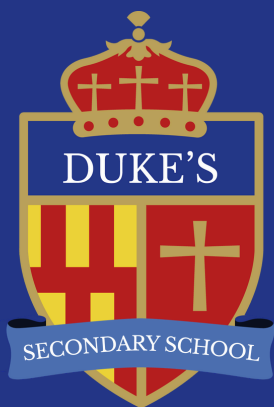




DIGITAL LEARNING: CHROMEBOOKS

PARENT/ CARER HANDBOOK

2025



We're really pleased to share this booklet with you. It gives an overview of the key features of our Chromebook Programme for students at Duke's.

At Duke's, we place a high value on digital learning. It's an important part of how we teach and deliver our curriculum. Because of this, every student can expect to use a Chromebook to support their learning in lessons. Chromebooks also help students access remote learning through Google Classroom.

Technology plays a big part in our students' everyday lives. We know they're quick to pick up new developments and adapt to change. With so many innovative ways to use technology in education, we believe it's important to reflect this in the way students learn—both independently and as part of a team. It's also key to how teachers plan, teach, and assess progress.

Chromebooks are a great way to help our students make the most of these opportunities. However, it's also essential that students learn to use technology safely, effectively, and responsibly and this is something that we actively promote.

We hope this parent brochure, along with the information on our school website, gives you everything you need to know about the Year 7 to Year 9 programme which is run in partnership with Freedom Tech.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch by emailing us at admin.dss@dukes.ncea.org.uk. Please include 'FAO Mr S. Thompson' in the subject line.

THE CHROMEBOOK PACKAGE

We have worked hard to ensure that parents are offered the best possible package in terms of robustness of the device, repairs, additional software and licencing etc. Please note, appropriate use of the device outside of school remains the responsibility of parents / carers.

The Lenovo 100e (4th gen) Chromebook has been fully evaluated and is the device that we are offering through the scheme - through our partnership with Freedom Tech.

The Chromebook package includes:

THE CHROMEBOOK

In consultation with our suppliers, the Lenovo 100e (4th gen) Mediatek Chromebook has been selected due to the robust and rugged design, specification, battery life etc.

‘The Lenovo 100e Chromebook Gen 4 is built to handle whatever school and life can throw at it. It meets stringent Lenovo DuraSpec testing, including 360cc liquid spills, 76cm drops on concrete, and 60kg force exerted on the top cover. It also boasts an easily serviceable top-load keyboard with anti-pry full-skirt keycaps. Together with its reinforced ports and hinges, plus rubber bumpers, this resilient Chromebook makes learning possible anywhere’ (Lenovo)

The Chromebook package also includes a case and charger.

REPAIRS

If your Chromebook breaks you can arrange repairs / replacement as necessary via Edutech / the Learning Foundation. Details on how to arrange this will be provided. Please refer to the Duke’s Secondary School Home / School Agreement for further information on damage repair.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF EDUCATION TECHNOLOGIES (EDTECH)?

Students need to be prepared for an increasingly digital world. Research has confirmed that good access to technology has a positive impact on a child's educational achievements; it often motivates students to do schoolwork by providing them with more interesting and engaging ways to learn independently, in collaboration with other students and through learning activities directed by their teachers.

WHY HAVE WE CHOSEN CHROMEBOOKS?

There are a number of tablet and laptop style devices available on the market. We did extensive research including consultation with leading Education Technology expert companies when considering the type of device which would be best suited to students in our school.

A Chromebook looks like a laptop but operates in a very different way. Services and apps are accessed online. The operating system is produced by Google who provide a wealth of apps and services which are specifically designed to support students in education.

Chromebook devices boot up in a matter of seconds and have a battery life of up to 14 hours (Lenovo 100e 4th gen, depending on use). Chromebook usage is monitored centrally by our IT support team to ensure that access is safe and secure. Internet content is filtered for inappropriate content to ensure e-safety in school.

Chromebook Features

Lenovo 100e 4th Gen Mediatek

- Up to 14 hours battery life
- Durability suitable for classroom use
- Simple technology
- Increased and simpler sharing of work between staff and students
- Work seamlessly with Google Apps for Education and other cloud based applications

HOW WILL CHROMEBOOKS BE USED AT DUKE'S SECONDARY SCHOOL?

In year 7 students will be using their Chromebooks to support learning across the curriculum. At the centre of this is the 'Google Classroom' for each subject in which students will access, complete and submit assignments, access resource and revision materials, and collaborate with peers.

The following are just a few examples of what students will do at Duke's using Chromebooks:

- Create, share and collaborate using Google Suite Applications (Google Docs, Google Slides, Google Sheets etc)
- Use subject-related apps in the classroom and at home
- Use Google Classroom as a base for each subject from where assignments can be set, materials uploaded, links created, information shared etc
- Access the internet to assist with research

Traditional methods of teaching and learning will still have an important place in education and will continue in our school. Chromebooks are an additional educational tool and not a replacement for these methods, more a way in which they can be more effectively developed.

HOW DO I CONNECT THE CHROMEBOOK TO THE INTERNET IN MY HOUSE?

Chromebooks use wireless to connect to a network so you will need WiFi at home to use the Chromebook on the Internet. If you have WiFi, your network security key can be added to the Chromebook before log-on. If you don't have WiFi at home, the Chromebook will still work for many things (most apps, reading eBooks etc) but, for example, email and web browsing won't work until the Chromebook is once again connected within the School network.

If you have any concerns about home WiFi, please contact us by emailing admin.dss@dukes.ncea.org.uk

MY CHILD ALREADY HAS A DIFFERENT DEVICE. CAN THEY USE THAT INSTEAD?

Unfortunately not. These are unlikely to be fully compatible with the Google Apps and add-ons that we will be using for teaching and learning.

- The battery will not last up to 14 hours on a single charge
- This device has been chosen largely due to its rugged and robust design, anti-scratch, rubber bumper and tamper resistant design. It is unlikely that other devices will be robust enough to endure the level of use we anticipate that the Lenovo 100e will have in school and at home.
- The device login and monitoring systems will not be managed by the school and therefore will not be manageable as a class learning tool.
- External devices are not permitted in school due to firewall and network compliance issues.

WHAT IF MY CHILD ALREADY HAS A CHROMEBOOK?

There would be difficulties with bringing your own Chromebook into school, with issues such as insurance, connectivity, filters etc making this an unsuitable option. It is also unlikely that the device has the same rugged specifications necessary for frequent classroom use, and as mentioned above, external devices are not permitted in school due to firewall and network compliance issues.

WHAT TECHNICAL SUPPORT WILL THERE BE FOR STUDENTS?

Duke's IT support team will be able to resolve many technical issues, but one of the advantages of a Chromebook is that it rarely goes wrong.

IS THE BATTERY GOOD ENOUGH? HOW WILL CHARGING WORK?

Chromebooks have a long battery life of around 8 hours plus. The Lenovo 100e device has a battery life of up to 14 hours, dependent on use. This can vary depending on what the Chromebook is being used for (e.g. browsing the internet consumes less battery power than using, for example, Youtube). If the Chromebook is charged overnight it will last all day and often longer. Students are responsible for bringing their Chromebooks to school fully charged. Please note that there will be no charging facilities available at school.

WILL MY CHILD NEED THEIR OWN GOOGLE ACCOUNT? IF SO, HOW WILL SCHOOL BE ABLE TO PUT APPS ON THE CHROMEBOOK?

Your child's school email account is actually a Gmail account, and this will be used. The school will use management software to distribute apps to Chromebooks registered with this school email account.

WHO OWNS THE CHROMEBOOK?

The Chromebook programme is run as a leasing programme through Freedom Tech and the duration is over a term of 36 months. At the end of this period, where parents / carers have made the 36 monthly donations, the Chromebook ownership will transfer to those parents / carers. Until then, it remains the property of Freedom Tech or dependent on funding arrangements, Duke's Secondary School. All students will be expected to continue to use their Chromebooks in years 10 and 11.

DID YOU LOOK AT WINDOWS, IPADS, MAC, LINUX OR ANDROID AS ALTERNATIVES?

We have consulted with and taken advice from a number of Education Technology experts and specialist companies before deciding on the Chromebook as the preferred device for Duke's.

We believe that iPads are excellent for accessing various media but they are not as good or as compatible for creating content and allowing our students to work collaboratively. The range of applications available on iPads and Android is vast, but many of the resources that teachers currently use, and will be using in IT suites would not be available.

While Windows, Mac and Linux laptops are more powerful than a Chromebook, they are more expensive and offer shorter battery life. They are also more complex so there is greater potential for things to go wrong. We believe that a Chromebook's simplicity is also its strength, overcoming the barriers associated with the other devices mentioned, meaning that the greater focus will be on learning that is taking place

COULD WE BUY A CHEAPER CHROMEBOOK AND 'OPT OUT' OF THE DUKE'S SCHEME?

No. There are other Chromebooks on the retail market, but our suppliers will be bulk purchasing a model that we believe offers good value for money. We will be offering a device that is robust enough for use in a school setting, and one that comes with the required licences, as well as technical and warranty support, three years of insurance and the costs associated with leasing. The programme is based around the provision of a **package** that includes a Chromebook, rather than just a Chromebook itself.

WHY CAN'T THESE DEVICES BE PROVIDED FROM SCHOOL RESOURCES?

Although from 2021, Yr11 and 6F students have been allocated a device from existing school resources, we do not have the resources to be able to do this for all year groups. The leasing scheme will allow for Yr7 students to have an up to date, brand new Chromebook to take with them throughout school, making full and effective use of technology for learning.

HOW IS THE PROGRAMME FINANCED?

The success of the programme relies on parents' donations to cover the costs of their own child's Chromebook package. This is also subsidised by the school to bring the suggested monthly donation costs down to the lowest amount possible. Pupil Premium funding is used to support those students who are eligible for this support. No student will be excluded from the programme due to financial reasons. Students whose parents do not feel that they can make the donation to the programme will be allocated a school device, although this will remain the property of Duke's, and will remain in school at the end of the school day. The donation levels are £12 per pupil per month for 36 months, and £6 per month for pupils in receipt of pupil premium - again for 36 months.

FreedomTech can claim Gift Aid on behalf of the school for any donations from parents or carers who pay income tax and meet the criteria. This adds 25% to the donation at no extra cost—just tick the Gift Aid box on the online direct debit form.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CHROMEBOOK IS LOST, STOLEN OR DAMAGED?

If a Chromebook is lost or stolen, it is important that this is reported to Freedom Tech as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made for reporting and replacing. The insurance will cover the Chromebook for theft and accidental damage.

WHAT ABOUT SAFETY ON THE WAY TO AND FROM SCHOOL?

We have looked at research from other schools and have found that there has rarely been, if ever, report of a Chromebook being stolen on a students' way to/from school. However, it is expected that the risk of theft is minimised through some common sense measures; students are to keep their Chromebooks in their bags on the way to and from school, both for road safety and crime prevention reasons. This is advisable if travelling on foot or by bus.

HOW WILL INAPPROPRIATE USE OF THE CHROMEBOOK AT SCHOOL BE DEALT WITH?

Students, with the support of their parents, will be required to sign a Home / School agreement which sets out some simple rules to make things go smoothly. Some of the rules will concern management of the device (e.g. 'I will bring the Chromebook to school every day, fully charged') and some will be about positive behaviour for learning in the Classroom (e.g. 'I will stop using the Chromebook when my teacher asks me to'), with the overall intention of creating a way that all students, staff and parents understand and agree with. Any student that misuses their device in school will have increased restrictions placed on their device use, and will also be subject to our existing Disruption Free Learning sanctions.

WHAT IS DUKE'S SECONDARY SCHOOL DOING TO REDUCE E-SAFETY PROBLEMS WITH THE CHROMEBOOKS?

Duke's has a very effective web filtering system and all devices attached to the school network go through this web filter. We will be actively monitoring students' use of Chromebooks while in school, both in the classroom in terms of actual use, and through our existing IT monitoring systems. We will be able to look at a web filter log should an issue arise. Students are already taught the importance of e-Safety in school through IT lessons as well as assemblies. This will be continually reinforced. We are also members of the National College, which provides annual training and on-going support for staff, students and parents around all aspects of e-safety.

HOW WILL THE CHROMEBOOK BE BACKED UP?

The Chromebook is always backed up and our students have unlimited storage space in the Google Cloud. This is already set up and associated with their Duke's email account.

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT MY CHILD'S WORK BEING STORED WITH GOOGLE. HOW SAFE IS IT?

The data is the property of Duke's Secondary School - Google GSuite customers own their own data, not Google. As a school we are following DfE and ICO advice in this area. Google does not store and log information, but this is encrypted in transmission and at rest. Google is fully GDPR compliant and does not share the data.

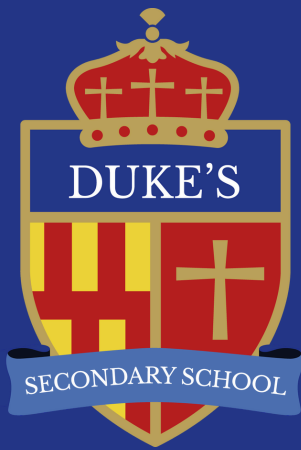
CAN MY CHILD PUT THEIR OWN CONTENT ONTO THE CHROMEBOOK (MUSIC, VIDEO, APPS)?

As per the school Acceptable Use Policy, students cannot use the school domain (dukes.ncea.org.uk) to store personal data, music, videos etc. If they have a personal gmail account they can use this to login to the Chromebook when not on the school premises.

HOME-SCHOOL AGREEMENT

A separate 'Home-School Agreement' document is to be read and signed by parents/ carers and students. This will be sent to parents and carers closer to the start of the new school year.

As well as general expectations around appropriate use of the device in and around school, this agreement also provides details of the Chromebook Programme and how to contact our programme partners in the event of any damage or should you have any questions relating to voluntary donations, gift aid or anything else related to the programme.



DUKE'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

I hope that all the information you need about our scheme is within this parent brochure and on our school website. You can contact us anytime via the school email address admin.dss@dukes.ncea.org.uk. Please include 'FAO Mr S. Thompson' in the subject line of your email.

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