



July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### Year 7: Digital Technology in the Classroom

Each year we invite Year 7 students to bring their own device for use in school. This year we will be asking students to bring devices from their first ICT lesson on or after **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October**; however, given the current situation with online learning, it may be beneficial to have devices for work at home from the start of term. We will use part of the school's summer camp to take students through their TBS email and Microsoft 365 accounts so they can access the school resources from home.

We have clear guidelines around the use of digital learning in school; this is documented in our Digital Learning Policy and Agreement. Key points are summarised below:

- Students will be **directed** when to use their device. It is the teacher's decision whether he or she uses technology in the classroom.
- Devices can only be used in the classroom for work as directed by the teacher; if a device is misused, a teacher will confiscate it in accordance with the Digital Learning Policy.
- Sanctions for misuse are documented in our behaviour policy.
- A student is fully responsible for the care and upkeep of their own device. We therefore recommend a durable case and insurance.
- Mobile phones cannot be used in classrooms or the school.
- Devices are unlikely to work successfully if they do not meet the minimum specification which is attached to this letter.

Whilst we do not champion any one device, and want to allow freedom of choice for you to select the most appropriate device for your son/daughter based on budget and platform preference, we would prefer students to use Windows devices as we know these work most successfully with our school systems. We allow different platforms as long as they are compatible with our network; however, we cannot provide technical support to resolve access issues. **Please note, Google Chromebooks can NOT access the school wifi, please do NOT buy a Chromebook.** All students have a Microsoft 365 school account, which will allow them access to Office online and other apps that will be used in the classroom as well as to download versions of Word, Excel and PowerPoint. At present, Microsoft provide this free for all students.

I have attached some Frequently Asked Questions for your information. Please note, devices will only be allowed in school from **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October** onwards and we will not allow Year 7 students to bring them before then.

If your child is eligible for support through Pupil Premium funding we will be providing a device for them – further details to follow. If your child is not eligible for PP funding, but you anticipate a difficulty in meeting our request to equip your son/daughter with their own device for 5<sup>th</sup> October, please contact me on the email below as a matter of urgency.

We hope, like us, you see the benefit of providing students with this access and we thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

**Mrs N Hodgson**  
Year Leader for Year 7

## Recommended Device Specification

### Hardware Specification

It is important that devices meet the following requirements:

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|------------------------|--|
| Form Factor            | Laptop or convertible device/tablet<br>The device must have a physical keyboard attachment with separate keys for A – Z and 0 – 9 and which physically move when depressed.                        |
| Physical Dimensions    | Minimum Screen Size: 11.6". Currently, many 14" devices are better value.<br>Please note, we have found that many students find devices bigger than 14" to be heavy and inconvenient to transport. |
| Operating System       | Microsoft Windows 10   |
| Processor              | Intel core i3 or AMD Ryzen 3 or above  |
| Wireless Compatibility | Devices will need 802.11ac wireless or better.   |
| Battery Life           | Advertised battery life of at least nine hours   |
| Memory                 | 4GB RAM or more.<br>At least 120GB storage.  |

Please take special note of the Wireless Compatibility requirements. This is the most difficult requirement to verify yourself for Windows laptops. If you are unsure, please take this document with you to a retailer.

### Additional Considerations:

The following are *not requirements*, but are considerations:

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum weight: 2kg</li> <li>• Disk configuration (laptops): Solid State disk (SSD)</li> <li>• Accidental loss and breakage insurance</li> </ul> |
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### Software Specification

We ask that devices meet all of the following functional requirements pertaining to software:

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|-------------------|---|
| Web browser       | The latest version of any modern web browser e.g. Google Chrome |
| Security Software | The device must have anti-virus software and be up to date.     |

### Example Devices:

We are by no means suggesting you buy one of these specific devices, or from these retailers, however; they are suggestions of devices which would enable students to thoroughly embrace digital learning at TBS. The prices were accurate as of 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020.

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|--|---|
|  <p><b>HP 14-dk0599sa</b></p> <p>£349.00 at Currys PC World</p> <p>AMD Ryzen 3 3200U Processor<br/>14" HD screen (non-touch)<br/>4GB RAM<br/>128GB SSD storage<br/>Windows 10</p> |  <p><b>ASUS VivoBook 14 X412FA-EK867T</b></p> <p>£349.99 at John Lewis</p> <p>Intel Core i3 Processor<br/>14" HD screen (non-touch)<br/>4GB RAM<br/>128GB SSD storage<br/>Windows 10</p> |
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## Frequently Asked Questions

**What personal ICT devices can a student use in school?** A Windows laptop computer or a tablet computer [tablets must have a keyboard]. Suggested devices and a minimum specification are supplied with this document. **Mobile phones/Smart Phones are not permitted.**

**How do I get permission to use a personal ICT device in school?** When you have received it, sign and return the user agreement to your ICT teacher in your first ICT lesson on or after **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October**. Please remember, devices will not be allowed prior to this time.

**Can I transfer work from school computers to my personal ICT device?** Students may transfer files from the school network to their devices by uploading work to OneDrive.

**Can I connect my personal ICT device to the School wireless network?** Students with the correct permissions are permitted to connect personal devices (but not mobile/smart phones) to the school provided wireless network. Instructions on how to connect a personal ICT device to the school network will be issued by mentors / ICT staff.

**Can I access another wireless network or networking service while in school?** Students are **not permitted to connect to any non-school wireless or networking service** while in school, since the school cannot permit access to non-filtered services for safety reasons. This includes all wireless and wired services e.g. 3G networks, wireless hotspots, vpns etc. Any student accessing such a network would be committing a gross breach of trust and would potentially no longer be able to use a personal ICT device in school. Additional sanctions for breaching school rules would also apply.

**What software is compatible with the programs on the school computers?** Students will receive a license for Office 365. This is currently supplied free of charge through Microsoft's education programme. However, please note that Microsoft has indicated that charges may apply in the future, at which point the school may not be able to supply students with MS Office. No other software is available from school for installation on your device. The software you have/own is your responsibility. You should only use the software that you have installed on your device and which is licensed.

**What about subject specialist software e.g. Photoshop?** There are a number of free alternatives to Photoshop e.g. Photopea, Paint.Net, Gimp and Inkscape that offer similar features and allow files to be saved in compatible formats for use in Photoshop. The Adobe suite can also be purchased at a heavily discounted rate on an educational license – the details can be found here: <http://www.adobe.com/uk/education.edu.html>. **Subject specialist apps may be required from time to time but the school will endeavour to ensure that these are free to purchase.** For any other queries relating to subject specialist software, please speak to your teachers.

**How will we ensure that students are work on their writing skills for exams that are completed on paper?** Students will not be expected to be on their devices for 50 minutes every lesson and books will still be used. The devices will be used more for the purposes of research and collaboration rather than document creation, although this will also inevitably happen. Many devices, particularly those that are both tablet and laptop in one, allow for handwriting recognition. The school will continue to ensure that spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are still taught without devices so that students do not rely on them for that purpose. Whilst exams are, for the majority, taken on paper, there are those who do use laptops and many schools are adopting this for examinations. It is a likelihood that in the future, exams will be taken on computer as students use them more and more in their daily lives – we must prepare our students for this eventuality but that does not mean we will abandon literacy or numeracy as key skills.

**How will we ensure that the Digital Learning system raises results?** Whilst we anticipate that Digital Learning will have a knock-on effect of raising attainment, this is not the purpose of it. We are not introducing this to specifically raise attainment but to ensure that our young people are suitably prepared for an ever-increasing digital world.