

22 July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Well, the summer break has finally come and brought a welcome finish to what has been an extraordinary second half of the year. We now have to wait to see how things develop over the next 6 weeks and the effect the national response to COVID-19 will have on the new academic year. Listening to and reading the various reports in the media we have, on one hand, our Prime Minister expressing a wish and a hope that things will be back closer to normal by Christmas and the scientists, on the other hand, saying we must not get complacent and we will be dealing with this for the next decade. The only assumption that we can draw from this is that it is likely to be somewhere in-between and, like you, I hope it is closer to the former rather than the latter.

To cope with this crisis, we have had to adapt to new ways of working and going about our everyday lives. It has been hard, but there have been positive developments too. Education and schooling has had to do the same and remote learning via digital resources and video teaching has accelerated to front and centre. It is our view that, as a school, we need to be much better prepared to respond quickly, if needed, and to improve our digital and IT capabilities further to level up the playing field for all of our students. When I made the proposal two months ago about a scheme to provide devices to students and asked for comments from parents who were **not** supportive, I pleasingly received very few. Of those I did receive, the main concern was affordability and internet access. With the growing economic uncertainty for our country, we have no doubt that these will not have changed and for more families this will be becoming a growing concern. There were other concerns such as maintenance and internet safety, but these can easily be managed. It was clear to us that we had to make affordability a key priority.

Over the past two months we have concentrated our efforts on negotiating a deal with an IT provider, a financing company and working with our sponsor, BAE Systems, to strike a deal that is the most affordable for parents with a device that will meet all of our needs. I am delighted to say that we have a deal and of all the other ones we have researched with other schools, there is not a better one.

The bottom line is as follows:

There are no credit checks as this is available to every family.

Year Group	Monthly Cost	Upfront one off cost
7, 8 and 9	from £9.99 (36 months)	£299.99
10	from £13.33 (24 months)	£279.99

What does this get you?

Lenovo 300e 'Flip and Touch' WinBook



Specification:

- AMD 3015E Processor
- 11.6" HD Touchscreen Display
- 4GB LPDDR4-2400 Memory
- 64GB eMMC 5.1
- Bluetooth 5.0 wireless, integrated in Wi-Fi + Bluetooth combo adapter
- Rugged & Flip Design (Turns into a Tablet)

Price includes a protective sleeve and:

- 3 year Extended Warranty
- 3 year Accidental Damage Protection (£0 Excess)
- 3 year Theft Protection (£0 Excess)
- Ownership at end – no additional cost
- School Software, Applications, Network Access

We estimate that a saving up to £200 can be made off the retail price for the equivalent package.

For parents of children who are currently in receipt of Free School Meals, or have been in the last 6 years, there is a further discount that will be applied. This subsidy is being provided by the school and our sponsor. Families eligible for this further discount will receive a supplementary letter indicating the new pricing.

Why have we chosen this device?

There is a wide range of tablet and laptop-style devices available on the market. We have conducted extensive research when considering the type of device that would be best suited to students in our school and for the specification and cost this is by far the best one.

How to place an order

You will receive a further email with a username and password giving you access to our web portal. If you choose to take up this excellent offer, you will then need to:

- Create an account
- Select the payment option of your choice
- Place your order

Given the current national and international demand for digital devices and the scale and timing of our order, we expect to receive delivery and have the devices set up by October half term, at the latest.

Future implications

One of the consequences of our response to COVID-19 has been to bring forward, by 24 months, our strategic plans for the use of IT across our Trust. Some of our discussions have already been around how digital devices might enhance the learning for our students and some examples are given below:

- Create, share and collaborate using the Microsoft Office 365 suite tools to increase the potential of peer assessment and collaborative learning approaches
- Organise homework and classwork through Microsoft Teams allowing easy access
- Use excellent learning resources from our web based tools, including up to date and relevant e-textbooks, where appropriate
- Use digital tools to support research and writing. For example, academic bibliography and citation tools, read aloud and voice recognition tools to promote independent learning
- Think and behave creatively across their subjects using Cloud Apps for design, planning, animation, mind-mapping, image editing, sound editing, video recording, etc.
- Use subject related Apps in the classroom and at home
- Greater opportunities for differentiation within the class to meet students' needs
- Effective assessment for learning in and out of the lesson to both redirect the lesson and aid long term planning based on students' learning.

It is important to recognise that we do not believe that digital devices will replace the teaching that takes place in our school, but we believe it can certainly enhance what we already do well.

Further information and a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section is available from our website.

Yours faithfully



Simon Laheney
Headteacher