technology.   In thinking about what the School will be providing for the Second Year, we have looked at a wide range of Chromebooks and have settled on the **Asus C213**. This Chromebook (along with others such as the Lenovo 500e) has been specifically designed for education. It has a touch & flip screen, 4GB of RAM, dual cameras and the latest componentry whilst also being in a robust casing built to withstand some of the rigours of teenage handling. Retail price is currently around £350.

For those of you unfamiliar with Chromebooks, they are cost-effective laptop-style devices that run Google's cloud based operating system Chrome. Students have access to a few offline apps, but mainly online apps that all run through a browser. The advantage of these devices is that they store all their files in the cloud so if a device breaks, all the information is automatically backed up and can be accessed from another Chromebook, phone or computer. As they have little need for offline storage, and they are built for teens and schools, they can be a fraction of the cost of a traditional laptop.

The different Chromebooks come in different shapes and sizes, and some are more powerful, better built, have bigger screens etc. It is certainly not the case that more expensive will mean it is better or will last longer. We are seeing a range of Chromebooks being made to meet the need of a wide range of expected usages.
More information on the advantages of Chromebooks can be found at
https://www.google.com/intl/en_uk/chromebook/

We don't imagine that the device you provide should need to stretch beyond the £400 mark and, if you are thinking of providing something more expensive than that, we would caution against it. Whilst we will do all we can to provide security on the school site, expensive devices will always be targets and, of course, remain vulnerable to accidental damage along the way too. As we say, a device in the range of £250-£400 should be absolutely all that is needed.

Finally, in choosing a device, it might also be sensible to have an eye on any specific requirements for GCSE or AL subjects. For the vast majority of subjects, a Chromebook will be fine, but in there may be certain uses where a more traditional laptop may be better suited. In the instance of Design Technology, for example, there is something of an argument for the device to be one that can run PowerPoint and has the processing power to make some of the CAD software we use run smoothly - i.e. a PC or a Mac. Similarly in Computing GCSE or A Level, the ability to install and run specific coding environments (e.g. IDLE) is beneficial. If you are unsure, please contact your son's teachers or the Director of eLearning (ben.whitworth@abingdon.org.uk) for advice.

6.   So, you like Chromebooks then. Are PC or Mac laptops ok?

Yes, so long as they meet the minimum spec outlined in Q4. We must repeat our advice, though, about avoiding bringing very valuable items into school. We are very aware of how much devices like Macbooks cost and would hate to see parents having to deal with the loss or damage of such a machine when it wasn't necessary to bring one to school in the first place. That said, see the final paragraph in Q5 above.

7.   My son already uses an iPad (with a keyboard). Is this acceptable?

No. We strongly prefer that boys do not use an iPad as their device. The key reasons for this are:

- They are more open to installing distracting games and apps.
- Some of the G Suite is not fully functional at the moment in iOS.
- At the moment, many websites still use Flash Player and iOS does not support this.
- The cost of adding a keyboard and associated accessories makes it less value for money than a Chromebook.

8.   Why does the school not enforce one model for everyone to use?

We aim to be pragmatic in our approach and use the devices that students already own. We feel by selecting a single model we would move the focus onto the choice of device rather than the wider benefits of using the internet in lessons.

9.   Who will pay for the device?

With the exception of the Second Year, the device will be the choice of the boys/parents, therefore owned by the boys/parents. Talking to boys, it is clear that the majority of them already have a device that will meet the requirements of the school - our latest poll on this indicated 75% of Middle School and 93% of 6th formers. The management of the device will be under the control of the boys and the School will offer IT support only as it relates to connecting the device to our network. We will therefore not be offering IT support for things like system or software updates, routine maintenance and other technical matters. Our focus will be on providing a fast, secure and reliable internet connection across the whole campus and we have directed school funds towards that aim rather than contemplating the (impractical) idea of providing and managing what would amount to nearly 1000 devices. Parents might view this as similar to purchasing appropriate sports kit for their sons: the school provides the specialist spaces for the sport to take place and the teaching necessary for a boy to develop in that sport, but the boy arrives with his own clothing and footwear.

10.   Is the school arranging any kind of bulk-buy deal with a supplier so parents can obtain a device at a discount?

No. We have looked into this and it isn't a viable route. This is for two key reasons:

- Large online retailers have greater buying power than we do, so can offer very competitive prices on devices, better than we could offer.
- If we were to buy devices and sell them on to parents, our understanding is that we would be unable to pass on the warranty as they would be classed as second hand devices.

11.   Will the boys' internet access be filtered in some way?

Yes. We have a very robust filtering system that prevents access to inappropriate sites. We cannot, however, prevent boys connecting to their phone data networks whilst at school (which we cannot filter) and, of course, we cannot monitor their internet habits whilst not in school unless they are using one of the school-owned devices (as 2nd years are). In general, though we do clearly believe in having a filtered network at school, we think the best way forward is in educating young people in the safe and appropriate use of technology and the internet - simply banning things without explanation rarely brings about the hoped-for change in attitude.

12.   Tell me again what your programme for rolling this out is.

Of course. The expected programme is below:

- **1st Year** - no devices; phones and other devices will continue to be handed to Mr Jenkins at the beginning of the day.
- **2nd Year** - School-owned Chromebooks; no phones, as per 1st year.
- **3rd Year - U6th** - Parent-owned device, to be brought into school from September

13.   OK. So why are you phasing it like this? Why not just have everyone bring a device?

Lower School (no device in 1st year; school device in 2nd year). We feel that the First Year can seem a big enough challenge for new pupils as it is without adding the complexity of managing a device for school as well. Our policy is to introduce devices in the Second Year very much under the School's control before they move onto 3rd year where they will be expected to be managing their own devices. Thus our provision is graded appropriately and ties in with aspects of our PSHCE programme to educate the boys on the safe and appropriate use of technology.

Third Year to Upper Sixth (devices from the start of Michaelmas). It is expected that these students will bring in their devices as they have been doing in previous years.

14.   Will the devices be used in every class?

A major aim of our approach is to give students the opportunity to access online resources for part of a lesson without having to go to an ICT suite. We are not, however, going to place any specific requirements or quota on teachers as to the usage of the devices in lessons. If a particular teacher feels that there is no advantage to be gained from using the devices during the delivery of a topic, then they will be free to say so. The professional judgement of the teacher remains paramount. However, if past experience is a guide, boys will find they are using their device a good number of their lessons, even if only for a few minutes.

What is clear, though, is that boys' homework will continue to be set on Firefly and teachers will be continuing to develop Firefly to have a range of online resources for the boys to use in their learning. Boys will need a good platform to access this and produce their work.

15.   Aren't public exams still mostly done by hand? Is the increased use of technology going to limit my son's ability to produce the necessary quantity of writing under timed conditions because he's not practising his handwriting as much?

It is true that the exams system in the UK is not yet ready for candidates to be typing their exam scripts en masse and thus, for the time being, we very much continue to encourage boys to keep up their handwriting skills. At Abingdon, the only boys allowed to type their exams are those approved by the Learning Support department on the grounds of a specific difficulty (this is laid out in our Exams Access Arrangements policy on our website). However, using technology for research, learning and even note-taking does not mean maintaining handwriting skills cannot happen, though we do recognise that it is up to all of us to encourage boys to continue producing at least some of their work by hand. Hand-written essays can, of course, be scanned, uploaded and submitted to teachers very easily these days, so there is no need for handwriting skills to fall into abeyance at all. We need to keep a watchful eye on this, we know. In time, the exam system will catch up, but not yet. The adult world has got there a lot quicker - rarely is a handwritten report preferred over a properly typed and well presented one in the world of business, we suspect.

16.   You've mentioned the Google suite of apps. What is this?

G Suite for Education is the online cloud-based suite of tools from Google aimed at schools. We already use it across the Foundation for email, online storage, word processing, spreadsheets, filling in forms and presentations. We feel the key benefits of it are that it offers unlimited storage to the students, is very reliable, can be accessed from any device and avoids many of the traditional file formatting pitfalls of the past (e.g. Word vs Pages). It was recently called Google Apps for Education, and it is often referred to in school as Google Drive or Google Docs. We have been using the Google suite of apps for 7 years and have found them reliable and effective in what they allow us to do. More detail can be found at Google G Suite for Education.

17.   Given the scale and scope of google's analytics, and continued concerns over privacy at major US technology groups, please could you outline what data google will collect and what risk assessment has been undertaken on this and what, if any, mitigating and monitoring arrangements the school is putting in place.

When creating Google G Suite for Education accounts for students, the school provides Google with first and last name (which form part of the school email address) and a photo. The location of individuals is implied as being in the UK through accounts being linked to the organisation 'Abingdon School', but individual's location is not explicitly given and no other personal data is given.
While using Google services, Google will collect:

- device information, such as the hardware model, operating system version, unique device identifiers, and mobile network information including phone number of the user;
- log information, including details of how a user used our service, device event information, and the user's Internet protocol (IP) address;
- location information, as determined by various technologies including IP address, GPS, and other sensors;
- unique application numbers, such as application version number; and
- cookies or similar technologies which are used to collect and store information about a browser or device, such as preferred language and other settings.

Further details can be found in the G Suite for Education Privacy Notice.

In our use and transfer of personal data, Abingdon School acts in accordance with GDPR, UK laws and other relevant regulatory guidance as described in our Data Protection Policy. We are satisfied that Google is also compliant under the EU-US Privacy Shield Framework and fulfils its obligations as data processor as set out in the G Suite Agreement with incorporated Data Processing Amendment and EU Model Contract Clauses. Furthermore we are satisfied that the security that Google builds into its services (including chromebooks) is robust and resilient and affords an adequate level of protection for student personal data.

Abingdon School's IT department continually review and manage security and compliance settings for G Suite for Education core services and restrict the availability of non-core Google services. For example, Google+ is not covered by the G Suite Agreement and is not currently available to students as part of their school Google account. In addition, students have controls under the 'My Account' area of their Google account that enable them to manage their own privacy and personal information settings and the school provides instruction and guidance to students on the use of these controls through workshop/classroom sessions and in online reference materials.

18.   What happens if my son's device is stolen?

As with any valuable item brought into school, a boy should take all necessary steps to keep it safe. We would recommend that you cover the device with an appropriate level of insurance, although you may find that your home insurance already covers this. When not in use, the device should be locked in his locker in his House room or other secure area provided by the School (including the lockers in Big School lobby over lunch or the Sports Centre during PE lessons). Your son will need to bring a padlock for lockers in Big School and his House room. The School cannot take any responsibility for damage, loss or theft, and the device won't be covered by the school's insurance.

19.   Will boys be able to charge devices in school?

Charging facilities are available in the Cafe, Yang Science Centre, House rooms and Beech Court, subject to availability. Some teachers may allow students to charge their devices during lessons, and many classrooms are equipped to support charging. However, students should ensure that their device is fully charged when arriving at school each day. We are not able to provide cables or chargers.

20.   Where can he get technical help?

Abingdon's IT department will be on hand to assist getting connected to the WiFi and accessing Firefly and Google Drive. Further guides will be made available on Firefly. Teachers will be able to help with some subject specific issues and, of course, a boy's peers may prove to be the quickest port of call. Issues that are specific to a boy's device, such as software updates, mechanical failure, damage etc. will remain the responsibility of the boy and his parents and Abingdon's IT department will not have the resources, or necessarily the expertise, to be handling such enquiries.

21.   Can you tell me more about how you encourage appropriate use of technology?

We talk about this throughout our PSHCE programme from 1st year right up to Sixth Form, encouraging the boys into sensible and healthy habits and making clear the dangers that things like social media platforms bring with them. We also educate them as regards the legal position surrounding online posting of photographs, what the consequences of online bullying may be and advise them to be very mindful of what they allow the world to see of their private lives, given we now live a large part of our lives in an electronic environment where nothing is truly able to be deleted and where, once you've posted something, you have very little control over what happens next.

Within the school day, our new policy will be making it clear that technology should only be being used for educational purposes. Any teacher will be able to enquire as to why a boy is using technology and the acid test of whether it's appropriate will always be its educational value. Even if they are in a year groups where phones are allowed in school, phones will not be allowed in lessons without permission and no technology is to be used whilst boys are walking around, for example in between lessons. We are seeking to eradicate the head-down-eyes-fixed-on-screen-zombie-walk that is now a feature of most town centres, for adults and children alike. And that, of course, means that we will be expecting teachers to model the very best behaviour in this regard too!

22.   Where can I get more questions answered?

Please contact Ben Whitworth, Director of eLearning, and he will answer any queries you have. He can be emailed at ben.whitworth@abingdon.org.uk