

BYOD FAQs – Parents & Caregivers

Does my son/daughter have to have their own device?

No. The curriculum will be delivered fully to all students, regardless of whether they have a device or not. Computers will still be available for students to use in computer labs, some shared learning areas and in the library.

Do I have to purchase a new device?

No, if you have a device already that meets our minimum specifications, your son/daughter may use it as their BYOD device

How do I choose an appropriate device?

There are many appropriate devices available and the school is not prescribing a particular device. However, BYOD is about learning that digital devices support and enhance, therefore it should have certain capabilities for it to be effective in the classroom

- Screen size: minimum of 10"
- Keyboard: laptops have this, but if you are considering a tablet, an external keyboard will make things easier at school
- Browser capability: browser capable of internet access (eg IE, Firefox, Chrome)
- Wifi capability: to connect to the school network, minimum 802.11g/n
- Battery: the ability to recharge devices at school is limited, so a battery life of at least 5 hours is recommended
- Operating system: Windows 7, 8 or later or MacOS
- Memory (RAM): 2GB minimum, 4GB recommended
- Antivirus: Recommended
- A laptop, netbook, chromebook (for juniors) or tablet should be sufficient to meet the needs of the student in the classroom.

What other factors should be considered?

The device should be robust and durable enough to handle school life, but light enough to be carried around easily by a teenager. It does NOT have to be an expensive laptop.

What will the device do?

The device will access the internet through the school's wireless network. Access to the internet will be safe - closely monitored and tightly filtered. For this reason, students will not be permitted to use their device with a 3G or 4G connection.

Why can't my son/daughter use a smartphone as a device?

While smartphones are wonderful for taking photos or video, communicating and many short internet searches, the size of the screen makes it unsuitable as a serious tool for learning, and the ability to complete lengthy documents is very limited.

What's better, a laptop or a tablet?

Both have their pros and cons. A laptop is larger, less portable, has lower battery life, but has a full operating system and more specialised functionality for advanced activities. The keyboard allows students to comfortably complete any word processing tasks. Tablets are cheaper, more portable and have a longer battery life, are very good for simple communication and tasks and excellent at

taking photos and video clips. They are not suitable for some activities requiring high processing power, memory or full applications, and unless it has an external keyboard, using a tablet to write lengthy word documents can be difficult.

What about software and apps?

The school is using Google Apps, which includes email, documents, calendars, communications, as well as cloud-based storage for access anytime, anywhere. There are also many free apps and programmes that students will be able to use to support aspects of their learning.

Can my son / daughter install personal software on the device?

Yes. It is a student-owned device, but software used at school must be fit for purpose.

What about security of the device at school?

Responsibility for the security and safekeeping of the device will rest entirely with the student. Classroom security cannot be guaranteed and staff are not permitted to 'mind' devices for students. Students will need to know where their device is at all times and should not leave it unattended. Lockers that the school currently provides for students are not designed for the security and safekeeping of devices. Parents / caregivers should check with their insurers to see what level of protection is provided. The school accepts no responsibility or liability for the loss, damage or theft of any student device.

My son / daughter wants to use the device in class but the teacher says no. Why is this?

The use of a device in the classroom is with the permission of the teacher, and this will be given when using the device is appropriate and fits the learning intentions of the lesson. Sometimes it won't be appropriate to use a device – eg during assessments, or practical work. At other times the teacher may want the device used in a specific way. In all situations, the teacher will decide on the use of the device.

Can my son/daughter get help from the teacher in learning how to use the device?

The teacher may be able to help students with basic usage, but this should not be an expectation of all teachers – and there will be a wide variety of devices in the classroom. Students will need to be confident in using their device and the apps and programs.

Will the device be needed every day?

It may be used in some classes every day / every period, and it may be used in some classes on a less frequent basis. Some subjects lend themselves to using a device better than others. As we are only starting with BYOD it is hard to predict the immediate use, though it is easy to see a time when the use of a device in the classroom is as normal and natural as using pen and paper now (and it is unlikely that pen and paper will ever disappear from the classroom!)

What about on-line safety and cyberbullying?

Upper Hutt College students agree and sign a Cybersafety Use Agreement before they are permitted to go online at school, and sign an Acceptable Use Agreement for BYOD if they bring a device to school. There are clear requirements and expectations laid out in each document, which is signed by student and parents / caregivers. Students are required to exercise personal responsibility in how they use their device, respect the privacy of all members of the school community and show respect for others and their property. (Full versions of the Upper Hutt Cybersafety Use Agreement for Students, as well as the Acceptable Use Agreement for BYOD are available on our website)