



30/6/2024

Dear parent / carer,

## September 2025 Year 7 Chromebook Programme

Firstly, we just want to say how excited we are to welcome your child to Duke's in September as they start this next, exciting step in their education with us.

At Duke's, we're really proud of how we use Educational Technology (Edtech) to make learning even better and to help students achieve their best. Research shows that when technology is used alongside more traditional ways of learning, it can have a big impact on progress. As part of this, we have a scheme that gives students 1:1 access to their own device, which really helps us continue to offer a high-quality education.

We know that at home, many students have to share devices with family members, which can make it tricky to get their work done. Our Chromebook Programme makes sure that all Year 7 students have their own Chromebook as part of their everyday school kit, which they can use throughout their time at Duke's. This helps students to stay organised, work independently and with others, communicate easily with staff, and have the chance to learn at school and at home (home use subject to parental contribution to the programme as outlined below).

We use Google Classroom to set and share Independent Study (homework) and as the main online hub for each subject. Students can easily find lesson resources, revision materials, and more, all in one place. The Google Suite (Docs, Slides, Sheets, Sites, etc.) also gives us great ways to provide live feedback, mark work quickly, and use lots of modern teaching and learning strategies that really help students.

Of course, as you can imagine, a programme like this is expensive to run. As a school, we're fully committed to it, and we've already seen a huge positive impact since we introduced it. We invest heavily in the scheme, and we also receive some support from local businesses, but we can't cover the full cost each year without asking for some help from parents and carers.

We are therefore asking parents and carers to consider supporting the programme through a small monthly donation over a 36-month period. At the end of Year 9, if donations have been made regularly, it's likely that the Chromebook will have been fully paid for and can be purchased by you for no extra cost. If not, there may just be a small remaining balance to pay. By making regular donations, students will be allowed to bring their Chromebook home each day right from the start of the programme.

Students will continue to use their Chromebook in Years 10 and 11.

### Why do we run this programme?

- Large numbers of computers that can be managed centrally
- Works seamlessly with Google Apps for Education other cloud-based applications
- Warranties and repair costs are included (subject to a cap on repair costs)
- We can provide the best levels of eSafety for our students

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

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 **£12 per month** for 36 months. A reduced donation amount of **£6 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 further 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 Freedom Tech. Payments, licensing, warranties and insurance will be organised and supported by Freedom Tech.

### What's included in the package?

- A brand new, fully expensed Chromebook with a protective case and a 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)
- Cost of the package spread over 36 months with on-going dedicated school and parent support from Freedom Tech.

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 includes all of the essential benefits outlined in addition to the cost of the device. An external device would not be able to be used in school due to the inclusion of specialist monitoring software, firewalls and network compliance. The Chromebooks used for our programme are also designed to withstand rigorous use in a school 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 improving achievement, communication, independence and preparation for future learning and employment.

### FAQs

A brochure addressing all aspects of the Chromebook programme, including 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 **Wednesday 8th July**. Should you have any problems accessing the survey please contact me via [admin@dss.dukes.ncea.org.uk](mailto:admin@dss.dukes.ncea.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Mr S Thompson  
Assistant Principal

