Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Requirements and FAQs

As Parish works toward meeting our strategic initiatives, we know questions will arise. We are committed to keeping you informed and will keep a dynamic list of FAQs on this site. If you have a question that you don't see below or need further assistance, contact Parish's Instructional Tech Team at iTech@parish.org.

Which grade levels are affected by the BYOD initiative?
The BYOD model requires students in grades 5-12 to bring a laptop to school every day.

I need to purchase a laptop for my child. What should I get, and how much will it cost?
You are free to purchase any laptop you wish as long as it meets the basic requirements listed below. Lower-end laptops can start in the $400-$500 range, and you can easily spend from $600 to over $2000 depending on the brand and configuration.

Which operating system should the device run?
Most of Parish's computers run Windows 10/11. The decision for your child's device is a matter of personal preference. Laptops can run either Windows or Macintosh operating systems as long as the General Requirements listed below are met. Chromebooks and iPads do not meet Parish's minimum requirements for devices for students in grades 5-12. See additional details below.

What are the minimum requirements for a laptop?
General Laptop Requirements:
- Either Windows or MacOS operating system
- AC power adapter
- Access to the Internet via Wi-Fi
- Built-in webcam
- Minimum of 4-hour battery life
- Headphones or earbuds
- Recent version of one of the following web browsers: Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, Safari
- Productivity suite (Microsoft Office, OpenOffice, Apple's iWork Suite, etc.)
- Virus, malware and spyware protection (current versions with automatic updates)

Additional Recommendations:
- Additional AC power adapter (one for school and one for home)
- High-capacity battery if available
- Protective laptop computer sleeve or backpack with a laptop compartment for increased protection
- External hard drive or flash drive for backing up files

Additional Recommendations for Upper School: If your child is planning to take classes in the arts, engineering, or computer science departments where installed third-party software is necessary, we strongly suggest additional laptop specifications. While the School has computers with the necessary requirements in a few labs, some courses require students to primarily use their own device, and students would also be able to use the apps while away from campus. A higher-end processor (purchased within the last four years) is recommended, and upgrading from 8GB to 16GB of RAM will help with the performance of some applications.

Can my child use a tablet or eReader?
Devices such as iPads, Android tablets, as well as eReaders generally do not meet Parish's laptop requirements. While these devices have a solid place in the computing market, they do not support the full range of specific classroom applications. Students are permitted to bring and use these secondary devices at the discretion of the faculty, but they should have and be prepared to use their laptop at any time during the school day.

Which software does the laptop need to have?
- Recent version of one of the following web browsers: Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, Safari
- Productivity suite (Microsoft Office, OpenOffice, Apple's iWork Suite, etc.)
- Virus, malware and spyware protection (current versions with automatic updates)

What if my child needs an expensive application like Photoshop or other specialized software?
Applications that are needed for high-end computer graphics, engineering and other specialized uses will be available in computer labs, the Design Den, and other locations on campus, so it is not necessary to purchase these. Additionally, Parish has licensing programs with vendors like Microsoft and Adobe that allow students to install applications on their own laptops, and many others (Autodesk, for example) are free for education customers. Many of the functions found in these applications are available online and in open-source software.

Is the laptop required to have an Internet filter?
Parish does not require students to have a filter installed on their own laptop. Parents may choose to install Internet filtering software, although the Tech Department will not troubleshoot it. It is also important to note that many such applications often block web sites needed for classroom use, so parents will need to make sure all sites required by faculty are accessible. While at school, personally-owned devices will connect through the same content filter as all school-owned computers. This fact, combined with our strong Acceptable Use Policy and consistent instruction to students, aids us in preparing students to be good digital citizens.

Is my child expected to use his/her laptop both at school and at home?
Yes. One of the goals of the BYOD program is ubiquitous access, meaning students have access to learning tools at school and at home. Some projects and homework assignments will require students to use their laptops, while others will not.

How can my child's laptop be protected from damage, loss or theft during the school day?
1. We recommend placing an identifying tag on the laptop, including name and year of graduation.
2. Students may store their laptop in their locker or keep it with them in their backpack or book bag.
   The laptop is at risk of damage or theft when not locked up or in their possession. (Please note that the only locks allowed on lockers are those purchased at the PAWS Spirit Store.)
3. We recommend a sleeve to protect the laptop while in backpacks or book bags.
4. It is recommended that parents contact their homeowners insurance provider to see what coverage is available for laptops when used both at home and away from home. Additionally, a few insurance companies that provide coverage specifically for these devices include the following:
   • Student Insurance Partners (www.studentinsurancepartners.com)
   • Safeware (www.safeware.com)
   • Square Trade (www.squaretrade.com)
   (Parish Episcopal School is not affiliated with these providers, nor does the School endorse one provider over another. These providers are given as resource examples only, and the School encourages families to conduct independent research when choosing the right provider for their needs.)

Will laptops be used in every class?

Whether or not technology is used in class on any given day depends entirely upon the teacher's judgment about the best tools to use for instruction. Some material lends itself to computer use while other material does not. Although a laptop can be a powerful tool for engaging in scholarly work, it is not the only tool that teachers use to deliver high-quality instruction.