

21st October 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am pleased to write to you regarding our next phase of our IT (Information Technology) strategy. It has been an exciting year and by Christmas we will have spent over £100,000 on Infrastructure and hardware to realise our Google business and classroom strategy. All classes have new interactive whiteboards and we will have a full WiFi system which will be able to handle the next step!

Our vision is for every KS2 child to have individual access to a chromebook to support their learning both at home and school. We are financially unable to achieve this and the original strategy was to offer every child in Year 3 and 4 the option to purchase a chromebook for use in school until they leave and then to take it with them to continue their learning journey.

Due to Covid-19, this has taken significantly longer than planned. However, we are now delighted to announce that by the end of the year, The Staffordshire School's Multi Academy Trust will roll out a parent purchase 1:1 Chromebook deployment scheme to all the children in KS2.

For those children who do not participate in the parent purchase scheme, whilst the ratios of child to chromebook may not be as favourable or provision as effective, we will then purchase a bank of chromebooks across each school to deliver our curriculum. We will provide an individual chrome book for all pupil premium and SEND (Special educational needs and disabilities) children.

What does this mean?

This means that every child in years 3 and 4 who participates will have individual access to a Chromebook. This will have a range of benefits including:

- Quick access to Times Table Rockstars, Nessy and other software packages
- Education City accessed quickly and efficiently for regular use
- Access to online learning and videos to supplement our Maths programs of study
- The ability to work online and share ideas with others; gaining feedback on work before being written up.
- Improved sustainability by reducing the amount of paper used within school
- The ability to present work in a variety of exciting ways
- Instant access to learning resources for lessons
- The ability to continue with work remotely at home through Google classroom*

Why Chromebooks?

Chromebooks are gaining popularity as effective tools in education because **they are affordable, sturdy, and easy to use**. They also provide easy-to-manage computing, allowing teachers to spend more time

on teaching than managing classroom technology. Chromebooks are smaller in size than average laptops because the Chrome OS requires less powerful hardware specifications. This makes them more portable for use anywhere a computer is needed. With cloud-based storage children can also access their learning remotely both at home and school with no issues around storage.

***Google Classroom.**

Google Classroom is a collaboration tool for teachers and students that helps organise and streamline the classroom experience. With just a few clicks, teachers can create a class, add students, and create assignments or announcements. Teachers are able to see who's completed an assignment, who's still working on it, and assign grades when it's finished. Teachers can also instantly offer feedback to students and see their questions or comments on their assignments.

Google Drive

Google Drive is like an online hard drive where students can store all their files - stories, designs, drawings, recordings, videos - anything! Google Drive has unlimited storage so our students don't have to worry about full disks, deleting old files, or losing anything if a computer crashes. Students can access their files from any device with internet service and, best of all, they never have to save: Drive automatically saves every time they make an edit! All their work is auto-saved, and they can even edit without internet service.

Google Docs

Google Docs documents come to life with smart editing and styling tools to help students easily format text and paragraphs. They can choose from thousands of fonts, plus add links, images, drawings, and tables – similar to Microsoft Word ·

Google Sites

Each student has their own unique username. These usernames are unique in that no one else will have your student's username and their username will stay with them throughout their years with us, but more importantly by utilising this username to access their Chromebook and Google Classroom, each student is protected by robust security software.

What will this all look like?

As a MAT we will ensure that our chromebooks are just one more way that we continue to blend traditional teaching with 21st century education. Chromebooks will not replace our traditional approach to lessons but enhance our provision. Children will still write regularly and on a daily basis. As you know, we strongly believe that writing is very important as is communication and language. Your child will still engage with their teacher and their fellow students in the classroom through discussions, questions and answers. The Chromebook is just one more tool to help prepare your child for the future.

Our belief is that while here at The Howard it is important that each child has regular access to IT. The Chromebook will help us to teach them the Chrome operating system and how to work in the Google environment but we will also still use our iPads to allow children opportunity to work within Apple systems.

Parent Purchase Scheme

The parent purchase scheme is simple, and provides you with a chromebook, 3 year warranty, case, and support for the time your child is at our school. Once your child leaves, the chromebook is yours to keep.

There are a number of purchase options available. You can purchase outright, or spread the cost over 12, 24 or 36 months (Please note it will not be possible to spread the cost past the time your child is at the school, i.e. Year 6 parents will be limited to a 12 month agreement or less). The approximate cost is below.

Outright Purchase	£293.78
12 months	£27.71
24 months	£14.67
36 months	£10.14

The finance agreement is with Freedom Tech Ltd, and there is no financial benefit to the school. Purchase/payment will be through the Freedom Tech Ltd portal.

Non Participation in the Scheme

We understand that some people may not wish to participate in the scheme, or may already have chromebooks at home.

For those who already have chromebooks, we would like to offer the option for your chromebook to be enrolled into the school network, thus enabling your child to bring their chromebook into school and participate in the same way. Your chromebook would need to be set up with the same filters the school uses for safeguarding reasons, and this may mean some access to certain sites is restricted at home as well as school. Please speak to your Headteacher if you wish to do this.

For those who do not wish to participate, we will be able to purchase some chromebooks for use in school and your child will have access to these ; however, they will be shared devices with other children

in class, and classes will book use of devices in advance, depending on availability. They will not be available to go out of school.

In conclusion

We are all very excited about our IT development, the final stage of which is to review our broadband provision. Ongoing work is linked to staff training, teaching and learning, and cyber security.

This is the final survey so that we can ascertain uptake and begin the processes of purchase with our approved provider. Please complete the survey [on this link](#). We will keep you up to date with developments.

Thank you.



Miss R Mills

Headteacher