The Beaconsfield School
A Specialist Arts College

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Dear Parents and Carers

Year 7: Digital Technology in the Classroom

You will most likely be aware that we introduced a Bring Your Own Device scheme in September 2016.

Each year we invite Year 7 students to bring their own device for use in school from **the start of the spring term in January**.

We have clear guidelines around the use of digital learning in school; this is documented in the Digital Learning Policy and Agreement which can be found on the school website under 'about us\digital learning at TBS'. Key points, however, are summarised below:

- Students will be **directed** when to use their device. It is the teacher's decision whether or not 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 in accordance with our Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- 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, but cannot provide technical support to resolve access issues. **Please note, Google Chromebooks can NOT access the school wifi.** All students have an Office 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 Office 365 free for all students.

I have attached some Frequently Asked Questions for your information. Please note, devices will only be allowed from January 2019 onwards and we will not allow Year 7 students to bring them before then.

If your son/daughter is eligible for Pupil Premium funding you will be contacted by Mrs Marks. If your son/daughter, is not in receipt of this funding; however, you anticipate a difficulty in meeting our request to equip them with their own device for the start of term in January, please contact Mrs Marks on smarks@beaconsfield.school.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Martin
Assistant Headteacher
lmartin@beaconsfield.school

Recommended Device Specification

Hardware Specification

It is important that devices meet the following requirements:

Form Factor	Laptop or convertible device/tablet 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" 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	A quad core processor, at least a Celeron N3450 or above
Wireless Compatibility	Devices will need 802.11ac wireless or better.
Battery Life	Advertised battery life of at least ten hours
Memory	4GB RAM or more. At least 64GB 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* of the Bring Your Own Device program, but are considerations:

Recommendations	• Maximum weight: 2kg • Disk configuration (laptops): Solid State disk (SSD) • Accidental loss and breakage insurance

Software Specification

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

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 devices, however; they are suggestions of devices which would enable students to thoroughly embrace digital learning at TBS. The prices were accurate as of 13th September 2018.

Acer TravelMate – B117-M Laptop. £238.98 on ebuyer.com • Intel Pentium N3710 1.6GHz • 11.6" screen (non-touch) • 4GB RAM. • 64GB storage. • Windows 10 S.	Lenovo 300e 81FY £319.97 on laptopsdirect.co.uk • Intel Celeron N3450 • 11.6" touch screen • 4GB RAM. • 64GB storage. Windows 10.

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 BYOD agreement to your ICT teacher in your first ICT lesson in 2019. 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 the ICT department.

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 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. 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. We are specifically looking at providing them with the necessary skills for when they leave school and embark on their next journey – whether that is to university, where the majority of students use their own devices, or the world of work, where such devices are prevalent. We want your son/daughter to be more engaged in lessons and we feel that having their own devices will allow for this.

How will we measure the success of Digital Learning? Whilst it will not be possible to give quantifiable evidence that having a device in a lesson results in an increased GCSE grade, we will constantly monitor the use of devices in the classroom as we would with any school development. We will maintain close communication with all stakeholders to gather feedback on the use of these devices both in school and at home and any resulting impact. We will scrutinise many areas including delivery of lessons, standards of work, variety of work, student engagement, and student development. We will use lesson observations and learning walks to review the quality of learning in lessons using BYOD as well as providing training for staff and students in the best ways to make the most of these devices for learning. We will be stringent in ensuring the devices are used appropriately and have a positive impact on behaviour and engagement. Surveys with those year groups already using digital learning show that 71% of students feel they are more engaged in learning when using a device and 69% say learning is more interesting now.