



Dear Parents/Guardians,

At Ratcliffe College we understand and value the benefits of technology as a learning tool to support students' education. Currently, all students from Years 4-13 are required to bring their own device (BYOD) into College to support their learning.

From September 2022, all **new** students to the College in **Years 4-11** are required to **purchase a Chromebook directly from Ratcliffe College**. This initiative is designed to provide cost efficient devices that enable students to carry-out all of their academic studies with a device that is optimised for use in school. It also begins the process of moving to school-managed devices across the College. By using school-managed devices, we can ensure that devices are set-up in the same way, to allow students to focus on their school work and control access to the internet.

There are two options to choose from:

- £120 for a Chromebook previously used in school. (We have 51 devices previously loaned to students, all in excellent condition, that have undergone refurbishment.)
- £200 for a new device, a Chromebook 14 inch non-touch.

The cost will be added to your school bill. Devices will be supplied with a protective case but you may wish to purchase a laptop sleeve.

It is important to note that the device is **not** covered by the School's insurance policy and the school cannot be held responsible for loss or damage to the device.

Parents will need to insure the device on their own insurance policy.

Sixth Form: Year 12 students new to Ratcliffe College are warmly welcome to take advantage of this scheme **or** source their own device, which does **not** have to be a Chromebook.

Please read the FAQ - 'frequently asked questions', which accompanies this letter for further information regarding the BYOD scheme. If you have any questions regarding the devices or wish to purchase a Ratcliffe device, please contact Mr Paul Grewcock (Network Manager) byoddevices@ratcliffecollege.com in the first instance.

Kind regards

Kevin Ryce
Senior Deputy Head

Frequently asked questions - FAQs

Will students receive training on how to use the school ICT system?

New students will be trained in the first few weeks of the new academic year. All students in Years 7-9 will also receive training / refresher courses during their first few ICT lessons on how to access RMuNify and use Google Classroom from any device.

What rules apply to the use of devices on the student network?

Students must first read and accept the Acceptable Use Policy. Any breach of either of these policies, or school rules may lead sanctions in line with the School's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy. Further information is available via the AUP policy, which is available on request.

Will my son/daughter be safe online?

Yes. We use an internet filtering system which is very robust. This blocks access to social media, online games, netflix, etc. Students will not be able to connect using 4G/5G or a VPN connection using a school Chromebook.

Are students able to charge their device in classrooms?

No. Students must charge devices whilst at home. The chromebook has sufficient battery-life after a full charge to be used throughout all of their classes in a day. We recommended that parents purchase a portable battery power bank to bring into school for students with Tablets. There are a restricted number of plugs in classrooms that can be used if a device has lost power, but the expectation is that all reasonable efforts should be made to charge the device overnight.

What happens if my son/daughter forgets their device?

The same rules apply as to when students forget an exercise book/text book - a warning may be issued by their teacher and then they have to do without their device for the day. This will be an inconvenience to them. After that, if a student regularly forgets their device, the matter will be addressed using the existing policies for Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions. If a student forgets their device (Years 7-11) and are in a year group allowed to bring their phone into school (or use school transport), they are still not allowed to use their phone as a replacement BYOD.

Where will the device be kept during the school day when not being used?

Students will keep their device in their locker. They will be able to securely place their laptop in their locker at break, lunch and during any co-curricular activities. The laptop should be kept inside the laptop section of a bag or in a laptop sleeve/bag. Students are responsible for looking after their own belongings. Laptop sleeves/bag and devices should be clearly labelled with student name and Tutor group.

When will the device be used?

The device will be used during lesson time and supervised Prep time only and will not be used in communal areas such as locker rooms, toilet areas, the Refectory, changing rooms, on school transport or in-between classes. Students may use their device at lunchtime for school work when supervised by the Librarian.

What is the process if a device is damaged, lost or stolen?

Like any lost bag, every effort is made by staff to locate the item with the student. A school-wide notice is put out and tracing 'last steps' takes place. We will encourage students to keep their laptop in a locked locker or in a bag on their person, at all times. It is important to note that the device is **not** covered by the School's insurance policy and the school cannot be held responsible for loss or damage to the device.

Parents will need to insure the device on their own insurance policy.

What are the educational benefits?

For students, the list of benefits is extensive. Using digital technology in school supports organisational skills as students can check on work set, Prep deadlines and use the Google Classroom stream to aid teacher-student communication. Having ongoing access to technology for learning will enable students to develop greater independence, increase engagement and develop the skills required to thrive in the 21st century. All students benefit from using ICT as a learning tool. For SEND and EAL students, the ability to access learning resources such as translating tools, online dictionaries, change background colours on presentations, re-read slides at their own pace and access electronic copies of all resources will be of significant benefit. I

Do teachers have to let students use their device?

No. The students are only able to use their device at the teacher's discretion at appropriate times in lessons. Students will be able to use their own device during Prep time. Students and staff have successfully developed their use of digital technology as a tool for learning and many departments have an integrated approach to learning. There are many activities which support the use of ICT and, while we encourage students to use these where appropriate, a balanced, blended approach is successfully working in schools where all students use a device.

Do teachers have to use Google Classroom?

Yes. Teachers will set up a 'Google Classroom' for each of their classes in September. Teachers will use their Google Classroom to post resources necessary to support student learning including worksheets, texts and PowerPoints, either before or after the lesson. Google Classrooms can be accessed both in and out of school so students will store and access their files on the Cloud (as no memory sticks are allowed in school).

Students will be able to view assignments set and deadlines for handing work to their teacher. Prep will be set via Google Classroom so students know exactly what Prep is set and the deadlines are clear. All necessary resources are in one place to support student organisation and will enable parents to also support their child.

What about handwriting? Students have to write for examinations so using a device will not help them prepare for examinations.

ICT and the use of portable devices is not replacing the need for students to write their answers and use exercise books. ICT and the use of devices at school and at home are learning tools, designed to enhance the learning process already in place. Not every piece of work will be typed and handed in via Google Classroom. Students will still be issued exercise books and will hand write answers/notes, as it is important that handwriting legibility, speed and endurance is developed for examinations, which will require students to write their answers in the traditional way. Teachers will use their

professional judgement as to what work should be set and completed via Google classroom.

When can students use their device for internal and external examinations?

The use of a word processor for both internal and external examinations is only permitted where a student meets the JCQ requirements as set out in the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy. If a candidate believes they should be using a word processor for their examinations and/or non-examined assessments they must first speak to their Tutor who would liaise with the SENDCo and parents. The SENDCo would make a decision based on all available evidence held in school. The use of a word processor will be granted to a student only if it is appropriate to their needs, and is their normal way of working in the centre. This must be approved by the SENDCo. Candidates eligible for consideration for the use of a word processor may include students with, for example:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- A medical condition;
- A physical disability;
- A sensory impairment;
- Illegible handwriting;
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand. This list is not exhaustive.

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she prefers to type.