Device Selection Considerations and Care Recommendations

What kind of device do we recommend?

There is a range of devices that are sufficient to fulfill the needs of the students for schoolwork. The most important consideration is that the device needs to be able to use the Google G-Suite Apps or websites effectively. Though it is possible to navigate most of the apps and sites with a tablet, such as an iPad, we have found those with tablets have had many more compatibility issues than those using a laptop or Chromebook, so we do not recommend their use.

Here are my three device recommendations in no particular order:

1. _Google Chromebook_ - The Chromebook comes pre-installed with the Google G-Suite Apps and is excellent value for money. The Chromebook is also less vulnerable to virus attacks than a PC. The Chromebook operating system also makes it harder to game online, so is a good option for those looking to have the device for school use only. Certain models are shockproof and splash/waterproof. Feedback from families and teachers has been positive in relation to their implementation at school.

2. _PC laptop_ - The Google G-suite is easily accessible via a browser. PC laptops can also be cost-effective, depending on the model. A negative to consider is their vulnerability to viruses. If you go this route, please ensure that suitable anti-virus software is installed. Something else to note, is that PC laptops provide the easiest way for students who wish to game online. Depending on how you look at it, this may be considered a downside for those purchasing the device specifically for school work.

3. _Apple Macbook_ - A more expensive option. The Macbook is a great option for students who are interested in video and photo editing/production. The capabilities of these devices far surpass the necessities at a middle school level, however offer expanded multi-media production options. Another advantage is that they are less susceptible to viruses than Windows-based laptops. In my experience, they also tend to last longer.

In preparing your children for our campus please have discussions with them around the following responsibilities of owning and caring for a device:

- **Ensuring it comes to school fully charged every day** – this means charging it the night/ morning before coming to school. We will have areas to charge, but will be avoiding having cords plugged in during normal classroom activities, due to the tripping hazard (and the 'pull the laptop off the desk' hazard). We do not

recommend charging the device in your child's room, as we do not want to promote the use of the device during the night.

- **Using a case/laptop bag** – When the device is not in use, it should be stored in a safe area. This means putting it back into its case or bag and storing it in a safe space, such as their locked lockers. This will be expected at lunch and recess.
- Please ensure the **charger is brought everyday, as well as personal headphones** (no sharing of headphones is allowed).
- **Clear labelling** – Please ensure that everything that you own is labelled, including the device, charging cords and storage bag/case.
- **Physical care of the device** – Ensuring it is always on a flat, hard surface when using it. Avoid eating around your device and liquids should always have a lid which should be replaced after drinking (water only in classrooms). Your teacher may assign an area for water bottles to avoid issues in this area.
- **No sharing of laptops/Chromebooks** – Each student should have their own device and therefore sharing should not be necessary. In addition to this, we will be implementing increased device cleaning protocols to reduce the spread of germs. As a reminder, **we highly recommend insuring your device for damages**. This can be purchased when purchasing the device and through certain insurance providers.
- **Used only with teacher permission** – Your device may only be used when you have been told to use them. At all other times, your device should be closed/locked.
- **Become familiar with your device** – Learn the basic settings and file structures of your device. It would be beneficial to install Google Drive and if you are using a Chromebook to download the Google Suite.
- **Create boundaries of use** – We recommend that you should draw up some clear boundaries as to what you deem to acceptable usage for your child and their device. There are fantastic guidelines for these types of boundaries here, from the Edutopia Website, as well as a comprehensive agreement taken from the Common Sense Media website here. I really like this downloadable poster, as it summarises technology boundaries really succinctly. We highly recommend an open book policy with your child, where there is an understanding that the device can be accessed by you at any time. We also encourage you to be aware of any accounts that you children have and to ensure you know their passwords.

Information about Google Classroom

Our school will continue to utilize Google Classroom as the preferred system of online classroom organization. This product is part of the Google Apps for Education suite (G Suite). It allows students to create and submit tasks and assignments electronically to

the teacher. Google Classroom is a closed environment, only providing access to the teacher and the students in the class. Though we are aware that our Grade Sixes may be familiar with using the Google platform, our junior high teachers will conduct some refreshers on how to use the G-Suite effectively.

Google Classroom integrates with Google Drive which is also part of the Google Apps for Education suite. Through their SCA accounts, our students have unlimited free storage.

As a parent, if you would like to have access to your child's digital work through Google Drive and Google Classroom you are able to work with your child to set sharing permissions to allow you access. This will require a Google account. You can use a Gmail account or connect your other email with
https://accounts.google.com/signupwithoutgmail
Once your child has been given their account details and has logged in, you can have access to all their work. Once access is granted, have your child log into http://drive.google.com and right-click on the Google Classroom folder. Choose Share. Enter the parent email address into the share folder. This will give parents access to the student's work.

What Software do we need to install?
Please note that there is no need to purchase any specialized software for your chosen device, as Google's G Suite is free and has the essentials that your child will need.
- For a **Chromebook**, these apps come pre-installed on most models.
- For a laptop or Macbook, you will need to install the Google Chrome browser and from there, the apps are accessible in the browser.

If you already have an office Microsoft Office subscription, feel free to install it, however, it is not a necessity (no matter how much the salesperson tells you it is).

If you have purchased a PC laptop, we recommend purchasing antivirus software, as PCs can be susceptible to viruses. Chromebooks and Macbooks are safer in this regard and generally don't require anti-virus software. As a family, you are responsible for your own virus/malware protection.

Parents – Knowledge is Power
We are on this journey of moving our students to become world-changing technology users together. We, therefore, encourage you to become confident in using the device that you have chosen to purchase for your child. You do not need to know it all and you

can learn along with them, but we urge you to have an open mind. There are great online tools around that will help you navigate the basics.

Please feel free to email me with any concerns or questions that you may have and I will do my best to promptly reply.

Looking forward to warmer days ahead.

Blessings,

Wesley Meyer
Vice Principal
Springs Christian Academy
Youville Campus
wmeyer@springs.ca
(204) 231-3640