FAQs

What about safety to and from & during school?
- Students already go home with mobile devices on them (iPads, iPhones and Apple Watches etc.) which are all more costly than a Chromebook
- Students will need to take responsibility looking after THEIR device

Will students be using the Chromebooks all day while in school?
- No. We are not doing away with writing, reading and textbooks; the devices will be a resource to complement existing learning materials and pedagogy.

What if a student forgets their Chromebook?
- If a student doesn't have a device that day for whatever reason then they will simply not have one for the day and will need to catch up with any work missed.
- We still use exercise books and whilst some days may use the Chromebook in all lessons, other days may only see it used once or twice.

Why can't students bring in their own device they have already?
- There are many reasons for our choice of Chromebooks, which I have already outlined - the main ones being their speed of the Chromebook and the battery life (for H&S reasons we can't have wires trailing everywhere)
- Safeguarding reasons - we can monitor and manage Chromebooks more easily

Is the school making any money on this?
- I would like to clarify that we are not making a penny on any of the units.
- We have no contracts with Google or Asus.
- We have chosen Google products because of their ease of use, their suitability for the education environment and the flexibility they provide.

Do we have to buy a Chromebook through the school?
- Yes. If you have already bought a Chromebook then this will not be usable in school.
- We must ensure all devices are used professionally and protected due to our safeguarding policy.

What happens if I cannot afford to join the scheme?
- The school may still purchase a limited amount of devices that can be borrowed to use in lesson time if required. These devices will be kept in school and given out when required. Students who qualify for the Pupil Premium grant can be supported in the finance package.
- We encourage all parents who receive a form of income support to apply for Free School Meals
- A separate handout for parents who may meet this criteria is available

How will you monitor what the students are doing and that they remain safe?
- The Chromebooks will be managed by the school system and Herts 4 Learning
- Strong filters that block particular online material. **These filters work at home**
- E-Safety workshops for students/parents

What about writing?
- The Chromebook will be used as both a consumption and a production device.
- Students will still be writing in lessons and researching on the devices, likewise in lessons they will be producing work in a digital format.
- We need students to be proficient at both sets of skills. When they go to university or

many forms of employment - IT skills will be dominant
- Most subjects will still at different points require writing - the skill of handwriting won't be lost. Likewise the art of verbal collaboration and communication will still be used

Why Chromebooks?
We researched a number of devices from laptops and tablets and now feel moving forward, the Chromebook is the best device that meets our needs. Key characteristics such as those listed below support this:
- Less than 8 seconds to boot up
- Long battery life
- Simple technology
- Easy student-teacher workflow
- Large numbers of computers can be managed centrally
- Excellent collaboration tools
- Works seamlessly with Google Apps for Education and other cloud based applications which all of our students and teachers already use extensively.
- The capacity to turn from a laptop to a tablet - and for one model, the use of a stylus pen that can interact with G Suite.

The following are just a few examples of what students will do at Simon Balle School:
- Create, share and collaborate using G Suite for Education
- Use subject related apps in the classroom and at home
- Collaborative learning.

Quality first teaching still has an important place in education and will continue to do so in our school. Chromebooks should be seen as an additional educational tool and not as a replacement for these methods. We will be training our teachers and teach our students to use these devices productively and appropriately

Other devices may not be fully compatible with the Google Apps and add-ons that we will be using for teaching and learning:
- The battery may not last 6 hours on a single charge
- The computer may not boot-up within 10 seconds from a closed lid
- The device will not be managed by the school and therefore will not be manageable as a class learning tool

From a schools perspective, two very important issues make the Chromebook our device of choice. Our Edutech team cannot support multiple types of devices, nor can our teachers be expected to understand the different problems that they will present in the classroom. Chromebooks all operate in the same way.

The other issue for us as a school is our responsibility to Safeguarding and the Prevent Agenda. We are confident and secure that Chromebooks work with the Herts filtering service and we need this for security and management. We can manage the students' devices whilst in school.