

Student access to technology at UWCSEA

UWCSEA's approach to the use of technology is based on a large body of research that clearly shows the benefits of the use of technology to support learning. Our learning principles and the UWCSEA profile provide ample guidance in developing pedagogically-driven uses of technology for all students across the learning programme.

In order to access and participate in our learning programme, all students are required to have immediate access to digital devices to support their learning. Details of these requirements, both at school and at home, are outlined below.

Technology in the Primary School: K1–Grade 5

Students in Kindergarten 1 to Grade 3 use iPads, while Grade 4 and 5 students are provided with a laptop, which they use in the classroom for the duration of the year. All devices used in the Primary School are provided by the school and are left at school every day.

Students in Grade 2–5 also regularly require access to a computer at home. All students engage in age-appropriate collaborative learning and homework tasks. Some homework is assigned, completed and submitted using online tools. Many of the online tools are accessed in the classroom at school and students then login to complete or extend their learning through homework.

Laptop Ownership Scheme: Grades 6–12

In Grades 6 and above families purchase laptops for their children to use, which they bring to school every day. In order to provide the best learning experience for students, these laptops must meet or exceed minimum specifications published by the College. The College provides the following:

- detailed specifications of the laptop required
- a preferred vendor, so that families can benefit from economies of scale and guarantee the best possible price for the required laptops
- the preferred vendor also bundles the required warranties and insurance to help ensure that any issues can be dealt with in a timely and cost effective manner
- all necessary software for all students. This includes any specialised software for High School students studying particular subjects; such as Music or Film Studies
- an 'Out of the Box' session, attended by all new parents and students, to distribute and set-up laptops and establish shared expectations around use of the laptop at both home and school
- onsite IT support, including a full Authorised Apple Repair Centre, for any technical problems with laptops (provided they have the appropriate insurance and warranty)

Q&A on the laptop ownership scheme

What laptop do I have to buy?

Students in Grades 6 to 12 are required to bring an Apple computer to school. The laptop hardware landscape changes quickly, so we will provide specific details closer to the start of the new school year. Should you be offered a place at the College, we will provide the appropriate details. For reference, the specifications for laptops for students in August 2018 were as follows:

- 13" Macbook Pro
- 2.3GHz i5 Processor
- 8GB SDRAM
- 256GB SSD Hard Drive
- Retina Display
- 3 years AppleCare Warranty
- 3 years Insurance

My child has a laptop from their previous school. Will I be able to use that one?

New students joining the College may be able to use an Apple laptop that they already own, subject to various conditions. The criteria below are used to assess whether students are able to use a laptop they already own.

- details of the laptop and proof of the purchase dates for the laptop and its warranty
- laptop must be presented for physical checking and the relevant agreements signed before students are allowed to bring the device on to the College networks. For families relocating to Singapore, this physical check may take place when the student arrives at the College
- must meet or exceed minimum specifications for the year of entry

- must meet requirements until at least the end of the school year for which it will be used. A laptop that does not meet the requirements for the full year (e.g. the warranty expires part way through the school year) cannot be used
- must have been well maintained and be in good working condition. In particular, it must be able to last for a full school day on a full battery charge. Students are not allowed to bring their own chargers to school and charging is not allowed in lessons
- laptop must be wiped and re-imaged with the College's image (software and settings.)
- laptop must be presented for inspection and re-imaging at the earliest opportunity once the student starts at the College. If possible, this should be done before term starts
- families are responsible for insuring the laptops against damage or theft

I am joining the College in January 2019 before the new family-owned laptop scheme officially begins. Will I receive a laptop under the new or old arrangement?

In this case we are providing you with a choice. If you wish to avail of the College laptop and then return the remaining value of it in your Term 1 fees for 2019/2020, then we can arrange that. If you prefer to buy a new one and bring it with you in January then we can provide you with the specifications as necessary. If you wish to use one you already have until you can avail of the offer from the College vendor, it must meet the criteria above in order to be usable.

I want to buy a new laptop. Do I have to buy it from the College vendor?

No, but we recommend that you do, as we negotiate with them so you can buy it easily and at a price below the normal retail rate. The preferred vendor will provide an arrangement with the insurance company to provide the best prices and seamless support, via the College's onsite support desk. If you order through this vendor, new students (and all students coming in to Grade 6) can collect the laptop from the College at an 'Out of the Box' session. Even if you purchase through another source, new students and their parents will be required to attend an 'Out of the Box' session.

How will I buy a laptop from the vendor if I am not yet in Singapore?

You will be able to order the laptop online and collect it at the College before term begins in August.

Is there anything else I will have to buy apart from the laptop? Will it have a warranty or be insured?

Parents will have to include both the full warranty and at least three years insurance with the laptops they purchase. The College will work with the preferred vendors to provide these at a competitive price as part of the bundles on offer.

How do I order a laptop?

The College is in the process of identifying a preferred vendor, who will be able to provide laptops of the correct specifications at a competitive price. They will also provide an online ordering system and arrange for laptops to be delivered to the College for parents to collect before the start of the school year in August. Ordering the laptops in bulk will allow parents to benefit from cost savings, as well as preferential support and insurance relationships. The specific details of this will be made available by the end of Term 2 (March 2019).

What happens if my child's laptop has a problem? Will the IT Support desk help to fix it?

The IT Support desk at UWCSEA will provide a single point of contact and manage all the necessary repairs and communications with Apple and/or the insurance company. We will continue to require all laptops to have full warranties and insurance cover to facilitate providing smooth and timely support.

The support desk also provides loan laptops for short periods when laptops require repairs.

I am concerned about my child having a laptop and access to online tools without my supervision. What does the College do to help with this?

The level of supervision that families exert over laptop use at home is at their discretion. The College will support families to develop agreements and protocols for use at home as well as provide details of the College programme. Digital Citizenship is an integral part of the school learning programme and we provide ongoing support for families if any specific issues arise. In addition the College runs several parent workshops over the course of the year covering major topics in this area, including dealing with distraction and gaming.

All new students and their parents attend an 'Out of the Box' session at the College, to distribute and set-up laptops. This session also serves to establish shared expectations around use of the laptop at both home and school.

I heard that the College used to provide a laptop free of charge to all students in Grade 6 to 12 and replace it every three years. Why has this changed?

The College used to provide a laptop to all new students entering Grades 6 to 12, which the College owned until it was paid for by parents through school fees over a three-year period (\$700 per year for a total of \$2,100), at which point the College provided a new laptop. In August 2019 we are moving to a family-owned model, which is more sustainable and gives parents flexibility on when to replace the laptop. Clear guidelines on laptop specifications and common software will ensure that we retain the benefits to learning of the previous model. Since \$700 for a laptop has been included up to now in the annual school fees for Grade 6 to 12, this amount will be taken off the 2019/2020 Grade 6 to 12 school fees (which will be agreed by the Board of Governors in December 2018).