



Dear Parent/Carer

## Blended Learning programme

As you may be aware, Roundwood Park School has moved towards a blended learning curriculum to better support students' learning and their access to learning materials. As part of this we have greatly enhanced our Bring Your Own Device policy and began moving students to the use of Chromebooks in September 2021.

Please see the addendum for further details of what Blended Learning is, why we have adopted it and the use of Chromebooks.

This is part of a planned roll out that will see the school move to using Chromebooks and blended learning across KS3 and KS4 over the next 4 years, the aim being to support learning more effectively and allow fair access to learning for all. This system is already in use successfully at many other similar local high achieving secondary schools.

We **highly recommend** that you purchase a Chromebook that meets the specification below:

- The device **must**:
  - Be an official Chromebook
  - Be laptop style, with a fixed keyboard and trackpad
- The device should:
  - Have at least an 11" screen size
  - Have at least 4gb RAM
  - Have at least 32gb storage
- The device may:
  - Be touch screen to allow it to run Android Apps
  - Be ruggedised or strengthened to withstand use in school
  - Exceed any of these requirements in terms of specification or size

This will ensure your child is able to engage with blended learning in the same way as all other students.

*Please note that we will be unable to provide technical support for your device hardware as this may invalidate your warranty.*

## **Examples of Chromebook Options**

### **Option 1: Purchase of Chromebook from providers such as Amazon or Currys**

Parents may choose to purchase a Chromebook from any provider. To benefit from the important safeguarding assurances offered by Impero and RM SafetyNet Go, families will need to pay a one-off fee of £42 to the school. This will then cover the Chromebook for its duration at the school. (It cannot be transferred to another device unless replaced under warranty.)

### **Option 2: Already Owned Chromebook**

Students who already have a Chromebook that meets the school's minimum requirements may use it for the BYOD scheme.

To benefit from the important safeguarding assurances offered by Impero and RM SafetyNet Go, families will need to pay a one-off fee of £42 (inclusive of VAT) to the school. This will then cover the Chromebook for its duration at the school. (It cannot be transferred to another device unless replaced under warranty.)

*Please note that we will be unable to provide technical support for your device hardware as this may invalidate your warranty.*

***Non-Chromebook Devices and Mobile Phones / Tablets are not allowed to be used in school.***

## **Warranty and Insurance**

### **Warranty**

Warranty is supplied by the manufacturer to cover any faults with the device that may occur or develop within the warranty period, through normal use.

### **Insurance**

We strongly recommend that all families insure their Chromebooks to cover the device. The school cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to Chromebooks.

### **Finance Options**

If you require financial assistance with the cost of a Chromebook and you live in Harpenden, Wheathampstead, Redbourn, Markyate, Kimpton or Flamstead, please contact the James Marshall Foundation in the first instance. Their easy to complete online application form is available [here](#).

## Addendum

***“To provide the best pedagogical practice in a format that is accessible for all and allows everyone to achieve all of the time”***

### **Blended Learning: (A definition)**

This term refers to the retention of all effective elements of traditional teacher-led classroom instruction (written work, literacy, numeracy etc) and skillfully weaves in digital technologies (digital devices, online resources etc) and collaborative learning.

- To foster independent, creative and resourceful learners
- To extend learning beyond the confines of the classroom and the school day (time and place shifted learning)
- To encourage collaborative and active learning
- To personalise the curriculum and remove the limits on learning

### **Why Blended Learning?**

Our intent for blended learning is that it will improve learning for ALL student groups at RPS. Enabling all students to access materials, assignments, live content and online work conversations, offers further opportunity to enable positive engagement with education regardless of whether there is a lockdown, snow day or other form of disruption. The opportunity for blended learning to support swifter progress, greater parity of opportunity and adaptability in learning styles and strategies in a normal school environment is second to none.

Research also supports the use of blended learning in improving the learning experience:

“However, as identified in the recent National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) report into lockdown learning experiences ([Lucas et al, 2020; SecEd, 2020a](#)), it has been shown that technology that promotes online conversations or activities that involve consolidating previous learning or revising, have “higher pupil engagement levels and an increased probability of having highly engaged disadvantaged pupils”.

Meanwhile, the NFER’s latest report into the challenges facing schools and students on full return ([Sharp et al, 2020; SecEd, 2020b](#)) states: “Evidence on distance learning highlights the importance of interactive learning, consolidating learning and supporting pupils to self-regulate their learning as effective strategies as part of a mixed diet of provision.”

### **Q. Why does the school want to use Chromebooks?**



1. Affordability
2. Ease of use
3. All apps controlled via school when students in school (no updates needed)
4. Locks students' other accounts during school hours
5. Safeguarding capability (other devices this is not possible)
6. Battery life
7. Small and manageable
8. Touch screen for apps
9. Keyboard for typing

Using Chromebooks and the school's Google Drive affords a very high level of security to support safeguarding both on and off school grounds. This will give students and parents added confidence in the use of these devices. The points below are the main advantages of the use of this system:

- a. Students can only log in with school accounts during school hours. At the request of parents this can be made 24/7.
- b. RM Buzz filters all traffic, no matter the geographical location, on students' accounts, hence the locking down of accounts during the day.
- c. All Google Drive files and emails are 'owned' by the school and as such can be retrieved at will for investigations etc, for the duration of the student's time here.

The use of devices will be supported by the already successful e-security education programme received by students through PSHCE.

### **Q. Will the Chromebook last for the duration of my child's education at RPS?**

Yes, the Chromebook model we recommend will last for at least 7 years. This should be more than enough to support students' learning until they reach Sixth Form.

### **Q. I have more than one child in KS3, do they all need a device?**

Yes, if they will be in Year 7, 8 or 9 from September 2022. As a school we have engaged in substantial research, discussion with staff, governors and parents in regards to the impact that this will have in school.