



STUDENT COMPUTER

Buyer's Guide

What computing device should you buy? A Chromebook? Laptop? MacBook Air? There are a myriad of different options all with their own pros and cons. To help guide you through this process, look through the questions and answers below.

What are the BYOD requirements?

The program requirements are simple. Any personal computer that has a really good battery life, an English Operating System, access to wireless internet and a keyboard qualifies for our BYOD program.

Is your child entering Grade 6 or Grade 12?

This has an impact on the size and weight of the laptop you consider as well as what they will need it for. A \$1200 MacBook Air for a 6th grader may not be necessary when a \$300 Chromebook can match most of the tasks being asked of the students. Conversely, by Grade 9, students start taking courses such as computer programming and graphic design where that Macbook makes sense.

What are your child's interests?

If your child will only be using the laptop for typing notes, creating spreadsheets, writing essays and researching, a Chromebook is more than suitable. Alternatively, If your child enjoys playing video games, PC laptops are a better choice but this usually means a heavier and more expensive option. Macbooks are really great for students that are more inclined to the arts and have an interest in content creation.

What specifications should it have?

Many people become confused between RAM and storage capacity. RAM affects the speed of the computer (how many things it can do at once before slowing down) and the storage capacity refers to how much data can be stored on the device's hard drive. In today's world 8GB of RAM is becoming a necessity for computers that plan on being used for a couple of years. Since we encourage cloud-based processing, it is very unlikely your child's hard drive will ever run out of storage space, unless he or she is storing a large volume of photographs, songs and movies. We highly recommend Solid State Drives (SSD) over Hard Disk Drives (HDD) as they are faster and more reliable.

Bottom line: The computer should have at least 8GB of RAM and a SSD. The next most important factor for school purposes is a long battery life.

Do I need any special software?

In short, no installation of any specific software will be *necessary* since most work is done with cloud based applications. Courses with specific software requirements, will have school owned devices that can be used by students. However, we do have an Adobe Creative Cloud license (Photoshop, Premiere Pro, etc) that students are welcome to have access to on their own computer if they are compatible.

What else do I need?

A really good battery life! Charging stations are really hard to come by in the school and we cannot underestimate the importance of having laptops that can last the day on one charge. The laptop will also be transported to and from school every day and will surely get bumped along the way. So, also consider the durability, weight and portability of the device.

Computer Types

Chromebooks: These are great school laptops for our younger students and are the most affordable option. If well cared for they can last up to around 3 years. They currently lack the ability to run some software and games but that is also an advantage in terms of computer security and reducing distractions.

Recommended Model for Middle School (Grades 6 - 8)

The [ASUS CX1 14" Chromebook](#) has 8GB RAM and is frequently on sale for under \$300 at local stores.

MacBooks: This is the most common computer in high school and for good reason. They are high performance, ultra portable, durable and have a long battery life. They are an expensive initial investment but rarely need servicing and should last at least 4 years if well looked after and kept up to date. You can also get a student discount if you order directly through the online [Education Store](#).

Recommended Model in High School (Grades 9 - 12): An M2 Macbook Air ([Apple Store](#) link). You will save around \$120 by ordering directly from the Education link vs buying in store.

PC Laptops: PCs offer much greater variety in their price and features (touch screen, battery life, screen size and resolution, etc) and are most beloved by students that like to play games on their computers. Unlike Apple computers, there are a wide variety of manufacturers and models so the adage of "you get what you pay for" often rings true for PC laptops.

iPads: These are great for content creators as high quality video and drawing tools are built right into the device. However, students do oftentimes find it a challenge to stay organized unless the student is very comfortable navigating between productivity apps on their iPad.