



Student Mobile Devices: Important Information and FAQs for Academic Year 2021/22

Does my child need to bring a tablet, laptop or mobile device to school?

When students return to the campus in September 2021, they will not be required to use a laptop or tablet in class. Boarders, especially in the Middle School and Sixth Form, usually bring a laptop for work and personal use. Sixth form students increasingly find a tablet with digital pen or pencil and keyboard helpful to organise their learning. Those studying Visual Arts are strongly recommended to use an iPad Pro with Apple Pencil to support their IB studies. A small number of students have dispensation to use a laptop in class for note-taking, following formal evaluation for learning support needs. Suites of PCs are provided for these pupils during examinations.

Some students, especially in the Lower and Middle school, might worry about looking after a laptop or tablet in school so you, or they, may prefer them not to. Mobile phones are a helpful way to access the Firefly (learning platform) app, view their timetable and check email, Teams or other school online systems. Phones do not need to be high-powered and an inexpensive smartphone is more than sufficient. Students are usually expected to silence phones and put them away during lessons. Parents are advised to work with their phone provider to apply controls and filters to their child's phone appropriate to their age. All devices must be clearly labelled for easy return in case they are lost in school. Strong, robust cases help to protect devices in a busy environment. Lockers are available across school for safe storage and, in some areas, charging.

Does the school provide my child with a tablet, laptop or mobile device?

We do not provide students with an individual mobile device. PCs are frequently used in teaching in 18 computing suites across 11 departments as well as across the campus and in every boarding house for private study. Shared banks of school iPads are used in a range of different subjects. We constantly review the best way to support our students' learning and the way we teach and will keep you informed about future developments as they emerge.

Does the school recommend a particular make or model of laptop, tablet or phone?

Above all, mobile devices should be fit for purpose. We recommend a robust, reliable device that is easy to use and maintain. Good battery life and portability are helpful for students who use a device during the school day. With accelerating changes in technology, it is difficult to pinpoint a specific type, make or model but devices should ideally meet these criteria:

- Robust mobile tablet or laptop without distracting social media, games or other apps
- Device that can be laid flat on the table with the screen uppermost if asked to do so by a teacher
- Integrated or attached keyboard for text-based work
- With inking device (e.g. Apple Pencil or Microsoft digital pen) for subjects better suited to drawing and annotating
- Secure case for carrying and storage
- Personal earbuds/earphones
- WiFi connectivity to connect to the secure Sevenoaks wireless network
- Personal device maintenance contracts and insurance in case of malfunction, loss, damage or theft

Students' existing devices may not meet all these criteria but will also be suitable at present. Devices do not need to be top-of-the-range as many highly suitable and affordable devices are more than sufficient for students' needs.

Possible bundles include:

- **iPad (8th generation)** 10.2" with Apple Pencil (1st generation), robust case with integrated Bluetooth keyboard, AppleCare+ and basic earphones. *Note that no educational discount is available for Secondary School students.*
- **Microsoft Surface Go 2** (10.5") tablet with Signature Type Cover, Surface Pen, Microsoft Complete 2yr with accidental damage cover and basic earphones. *Some Microsoft education bundles automatically include O365 subscriptions. This is not required as the school's Microsoft licence allows students to download and use Microsoft Office software for as long as they are a student at school. Full details are available on Firefly when students arrive.*

Essential computer security for any laptop

Lockers are available for laptop storage and charging to protect expensive equipment when not in use.

Before your child brings any laptop (including Microsoft tablets) to school, ensure that antivirus (AV) software and anti-spyware software are loaded on the laptop with the latest definitions. Both should be run in the 24 hours prior to connection. These eight AV products are supported by the school's wireless network to ensure faster, more efficient connection and fewer problems for students. They have been selected for security, ease of use, cost and compatibility with school systems:

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|---|-------------------|----------|
| • Microsoft Security Essentials (MSE) | Windows only | Free |
| • Windows Defender | Windows 8/10 only | Free |
| • AVG | Windows only | Free |
| • Sophos Mac Home Edition | Mac | Free |
| • Norton Security Suite | Windows or Mac | Paid for |
| • McAfee AV | Windows or Mac | Paid for |
| • ESET | Windows | Paid for |
| • Malewarebytes | Windows | Paid for |

What support does the school offer for pupil-owned laptops?

No support is offered by the IT Service Department for student devices (hardware or software). Students are responsible for the maintenance of any electronic equipment they bring into school. If your child boards at Sevenoaks School, you may wish to consider on-site maintenance by the laptop manufacturer or supplier. Calls for repair in the event of malfunction are the responsibility of the child and/or parent and must be made in consultation with boarding house staff. Pupils may instead wait until leave weekends and holidays to arrange repairs. *Parents are also advised to ensure that their child's devices are covered by their own household insurance or other policies as they are not fully covered by the school's policy.*

Does the school offer a laptop/tablet purchasing scheme?

No. Sevenoaks School does not currently offer a scheme to parents for the purchase and maintenance of student laptops or other mobile devices.

What type of network does the school run?

The school currently operates a PC environment running Office365 software in a Windows 10 Educational operating system.

All school users are provided with an online account for [Microsoft Office 365 with OneDrive](#) for secure access to communications, files and applications, in line with the school's [digital strategy](#) to implement a 'Sevenoaks School Cloud' with Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) in the future. By logging into their school Office 365 account, students can work on emails and documents in three ways: 1) from school PCs; 2) from their own PCs, Macs or laptops and 3) from mobile devices. Full details are available to students when they arrive and log into their account.

The school's wireless network supports Windows laptops and tablets, Apple/iOS devices including iPhones and iPads and Android devices. Pupils should be aware of how to save in interchangeable file formats (e.g. homework files created in Pages will need to be submitted in Word or pdf format). Please note that support for other operating systems cannot always be guaranteed.

How secure is the school's network?

We aim to provide as secure a network as possible to protect all our users. This includes web filtering to ensure appropriateness of content by age of user, time of day and by site. All students sign up to appropriate, respectful and secure use of school systems when they join.

Please be aware that it is a breach of school rules for students to use VPN or proxies to bypass school web filters. Note also that with 3G and 4G connections, online access is unfiltered, giving students unfettered and unmonitored access to the internet. The school is concerned about the impact this may have on students as well as their peers. Parents may wish to discuss parental controls with the suppliers of their child's smartphone or other internet devices.

How can students connect a device to the Sevenoaks WiFi?

Full details about how to connect devices to the school's WiFi are available to students when they arrive at the start of the Michaelmas Term, then on their Firefly learning platform.

For security, there are three pre-requisites for laptop configuration. Failure to meet these criteria may make wireless network connection impossible:

1. valid licence for the operating system installed
2. one of eight supported anti-virus (AV) products must be installed, updated and run routinely (details above)
3. anti-spyware installed that can be updated online and run routinely (*except iOS devices*)

How can I help my child stay safe online?

It can be hard for young people to navigate the many risks online. At Sevenoaks we promote Positive Online Profiles and encourage students to reflect their achievements in a way that will help with applications to universities and the world of work at a later stage. We use Technology and PSHE lessons, visiting speakers and assemblies to help students recognise risks, develop coping strategies and report problems. We have consulted with students during campus closure and provided additional information and resources to help them work safely online away from school. Online safety information for parents is available from the [IT Information](#) section of our website and in the 'School Information' section of our [Parents Online](#) system.

Checklist for students and parents: getting students ready for connection in school

As no repairs to, or maintenance of, student-owned devices are available in school, it is essential that pupils understand how to look after valuable, portable equipment carefully at all times and that they are familiar with how to use their device.

The following checklist should help pupils and parents prepare:

- If you use an Apple computer to create files (e.g. in Pages), do you know how to save the files in the right format to submit for homework (e.g. Word or pdf)?
- Are anti-virus and anti-spyware software installed and do you know how to run them?
- How do you plan to deal with repairs?
- How will you back up data and how often?
- Is the laptop covered by a family insurance policy?
- Is the machine security-marked and can you lock it to a desk in the boarding house for added security?
- Do you know about good practice for looking after your laptop or tablet?

We do offer students help and explanations on how they can do these things. We also require all students to sign our IT Services Terms & Conditions to say they understand and agree to our rules which will be explained to students when they join.