

Digital Learning Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions

Heathfield
Community College and Sixth Form

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We appreciate parents / carers will have questions regarding the scheme. We have collated questions from previous years in this document. If you have any further questions please contact the College using the details below.

Do the devices go home every night; does this present an unnecessary risk to younger students; what security is in place?

Chromebooks that are issued to students as part of the Digital Learning Scheme must be taken home every night. We currently have a large number of privately owned smart phones along with all other year groups using devices and we have almost no report of anxiety over theft or threats to take possession.

Few Colleges with similar schemes report theft as being a problem, however, we would not wish to be complacent and our advice to all students would be to hand the Chromebook over if they are challenged and immediately report the incident to a member of College staff.

What about parents who can't afford the scheme?

We want everyone to be able to join the scheme. If you feel you would struggle to join then please contact our finance team dlt@heathfieldcc.co.uk And they can investigate ways in which we can support. This includes support for those in receipt of Pupil premium funding.

Can't I go and buy a cheaper Chromebook myself?

Chromebooks come in a wide range of models and specifications. We don't believe you can buy this specification for a cheaper price as we work hard to secure the best pricing. However if you would like to purchase a different model Chromebook for use on the scheme then you can do this by joining our BYOD scheme.

What about students who already own a Chromebook?

You can either choose to join the College scheme or bring your own Chromebook into College, provided that it is no more than 3 years old. The Chromebook will need to be factory reset and we will then join it to the college network. Please note that the device will need to be managed by the college throughout the duration it is used as a scheme device.

Parents / Carers are responsible for their own repairs on BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Chromebooks. We cannot assist with repairs and they are not eligible for the in house repair service as we will not have the parts required to repair them.

Why has the college changed from iPads to Chromebooks this year?

The college started working with iPads in 2012 and we launched our first scheme in 2013. Back then the landscape was very different and the iPad had significant advantages over Chromebooks. Over the last 14 years the landscape has changed and Chromebooks are now a better choice within education.

Google provides an extensive range of education solutions that integrate natively with chromebooks, providing a seamless experience. The devices are quicker to repair and it's easier for us to allocate a spare device when repairs are required. All this reduces the time a student is without a device significantly.

They also come with keyboards and pens which further help to improve productivity with these devices.

The iPad remains an excellent choice and we will continue to support this in other year groups whilst we transition to Chromebooks over the coming years.

What if I have more than one child in this year group?

We are able to offer a small discount for twins or triplets as we recognise the pressure this can cause. Please contact the Finance Department (dlt@heathfieldcc.co.uk) for arrangements.

How will using a Chromebook impact on the quality of students' hand writing?

We are fully committed to students developing their writing and further literacy skills. Students will still be expected to hand write work and complete extended pieces of writing. There will be no need to word process all their work and much will still be completed in exercise books.

However, the Chromebook will support students by allowing them to check spellings, looking up definitions of key terms and supporting them with their reading.

Exams still take place on paper, so how will Chromebooks help with this?

Exams and mock papers can and will still be handwritten. Students will experience this formally during mock examinations and through the completion of assessments in lessons. The Chromebook will support students with their examinations by offering a single place to access suitable resources for revision.

How will the Digital Learning Scheme affect homework?

A device that can be used both at College and at home will improve the continuity of learning, with resources needed available in one place.

Parents / Carers can play a greater part in supporting and understanding the work that students are completing in class.

We believe that homework tasks now include a wider range of media and resources than conventional based homework. This, in turn, should improve student's motivation to complete work outside of the classroom.

Do students need to carry the Chromebook in addition to all other text / exercise books?

Yes. As always, it helps if parents / carers of younger students help their child pack their bag the night before. This ensures only the required books and equipment are being carried. Students also need to ensure their Chromebooks are charged fully for the start of the day.

It is important that students carry their device in a safe manner both at school and to and from school to minimise any accidents.

Can students choose a device other than a Chromebook instead?

No. Other devices are not fully compatible with the software and tools we will be using. It is also important that teachers only have to manage one type of device during lessons to ensure their students can be supported effectively.

Years 8 - 11 will continue to use iPads and this will be the only supported device. These year groups will not be able to use Chromebooks.

How will students differentiate their Chromebook from others in College?

One of the first actions for students to install a unique wall paper to make their Chromebook easy to recognise. We recommend in the first term that this is the students timetable to help them to know which lesson is next. Chromebooks also show the E-Mail address of the last user making it easy to identify.

Will students spend all day staring at a screen?

In most lessons, Chromebooks will only be used as and when needed. In some lessons they may not be used at all if they do not enhance the learning in that topic. Chromebook use does not replace the good teaching and learning that takes place. They will be used as an appropriate resource when necessary.

At break times and lunch times Chromebook use is also banned. Students are actively encouraged to engage with other activities that take place in the College.

What can you do to stop students being off task during a lesson?

Effective classroom management is just as important as ever when Chromebooks are used.

Teachers have tools to allow them to manage the device in lessons and assist students with staying on task.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PAYMENTS & THE REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENT FUND.

How will payments appear on my bank statement?

Payments will appear on your bank statement as HeathfieldCC or GoCardless

How can I change my bank details?

If you have changed your bank details, please E-Mail dlt@heathfieldcc.co.uk and we can send out a link to reinstate the direct debit.

What happens with missed payments?

If for some reason a monthly payment is missed, then initially GoCardless will attempt to collect the payment later in the month. The College will also make contact if required.

Continual non-payment of missed monthly direct debits will result in the Chromebook being removed from the student until the outstanding amount is cleared.

Please do not hesitate to contact the finance office (dlt@heathfieldcc.co.uk) if you require any help.

What happens if the student leaves before the end of the scheme?

If the student leaves the College the amount remaining on the device will be calculated. Parents / Carers then have the option of taking ownership of the device by making this payment.

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Will I get a refund if my students leaves the scheme?

No. The cost per month is for the lease and associated costs of the Chromebook. Whilst the student is in the scheme you remain liable for each monthly cost.

What happens if the Chromebook is damaged intentionally or due to negligence?

If the device is damaged as a result of Intentional damage or negligence, then the full cost of the replacement parts will be charged to the parents. The college will still cover the labour element. The college may refuse to repair a device when repeated damage occurs.

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

Will students need access to home Wi-Fi?

The device will require Wi-Fi to work at home. Students will have access to the College Wi-Fi system while at College.

Is my child's work going to be backed up?

Students' work will be stored on google cloud. If the device is damaged or lost then all work can be retrieved by signing into another Chromebook.

Will age controls (internet filtering) differ on home Wi-Fi?

No. As protocol the restrictions that are put in place remain in place at home. If you wish to have this option removed, you will need to contact the College.

Will the Chromebook restrict my child from experiencing other operating systems?

No. We continue to have a large number of both Windows and Apple based computers in the College.