



HITCHIN BOYS' SCHOOL
An Academy Trust

Chromebooks 2021





So...what is a Chromebook?

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It's a laptop that runs on the Google Chrome operating system. The Chrome operating system is designed to work on the cloud, so that means everything – your files, your apps, even your desktop – lives online (not on your laptop) and is the same wherever you sign in. That means never misplacing your files or losing your work in progress (it's all right on the cloud). No wifi? Chromebooks also store files locally and work offline.

"A range of simple yet powerful devices with built-in accessibility and security features to deepen classroom connections and keep user information safe."

Why did our school choose Chromebooks?

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Chromebooks are by far, the #1 devices in schools because they're easy to use, versatile and secure – we know trust is earned by protecting privacy and providing worry-free security. It helps that Chromebooks come as laptops and tablets with big screens and small screens, and entry models are affordable. They are built to be shareable. This means you and your child can use the same Chromebook and each have your own profile and files.

What does your child actually do on a Chromebook?

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That varies from class to class, but the answer may be, “just about everything.” Popular tools like Gmail and Google Docs make classroom collaboration easy, and there are apps to learn skills like video-making, podcasting, and coding. In our experience, having access to a touchscreen device with a camera opens up many creative possibilities in Art, Design and Technology, Music, Maths and being able to film and review practical performances in Drama and PE. You may also have heard your child talk about Google Classroom.

It's a tool all our teachers use to help organise student classwork and assign homework and projects.

When a class of students have access to a device in school, this opens up the possibilities in lessons of interactive activities and online research.

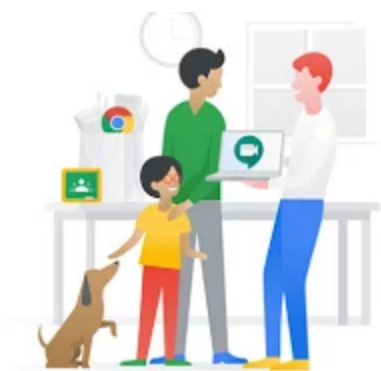


Suddenly, every student has access to an atlas, a French/Spanish/German dictionary, the latest statistics on the economy, a flexible musical instrument, a camera and more. We will be able to be innovative with our teaching approaches.

For students undertaking GCSEs, BTECs or A'levels it will allow access to online learning resources at home and at school, such as e-textbooks and platforms like GCSEpods for revision and tools to support independent revision.

Frequently Asked Questions?

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My child is in receipt of Free School Meals. What support will you provide?

For parents of children who are currently in receipt of Free School Meals, or have been in the last 6 years, we will be providing a 50% discount. This will come with the same options to spread the cost over 12 to 36 months or to purchase the device at a cash price.

We don't qualify for Free School Meals but will struggle with the costs of this scheme. What support will you provide?

There may be other circumstances where support is available (e.g. multiple siblings) and we are committed to ensuring that every child has equal access to a device. You will be asked to contact the school with details of your current situation and each case will be looked at on an individual basis to see what support we can provide.

My child already has a different device. Can they use that instead?

As long as it is a touchscreen Chromebook they can use it.

What evidence is there to support 1:1 devices in Schools?

We are following the [DFE national strategy](#) and using the latest [EEF research](#) along with their teacher toolkit in making our decision. These show a net learning gain and also an improvement in collaboration, feedback and metacognition. We have outstanding teaching and there is a flourishing Edtech business centre locally as well as nationally.

Technology can improve; the quality of explanations and modelling, the impact of pupil practice and in assessment and feedback. We have in place a programme of CPD to support the roll out of these devices for students, teachers and for parents based on the latest research.

Why have you gone with a touchscreen - this makes it more expensive?

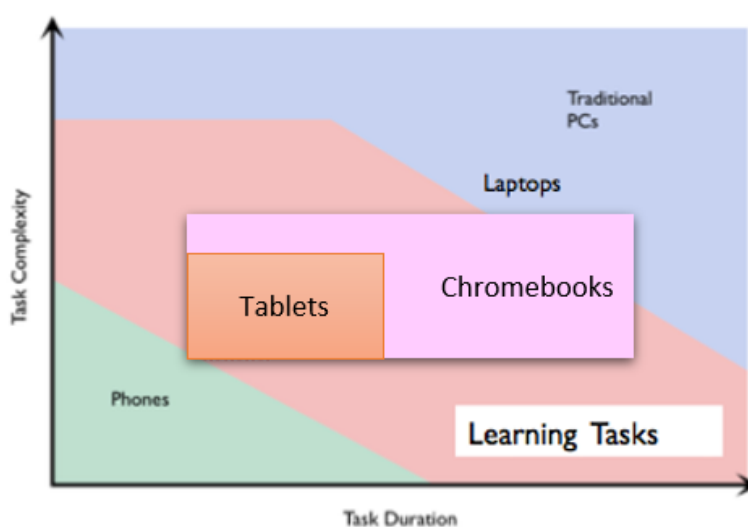
We believe that there are increased learning opportunities from being able to operate both as a touchscreen tablet (that can run the wide range of Android apps) and as a laptop with a keyboard. Experience of schemes in other schools shows that there are use cases where a touch interface wins (e.g. painting, music making, annotating documents, using whiteboard apps in Maths, photography and video) and those where a keyboard will be more useful. We are then able to get similar learning benefits that have deployed Apple iPads, but at a lower cost and with the benefit of a device with a good size screen and keyboard that can be used in sixth form and beyond.

Did you look at Windows, iPads, Mac, Linux or Android as alternatives?

Yes, very seriously. We believe that each of these devices and options have their strengths but each also has weaknesses. The simplicity of the Chromebook overcomes these barriers so that the focus will be on learning. Alongside this having been a Google school for 9 years and using Google Classroom for the last 3 years we are in a strong position to make the most of these devices.

My child already has an internet connected phone – why can't you just use that?

A 'smartphone' is not a suitable learning device for this programme. Screen sizes are simply too small to be able to use eBooks, conduct research, write presentations or essays, etc. It is a fallacy promoted by IT vendors that one device can satisfy every possible educational use. You wouldn't use a laptop to film in drama, likewise you probably wouldn't type an A Level essay on an iPad!



- Low duration/complexity : web research, photo or video capture, blogging/tweeting, scanning QR codes, reading ebooks, quizzes, surveys etc.
- Longer duration/complexity : word processing, programming, movie editing etc.

Furthermore, we require access to the Internet to be via our filtered WiFi and require devices with 3G/4G connections to have them switched off for the safety of our students and staff. The 'no phones in lessons' rule makes this much easier to monitor.

What if my child already has a Chromebook?

If it is touchscreen, they can bring it to school instead of purchasing one through the Tech for Learning offer. You will need to consider insurance for this device and what you will do if it needs repairing. The Tech for Learning scheme includes zero excess, no claims limit, accidental damage protection with a 5 day turn around. The school will have a supply of spare devices kept on site that can be used to swap for your child's device immediately so that they don't lose access while repairs are undertaken.

Is the battery good enough? How will charging work?

Chromebooks have a battery life of 8 plus hours. This varies depending on what the Chromebook is being used for (e.g. web browsing is very different to using Youtube). As long as students charge the Chromebook overnight, it will last all day. An energy research body has calculated the cost of charging a Chromebook for a year to be 87p if charged every other night. Students are responsible for bringing their charged Chromebook to school.

Please note that there will be no charging facilities available at school.

Can we have different models to choose from?

In order to achieve the economies of scale with a manufacturer which makes this scheme most affordable, we have chosen two devices which offer the best combination of sturdiness and teaching and learning opportunities. If purchasing your own device as long as it is touchscreen and a Chromebook you can bring it in.

What technical support will there be for students?

Our IT department will have devices for on-site swapping and loaning for a day. Students who have taken up the Tech for Learning offer will then have their device sent for repair as part of that scheme. One of the major advantages of the Chromebook is that it rarely goes wrong.

Are there any Chromebook guides available?

Yes, there's a lot of (free) guidance out there. This link is a good place to start:

<https://www.google.com/chromebook/howto/>

We will make sure all of our students receive the teaching input to get them up and running with their new Chromebooks when they are issued.

Will my child need their own Google account? If so, how will the school be able to put apps on the Chromebook?

Your child's Hitchin Boys' School account is in fact a Google account and this account will be used. The school will use management software to enable it to distribute apps to any Chromebook registered with it and can deploy apps to the device.

What is the school going to do with the current IT suites?

We will be maintaining our investment in the IT suites which run specialist software. We recognise the importance of IT facilities and continue to invest significantly in this area to maintain an infrastructure that allows students to access high quality resources to support their learning. The IT suites will be used for subjects that need access to more powerful software such as in Design and Technology, Media and Computer Science. Our Chromebook scheme will allow students to access online services in every lesson across their timetable.

Who owns the Chromebook?

Hitchin Boys' owns the Chromebook until full payment has been made. At the end of the scheme, transfer of title will take place and ownership transferred to parents.

Could we buy a cheaper Chromebook and 'opt out' of the Tech for Learning School scheme?

Yes. There are other Chromebooks on the retail market, but we will be bulk purchasing models that we believe can offer good value for money. We will offer devices we think will be robust and stand up well in a school setting. A level of standardisation will make training and support easier for students and staff. The scheme will include accidental damage protection and Freedomtech's advanced services. A minimum number of the same specification of devices is needed to be able to access the facility to have a bank of spares that can be swapped instantly in case of damage or breakdown.

What about too much screen time? How about handwriting? My son spends enough time online!

We plan to operate a 'Blended Learning' approach where teachers will have control over when students are asked to use their Chromebooks. This may be for a short part of the lesson or not at all, depending on the best learning tool for the situation. We will be continuing with handwritten notes and essays, reading of literature in the written form and ensuring that there are a mix of activities so that the school day has variety and a blend of traditional, practical and digital learning experiences.

THE TECH4LEARNERS OFFERING



The latest technology in the hands of students at no cost



End-to-end management of the programme



All parent communications dealt with by us

ADP

Accidental Damage Protection



Zero excess



No claims limit



Simple process



5 working day turnaround

FTAS

Freedom Tech Advanced Services



Have a backup of your devices in place ready to use when needed



On-site swap-out to reduce downtime



Old device sustainably and securely recycled by us

Collaborate anywhere

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Co-edit documents, spreadsheets, and presentations in real time.



Slides



Docs



Sheets



Drive



Jamboard

Communicate your way

- - - - X

Connect your classroom with email, chat, and video.



Gmail



Meet



Chat

Manage your classroom simply

- - - - X

Create classes, make assignments, give quizzes, and save time grading.



Classroom



Assignments



Forms