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5th November 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Re. Technology provision across the school (5th November 2020)

I would like to update you on some important news about the school's technology provision.

Over recent months we have been reminded of the importance of technology in a modern education. Concepts such as *remote learning* and *blended learning* are now part of the wider conversation about schooling during this period of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 virus.

There is an emerging distinction between *classroom teaching* – that may or may not benefit from the use of technology – and *online learning at home* - that is increasingly dependent on access to suitable devices and reliable wi-fi.

On-site technology provision

The school has recently conducted a review of the wi-fi network that covers the site. Staff and increasingly students (especially in the sixth form) are using mobile devices such as tablets and laptops to enhance teaching and learning. We have concluded that the current wi-fi network is not providing sufficient coverage for the school to be able to exploit current and future opportunities in this important area.

We have therefore commissioned the installation of a new wi-fi network that we hope will be up-and-running in January 2021. This is a significant investment on a site our size, but we firmly believe this will enhance our on-site technology provision for many years to come.

The school has also conducted a full review of access to technology on-site. We have now purchased and received 64 new Chromebook laptops that teachers can utilise in their lessons. Their usage, alongside the existing mobile devices that the school has, will be enhanced further once the new wi-fi network is installed.

The school has also invested in Google Enterprise for Education, an enhanced version of the Google Classroom Suite of software that allows us to further develop our ability to deliver lessons, including safe, live lessons using Google Meet. We will be offering support and training to our staff who continue to prepare for further disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Off-site technology provision

School closures and self-isolation have exposed the importance of students being able to access computers and wi-fi at home. The very rapid switch we have made to online learning platforms such as Google Classroom will mean that a blended learning approach to education will now become a normal feature of home learning.

A survey we conducted of parents/carers in May/June 2020 revealed that the vast majority of our families have access to reliable wi-fi and appropriate computers and devices at home. We asked about whether parents/carers were interested in a contribution scheme for the purchase of a Chromebook laptop, which many were. Unfortunately, the schemes available largely end up costing people more than an equivalent arrangement with a



high street retailer and are mainly aimed at schools who are insisting on students bringing devices to school with them.

We would therefore recommend the following as the kind of specification that would be required as a minimum for a student to access the kind of cloud-based software (such as Google Classroom) typically used by the school.

Chromebook with:

- Processor - AMD A4/Intel-I3 1.6GHz
- RAM - 4 GB
- Storage - 16 GB (16 GB is useful for a Chromebook with few apps downloaded. if the user wants to download apps from the google play store then it may be a good idea to go for 32 GB)
- Display - 11.6"

For example (price range of £200-£280) the:

- HP 11-v051na 11.6" Chromebook - Intel® Celeron™, 16 GB eMMC
- ASUS Chromebook C223, Intel Celeron Processor, 4GB RAM, 32GB eMMC, 11.6"
- Lenovo Flex 3 Chromebook Laptop, Intel Celeron Processor, 4GB RAM, 32GB eMMC, 11.6"

If you are having trouble accessing wi-fi or a suitable laptop at home due to financial constraints, we are keen to ensure our more vulnerable students have the same opportunities as others. You can contact the school by filling in [this form](#) and we will look into any support we can offer.

I am very ambitious for the school's use of technology as we move forward and see these developments as the first steps to future-proofing our on-site and off-site provision.

Best wishes



Mr Jeremy Scott
Headteacher