



Duke's Secondary School

Josephine Butler Campus, Academy Road
Ashington, Northumberland NE63 9FZ
Telephone: 01670 816111 admin.dss@dukes.ncea.org.uk

Principal: Mr R Atkinson

13/6/ 2023,

Dear parent / carer,

September 2023 Year 7 Chromebook Programme

Firstly, I would like to say how much we are looking forward to welcoming your child to Duke's Secondary in September as they begin the next exciting phase of their education with us.

We are very proud here at Duke's of our use of Educational Technology (Edtech) to enhance students' learning experience and to support achievement. Research shows that access to Edtech opportunities increases attainment when used as part of a blended approach of perhaps more traditional learning methods and more modern, innovative technology and access to digital resources. As part of this, we have a programme that allows 1:1 access to technology for students to enhance their learning experience and to allow us to continue to provide a high standard of education.

We understand that often students will need to share devices at home which can make it difficult for them to access remote learning opportunities for themselves on a regular basis. Our 'Chromebook Programme' ensures that all year 7 students have access to their own Chromebook as part of their school 'toolkit'. This helps students to organise their learning, communicate with staff more effectively, work independently as well as with others, and have the opportunity to learn and study both at school and at home where appropriate.

Google Classroom is used to set and share Independent Study (homework), as well as being the main online 'hub' for each subject. Students can access resources, previous lesson presentations, revision materials etc through Google Classroom. Our use of the Google Suite (Docs, Slides, Sheets, Sites etc) allows for more opportunity for live marking, personalised feedback and many other modern and beneficial teaching and learning strategies.

However, I am sure that you will appreciate that there is a huge cost associated with such a programme. As a school we are fully committed to the programme, and have seen a significant positive impact since the scheme was implemented. Duke's makes a significant investment into the costs of the programme, and we are grateful to have support from some of our local business partners, but the reality is that we are unable to cover the full cost of the programme year on year without parental support.

(PTO)



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As such we ask that parents consider supporting the programme through a monthly donation over a 36 month period. At the end of the 36 month period (the end of year 9), where parents have supported through the monthly donation, we anticipate that the device can be purchased outright by yourselves at the residual cost in cases where the full package costs have not yet been covered.

If all donations have been made then it is likely that this will be at zero additional cost. At the end of the programme we will continue to use the devices through year 10 and year 11, or there may be an option to lease a newer model for use in Key Stage 4.

Although year 10, year 11 and 6f students will be allocated Chromebooks from existing school resources, these are older models and we do not have the resources to be able to do this for all year groups. Our programme makes sure that our new year 7 students have an up to date, brand new Chromebook to take with them throughout Key Stage 3.

Why have we opted to consider this programme?

- Large numbers of computers that can be managed centrally
- Works seamlessly with Google Apps for Education other cloud-based applications
- Warranties and insurances are included
- We can provide the best levels of eSafety for our students

What do we need from parents / carers to make the programme a success?

We require the support of the parents and families of students at Duke's Secondary to help fund the Chromebook scheme for students entering year 7 in September 2023.

In order for the programme to be able to run we ask parents / carers to contribute a suggested donation. We are committed to making access available to all year 7 students by setting this figure at **£11.50 per month** for 36 months. A reduced donation amount of **£5.50 per month** is offered to parents of students who qualify for Pupil Premium funding. Pupil Premium is a national funding strategy to support qualifying students in improving progress and attainment. As a fully inclusive school that understands the challenges faced by many families in our community, no child will be denied access to the programme, although in such circumstances Chromebooks will remain the property of the school, and will remain in school at the end of the school day.

It is important to note that the above figures are lower than the actual cost of the package, and are being supported by a significant investment from Duke's in order that voluntary donations are at a more manageable level for all parents.

The programme is operated on our behalf by the Learning Foundation, a charity supporting digital access.. Payments, licensing, warranties and insurance will be organised and



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supported by the Learning Foundation, and their partner Edutech. As the Learning Foundation is a non-profit making charity they will be able to claim Gift Aid (on the school's behalf) on all parental donations received from parents/carers who pay income tax.

The Gift Aid is provided free by the Government and increases the amount of the donation by 25%. The good news is that ticking the Gift Aid box on the on-line direct debit form doesn't cost anything, meaning that a £11.50 donation with Gift Aid is worth £14.37.

What's included in the package?

- A brand new, fully expensed Chromebook with a protective case
- Google Licence
- Monitoring Software (offering the same high level of protection as school devices, which can identify misuse and report back to school pastoral staff)
- Filtering Software (again, to the same high level of protection as in school)
- Insurance (zero excess) and 36 month warranty
- Cost of package spread over 36 months
- On-going dedicated school and parent support from the Learning Foundation and Edutech Zone

We understand that there may be concern that the overall cost for the package is greater than for an individual Chromebook that could be purchased separately. However, the package itself includes all of the essential benefits outlined above on top of the cost of the device, and an external device would not be able to be used in school due to firewalls and network compliance. The chosen devices are also designed and built to withstand rigorous use in an educational setting.

The format of our Chromebook Programme has been extensively researched, the benefits assessed and evident in school, and we are confident that with continued parental support, will continue to be successful in terms of improving achievement, communication, independence and preparation for future learning and employment.

FAQs

A separate document addressing Frequently Asked Questions accompanies this letter.

Next steps

You will be sent a link to a survey which we would like you to complete and submit by Friday 23rd June. Should you have any problems accessing the survey, or any questions please contact me via admin@dss.dukes.ncea.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Mr S Thompson
Assistant Principal (Digital Curriculum)



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