

Combining online educational materials and opportunities with traditional teaching methods.

**Educating students for success in life.**



# The Priory School **Blended Learning**

## **PARENT PACK 2023**



We are delighted to invite our Year 7 students to join our Chromebook Blended Learning Scheme.

We are now living in a digital age. Computers have infiltrated every aspect of our lives. Everything including mobile phones, televisions, traffic lights, theme parks, agriculture and sport depends on computer systems. When our students leave full-time education they need to be prepared for the real world; ***we are educating students for success in life.***

Being permanently connected to the Internet is changing how we learn: the answer to that question you have just thought of can be found at the touch of a button; tutorials on YouTube demonstrate hands-on practical skills; and languages can be automatically translated just by talking out loud to your smartphone. Industry is beginning its 4th 'industrial era'.



So, how can we prepare our students to ensure that they are ready? We are excited to share our vision for the future at The Priory School.

In 2018 we thoroughly investigated different 1:1 schemes at various schools, and we then tested a small pilot group at The Priory School in 2019. In September 2020 we began our own Blended Learning Chromebook roll-out, starting with Year 7, followed shortly by Year 11 and then Year 9 in January 2021. By negotiating closely with suppliers, selecting devices appropriate for all students, and running our scheme all in-house, we are pleased to offer one of the lowest cost 1:1 schemes in Hertfordshire, meaning our parents have been very supportive of the scheme with 99% of our students owning their own school Chromebook.

All students now have access to their own Chromebook. We want to help build their digital ***resilience*** to enable them to learn independently, creatively, collaboratively and to communicate anywhere at any time.

Students learn in many different ways at both home and school. Embracing the use of technology allows learning to be increasingly engaging. Students will be able to take ***responsibility*** for their own learning, allowing the school to extend education far beyond the four walls of the classroom. We have already seen fantastic evidence of this during the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, this scheme has not just come about as a result of the pandemic and the use of Chromebooks will continue long after we return to 'normality'. We have spent over 4 years carrying out thorough and rigorous research into the technology we will be using and the methods of teaching to successfully embed appropriate use of the technology within lessons. In the same period we have dedicated time for staff training focused on digital learning tools and lesson methodologies. At The Priory School we proudly have Google Certified Educators who are able to share their expertise and knowledge. All other teaching staff are completing modules for their Level 1 Certificate to ensure everyone can expertly use the tools available within their classroom.



The school has invested significantly in our IT infrastructure to provide high-speed stadium-quality WiFi across the whole of the school. We will also continue to invest in and maintain our high-quality specialist computer labs to teach subjects such as Music Technology, Media and Computer Science.



Our Chromebook Scheme is funded through monthly contributions from parents to purchase Chromebook devices for students at a very attractive price. Parents will make contributions to the cost of the Chromebook over a 24-month period, interest-free, after which the Chromebook becomes the property of the parent(s) and student. There is also the option to pay the full amount for the Chromebook up front at our bulk-buy cost price.

As part of the scheme, each student will receive:

- A Chromebook device
- A durable and highly protective case
- Warranty cover and insurance cover for damage and theft
- A bundle of apps for use in school and at home
- Quality online filtering both in school and at home
- Technical support
- Student and parent training



The scheme is voluntary, but by keeping costs to a minimum it is our expectation that every student will buy into the scheme. Special provision will be made for those who choose not to join it to ensure no-one is disadvantaged.

You will find more information about the monthly contributions and payment methods, as well as answers to lots of questions you may have, included in the rest of this booklet.

If you have any additional questions about the scheme that we have missed from this pack, please do not hesitate to contact our team at [chromebooks@priory.herts.sch.uk](mailto:chromebooks@priory.herts.sch.uk).

Kind regards

Handwritten signature of Geraint Edwards in black ink.

Geraint Edwards  
Headteacher



## What do I need to do?

Please read through the details in this booklet and then visit [www.priory.herts.sch.uk/information/chromebook-information/](http://www.priory.herts.sch.uk/information/chromebook-information/) to accept the Chromebook Blended Learning Scheme contract.



## OUR AIMS

1. To allow all students to become independent digital learners by equipping them with an appropriate device that allows access to the Internet and other educational applications. This device can be used across all lessons, as and when directed by teachers.
2. To allow teachers to become facilitators in digital learning, helping students to make exceptional progress using a wide range of educational online tools within the classroom.



“ *I have followed your work at The Priory with interest and been impressed with how you, and your team, are really moving The Priory forward in all things technology and digital.*

Neil, Year 9 / 11 Parent &  
CEO of Earthware, a local software development company”

# THE CHROMEBOOK

## WHAT IS A CHROMEBOOK?

Chromebooks are different to laptops in that they run the Google Chrome Operating System. This means that Chromebooks primarily work through a wireless connection with Google apps. Resources and documents are accessed online in the Cloud.

## WHY CHROMEBOOKS?

- A boot-up time of less than 8 seconds means no time is wasted waiting for the start-up
- Chromebooks work seamlessly with Google Apps for Education & Google Classroom
- Long battery life
- Simple technology
- Automatic updates meaning no need to purchase and install new software
- Excellent collaboration tools
- Can be used for lots of typing



## DELL 3100

The Dell 3100 is rigorously tested to endure the school day and beyond. Students can learn uninterrupted with a tamper- and spill-resistant keyboard and a long battery life. It is tested to survive 5,000 free-falling micro-drops and 30-inch drops onto steel, while rubberised edges minimise impacts from drops and bumps.

Students can learn, discover and share without worry thanks to the full-sized keyboard which can withstand up to 354 millilitres of liquid. Plus, its top-mounted design ensures that the entire palm rest does not need to be replaced if there is damage to the keyboard.



With up to 14 hours of battery life, this trusty Chromebook gets students through even the longest school days. The 11.6 inch HD screen has technology to help reduce eye strain.

The Dell 3100 is equipped with one USB-C port for powerful and fast connectivity to peripherals. USB-C connectors are smaller and reversible, making for quick connections without first having to check a connector's orientation. The Dell 3100 also has one USB 3.0 ports, wireless-AC and Bluetooth® 5 so it can connect to just about anything a student needs. An integrated HD webcam helps with recording video and photo evidence of learning or can allow students to take part in lessons via video conferencing if they have to work from home.



# LEARNING WITH A CHROMEBOOK

## What are the benefits to students?

- Work can be completed independently and at their own pace
- Unlimited access to teaching and learning resources
- Collaborate with other students electronically
- Communicate with their teachers and get support when they need it most
- Work from anywhere not just in the computer labs
- Store work online where it can be backed up automatically
- Develop a proficiency in IT
- Take work home in a digital format
- 8-second boot-up time means no wasted lesson time
- Stay organised with the online calendar for deadlines and events

## How will the school ensure students get the most from the Chromebooks?

The Priory School's teaching staff are committed to developing opportunities to engage with new technologies so that devices support learning. Over the last 4 years our staff have taken part in professional development and training to embed opportunities for learning with Chromebooks and to develop their use of the Google Workspace for Education apps.

Miss Rosler, Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning, is a Google Certified Educator Level 2 and we have 4 other members of staff currently trained at Google Educator Level 1 who are now working towards Level 2. All other teaching staff are currently completing training towards their Google Educator Level 1.

## How will the device be used in the classroom?

The Chromebook will be a tool to support and enhance learning and promote creativity such as accessing Google documents and recording visual elements of learning, for example role play or experiments. We seek to equip all our students with the necessary skills and modes of thinking so that they will succeed in a constantly changing society.

## Will the device be used every lesson?

Key Stage 3 & 4 Schemes of Learning have recently been reviewed across all departments and the use of Chromebooks is now built in to them. However, there will be times where their use is not suitable for learning so the Chromebooks may not be used in every lesson. In some lessons, students may be given the *responsibility* to decide which is the best learning tool for the job. For example, students may decide to simply take rough notes on paper rather than use their device. We are keen to develop students' independent learning skills and support them in finding their preferred learning and revision techniques.

## Will students still use pen and paper?

As they progress through the school, students will still be expected to write in lessons and we will continue to promote the development of 'writing stamina' to support internal and external exams. Students will be writing notes on paper, practising their handwriting, and will be expected to bring black pens and their other stationery to school.

## Will the device be used for homework?

Yes! Work will be set via Google Classroom for students to complete at home.

## Will the Chromebooks be used in form time?

Yes! Form-time activities will include self-preparation for the day, checking notices on the bulletin, checking emails for direct messages and viewing their timetable of lessons and out-of-school opportunities.

# DIGITAL LEARNING APPS

To make Blended Learning successful there has to be a range of online educational materials and opportunities on the Chromebooks to use in the classroom and at home... luckily we are not short on these!

## GOOGLE WORKSPACE FOR EDUCATION

Google Workspace for Education allows students and teachers to create and share with Google Docs, Sheets and Slides. Students and teachers can interact seamlessly and securely, staying synced across devices.

Google Workspace  
for Education



Experience ultimate productivity: communicate your way, connecting via email, chat or video conference; collaborate anywhere, co-editing files in real time; and manage all of your tasks, building to-do lists, scheduling tests and creating homework reminders.

## OTHER DIGITAL APPS

Quizlet Kahoot! edpuzzle

There are hundreds of free educational apps available online that our teachers are already using regularly in their lessons. Apps like Kahoot! and Quizlet bring engagement and fun to lessons through their game-based learning platforms. Edpuzzle allows teachers to easily create beautiful interactive video lessons, and Khan Academy contains expert-created content and resources for every subject and level. And that's just four... at The Priory School we also use Duolingo, Padlet, Quizizz, Flipgrid, Mentimeter and GCSEPod to empower students to learn more and think critically in a connected world.

## tpsQUAD

tpsQUAD is our personalised digital learning tracker and central information hub for students to use while at school and at home. Students will see a live update of their reward points, consequences and attendance statistics through the launchpad. Students will also be able to record their achievements and club attendance as they earn their digital tpsBADGES.



## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Chromebooks include accessibility right out of the box, unlocking learning experiences for students with diverse needs, abilities and learning styles. Built-in settings and easy-to-use apps and extensions help customise the learning experience to include and engage every student.



All our students have a license for an app called 'Read&Write' which offers a range of powerful support and study skills tools to help students gain confidence with reading, writing, studying and research. For example, students can use text-to-speech to hear words and proofread their work, speech-to-text to dictate words to assist with writing, and word prediction as they type. This app will come pre-installed on the Chromebooks.

# SAFETY, WELLBEING & SECURITY

## ONLINE SAFETY

The Internet and online technology provide new opportunities for young people's learning and growth, but they can also expose them to new types of risks. Online Safety forms a fundamental part of safeguarding and child protection measures. We have a whole-school approach to Online Safety as it is our joint responsibility to keep children and young people safe, and to teach them about Online Safety, in and outside of school.



## FILTERING

At The Priory School we have invested in high-quality filtering and Online Safety tools to protect students from harmful content thereby providing them with freedom to learn without limits. The filtering system that is applied to all devices in school will also apply on student Chromebooks outside of school to help students stay safe while surfing at home. This is included in the Chromebook Purchase Scheme at no extra cost.

Via the **Securly Home** iOS or Android app, or the Securly Home website, outside of school hours you will be able to:

- View the Chromebook activity (what your child has been searching for/watching)
- Get immediate notifications of any flagged concerns (searches for something dangerous)
- Switch on or off some of the categories that are filtered (eg social networking, stream media)
- Create offline schedules where the Chromebook becomes locked (eg bedtimes)

## WELLBEING & SCREEN TIME

As screens, devices and apps become more and more a part of our daily lives we start to evaluate our relationship to technology. Is it helping us do more of what matters most to us? Or is it getting in the way of that? Not all online activities are equal: doing something creative or learning new skills are both very different to scrolling through social media.

*"...rather than worrying about the catch-all notion of 'screen time' it might be better to focus on whether, when and why particular digital activities help or harm individual children"*

Professor Sonia Livingstone, 2018.

Asking students to reflect on their own digital behaviours is a critical step to helping them take control of their screen time. Our aim is to teach students about the safe and useful ways to use their devices to help them make their own informed choices. Our Blended Learning approach combines online educational materials and opportunities with traditional teaching methods. Therefore traditional methods of learning will still be used in lessons and students will not use a Chromebook for a full 5 hours every school day. Time that students spend in front of screens at school will be engaging and purposeful.

## SAFETY OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Many students already carry valuable electronic devices to school such as smartphones, and the Chromebook is not seen to provide a notable additional risk. In our research with other schools using similar schemes we asked if they had ever experienced a student having a Chromebook stolen on the way to or from school/home and they all said that this had never happened. However, it is sensible to reduce the risk of theft through some common-sense measures; students should keep their Chromebook in their bag on the way to and from school, both for road safety and crime prevention reasons. We will be encouraging students to register their device on the police's Immobilise database.



# FINANCE

We are delighted to be able to present you with a Chromebook package offering you *outstanding* value for money both in terms of robustness and price. We have worked hard to ensure that parents are offered the best possible price as we recognise that this is a significant financial commitment. We have been through a rigorous and competitive process over 2 years, and the device we have chosen has been fully tested within school.

We will be offering families a simple, low-cost payment arrangement comprising of a £50 deposit and 23 monthly payments of £13 (0% interest). This is roughly the same as one Costa Coffee a week, two pints of beer a month or one Cadbury's Freddo chocolate bar per day!

First payment deposit	£50 by 11 September 2023
Payments 2 to 24	£13 from Oct 2023 to July 2025 inclusive
Total payable	£349

£13 per month  
23 months  
£50 deposit  
0% interest

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Free School Meal students\* attending The Priory School will be offered the opportunity to purchase a Chromebook at a reduced price of £5 per month for 24 months. However we do not want any student to be at a disadvantage because of financial hardship, especially in the current climate. Please contact [chromebooks@priory.herts.sch.uk](mailto:chromebooks@priory.herts.sch.uk) to speak to us.

*\*This will apply to any children on Free School Meals at any point during the 2-year scheme.*

## How to pay for the Chromebook

1

Go to [www.priory.herts.sch.uk/information/chromebook-information/](http://www.priory.herts.sch.uk/information/chromebook-information/) to read the Chromebook Blended Learning Scheme contract. At the bottom of the contract will be three options:

*Option A - Pay £50 and sign up to 23 monthly payments of £13*

*Option B - Pay £349 up front - full insurance included*

*Option C - My child is currently receiving Free School Meals*

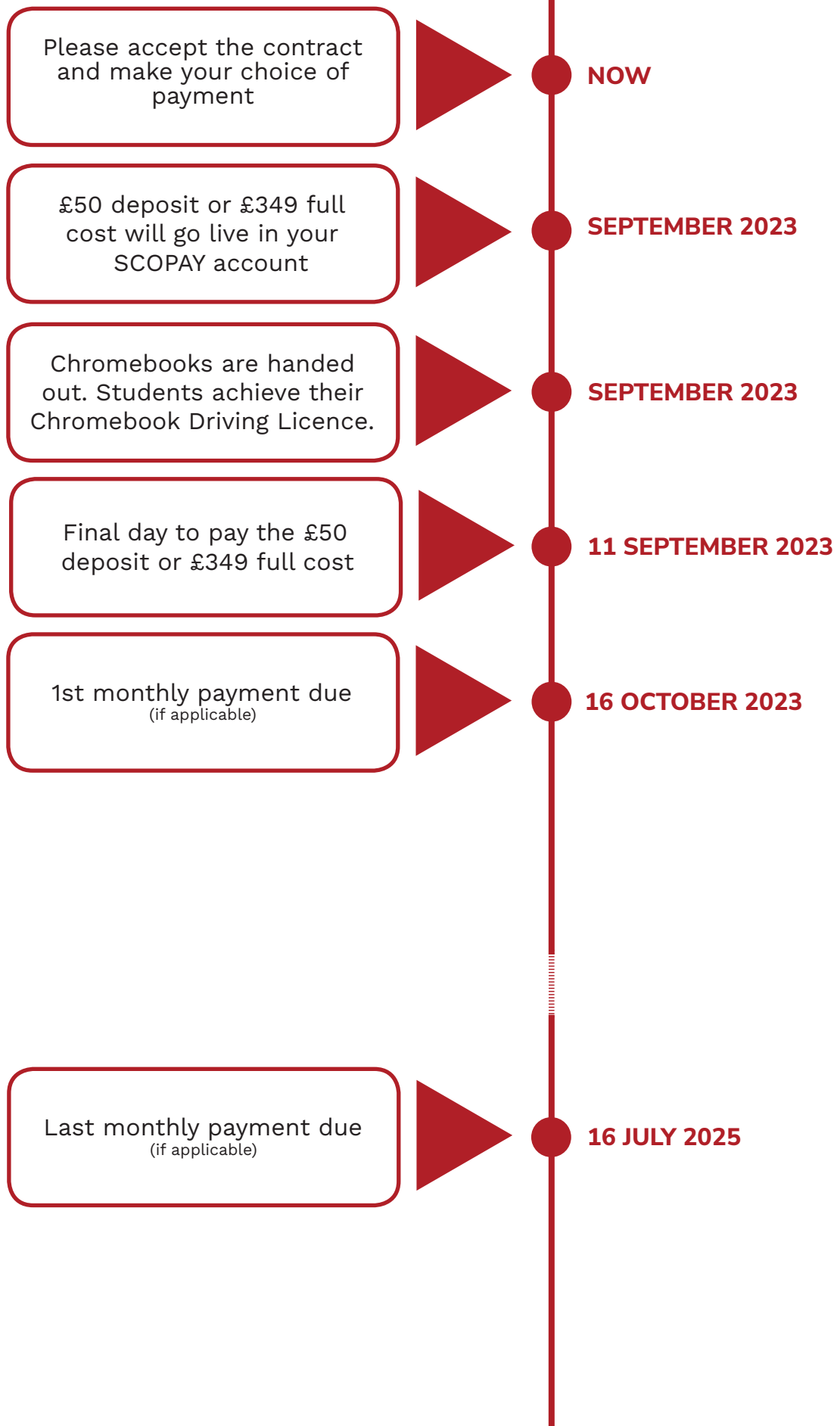
2

Anytime between 1 September and 11 September 2023, you can pay the £50 deposit or £349 full cost via SCOPAY (our school finance system)

3

If you have opted for Option A or Option C, we will contact you in September to set up a monthly standing order account on SCOPAY.

The first monthly payment will be due by 16 October 2023.



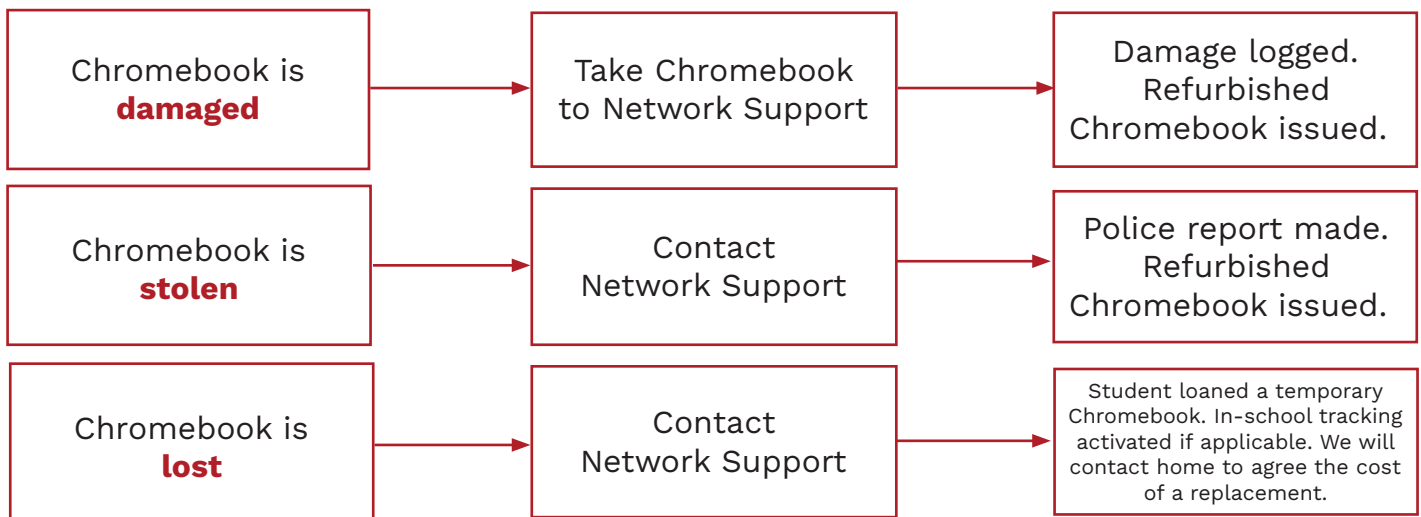
# INSURANCE, PROTECTION & REPAIR

Our Chromebook packages include zero-excess insurance which covers students for Accidental Damage, Theft, Flood Damage, Fire Damage, Malicious Damage and Worldwide cover for up to 90 days in a 12-month period. **Loss is not covered** so we would ask students to keep their Chromebook on them at all times or use their school lockers. Students are allowed a limit of 2 successful claims within the first 12 months; 3 successful claims over the 2 years.

Students will be covered by this insurance during the 2-year Chromebook Scheme period. After the final payment there may be the opportunity to pay a nominal insurance fee per month if you wish to continue to have this level of cover.

The labour cost for maintenance and repairs will be included and there is no excess cost. If a Chromebook is broken, lost or stolen it is important that it is reported to the Network Support team as soon as possible. The Network Support team can track devices from within the school and can remotely disable a Chromebook if needed, rendering it unusable and unfit for resale.

*Our aim is to keep a Chromebook in the hands of every student to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to learn in the classroom.*



## GOLD STOCK

We have a rolling set of refurbished Chromebooks to allow us to keep a Chromebook in a student's hands in the event of damage or theft requiring a long period of time to source a replacement. In the event of damage that we are not quickly able to fix, students will be given a refurbished Chromebook from our 'Gold Stock'. Their old Chromebook will then be sent off to be fixed/replaced and will be added to our Gold Stock once it returns.

## PROTECTIVE CASE

Every Chromebook will be provided with a case that we have selected for its rugged build and protective features. This case is approved by the insurance company for transporting the Chromebook. No other cases should be used as this may void the insurance for the device.

# TRAINING

## STUDENT TRAINING

Each Year 7 student will complete their 'Chromebook Driving Licence' which is made up of 4 modules:

- How to use a Chromebook
- The basics of Google Workspace
- Expectations of using your Chromebook
- Keeping safe

By completing the 'Chromebook Driving Licence' students will have shown the required skills to use their Chromebook in lessons.



## PARENT TRAINING

We will be providing parent training sessions over the next academic year.

The first will cover Chromebooks in general; the second will cover how to support your child with their learning through a Chromebook at home.

## HELP VIDEOS

The 'digital natives' (our children) may well be the experts in the family when it comes to online resources, but as parents you may feel you need a bit of a helping hand. We have put together some videos to help support your child with using Google Workspace.

There are also some shorter 60-second videos specifically for students to help them with tasks they struggle with the most.

You can find all of these videos on The Priory School YouTube channel.

**[www.youtube.com/@ThePriorySchoolHitchin/](https://www.youtube.com/@ThePriorySchoolHitchin/)**

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## **What are the benefits for parents?**

- No credit checks
- Low cost monthly payment with no interest
- Special education pricing with extra protection added in
- A device perfect for school work, delivered, managed, filtered and insured
- At the end of the payment plan the Chromebook will be owned by the parent

## **Can the Chromebook be used at home?**

Yes. Using the Chromebook in school and at home supports our goal of anytime, anywhere learning.

## **What happens after 2 years? (On the monthly payment plan - option A or C)**

The Chromebook will become your property after the final payment is received. Your child can continue to use it in school for as long as they wish.

## **How long do Chromebooks last for?**

The expected useful lifetime for a new Chromebook is 5 years from date of release, and each Chromebook is guaranteed to receive new updates for this whole period. The battery life may degrade over time depending on the level of use.

## **What would happen if we chose not to take part in the Chromebook Scheme?**

To ensure all students are equally equipped, every student will need to have a Chromebook for the duration of the school day. If you have opted out of the Chromebook Scheme your child will need to collect a Chromebook from our 'Chromebook Crèche' in the library each morning before form and return it at the end of the school day.

## **What is the Chromebook Crèche?**

The Chromebook Crèche is our set of loan Chromebooks available from the library. These loan Chromebooks are *not* allowed to leave the school site at anytime.

## **Can I log into a personal Google account on the Chromebooks?**

The Chromebooks will be open to Priory accounts only during the 2-year scheme. After 2 years, when the students are at home they will be able to log into the Chromebook with other accounts. In school, all Chromebooks will only log into Priory accounts.

## **What is the Chromebook Management License?**

The Chromebook Management License, paid to Google, allows us to push out educational apps and manage devices centrally.

## **Will pupils be issued with a loan device while theirs is being repaired? (School-provided insurance)**

If the simple repair can be completed on site, pupils will be expected to take a loan Chromebook from the 'Chromebook Crèche'. Otherwise pupils will be given a replacement from our 'Gold Stock' to keep a Chromebook in their hands.

## **Did we look at other alternatives to Chromebooks?**

Yes, very seriously. We spoke to other schools that offer similar iPad and laptop programmes, and also consulted our own students and teachers. We came to the conclusion that Google Chromebooks are the best fit for us. No other device provided the value for money coupled with the functionality that the Chromebook did.

## **Will the Chromebook increase the weight of a school bag?**

The Dell 3100 weighs 1.29kg which is equivalent to 2 average-sized textbooks (200 pages). It is generally suggested that the aim should be for school bags to weigh less than 10% of a child's weight, meaning for the average 11-year-old this would be 3.7kg. A school bag holding 5 subject exercise books, all The Priory School essential equipment, a packed lunch, 500ml of water, a reading book and a Chromebook weighs around 3.5kg in total.

## **Can I buy a replacement charger/case?**

Yes. We offer these at bulk cost price, currently £30 per charger and £10 per case.

**How will I make the monthly payments if I have opted for the monthly scheme?**

We will be in touch during September to arrange setting up an automatic payment method for the 23 months of £13 starting from 16 October.

**Who owns the Chromebook if I buy up front?**

The ownership of the Chromebook passes immediately to the parent(s).

**Will I need to purchase any other equipment?**

Students will be required to use earphones with their device from time to time and they may also wish to use their own small wireless mouse.

**Can my child use a different Chromebook or laptop?**

No, sorry. There are several issues with students using other devices in school en masse. From a technical point of view, the batteries on some devices will not last the full school day, some devices are prone to computer viruses, and to support a range of different devices is unrealistic for our IT team and teachers. We want the learning to be truly 'blended', so the technology should be a tool to help learning and should not distract from it.

**Can I go and buy a Chromebook myself and let my child bring it in?**

For management and safety purposes, only Chromebooks purchased through our Chromebook Scheme will be allowed to access the school network.

**How is a Chromebook different from a laptop?**

There are some obvious differences between a Chromebook and a normal laptop. For example, with Chromebooks it is not possible to install applications such as Photoshop or Microsoft Office as they require a full desktop Operating System (OS). However, that does not mean you are not able to perform all of the same tasks as there are many online alternatives such as Pixlr Editor and Google Docs.

A Chromebook will also be of a lower overall specification than a traditional laptop, however that does not mean that it cannot do as much! A Chromebook can make full use of the Cloud, and web apps are able to process much more information far faster than a traditional device.

**What about GDPR and Data Protection? I am concerned about Google storing my child's data.**

Google is committed to building products that help protect student and teacher privacy: all data is kept securely; Google Workspace core services do not contain advertising and information is not used for advertising purposes; and Google complies with all industry regulations. The DfE have a close partnership with Google's Workspace for Education.

**How will devices be charged?**

Students are expected to charge their devices before coming to school for the day. This is due to few electrical points in classrooms, especially in older buildings, and due to the tripping hazard of trailing leads.

**Can a student print from their device?**

Where possible students will be encouraged not to print, but instead to submit work digitally to help protect the environment. However, the Chromebooks will be able to print to a variety of devices around the school if needed. These printing costs will be subtracted from a student's personal print allowance. Students can also connect their Chromebook to a home printer to be able to print at home.

**Where will students store their Chromebook during PE?**

Students will leave their bags in the changing rooms, as is current practice, as the changing rooms are locked when unsupervised.

**Where will students store their Chromebook at lunchtime?**

Students will keep their Chromebooks in their bag and we would suggest that bags are kept in a locker wherever possible. Students will be allowed to use their Chromebook in their lunchtime clubs or after 1pm in the cafe. Chromebooks will not be allowed on the field and bags must be stored on the bag racks if left outside the cafe.

**What happens if a student leaves part of the way through the 2 years?**

The device is returned to the school or the balance is paid to keep the Chromebook.

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*Wow! Thank you so much. We do not have a computer and this means so much. I would never be able to afford it and this is such an amazing opportunity. Thank you!*

Christine, Year 7 Parent

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## What do I need to do now?

Please read through the details in this booklet and then visit [www.priory.herts.sch.uk/information/chromebook-information/](http://www.priory.herts.sch.uk/information/chromebook-information/) to accept the Chromebook Blended Learning Scheme contract.

## I need more help...

Please send an email to **[chromebooks@priory.herts.sch.uk](mailto:chromebooks@priory.herts.sch.uk)** if you have more questions or need other assistance with our Blended Learning Chromebook Scheme.



Did you know we are working towards becoming an Eco School? Please keep this booklet safe for the duration of the Chromebook Scheme and then recycle it when you do not need it anymore.



Our Blended Learning Chromebook Scheme is managed, funded and supported entirely in-house to keep costs as low as possible. The Priory School makes no money from the scheme as we are purely student-focused. This booklet was even created by our own staff!

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*The Chromebook has been brilliant as I really don't know how we would have kept up with remote learning without it. It has enabled my daughter to complete tasks independently and has also helped her be responsible for checking her emails and Google Classroom so she knows what to do for the week. Thank you so much!*

Hannah, Year 7 Parent

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