

During the summer months, parents frequently call the School's technology office with questions about computers and phones. Here are answers to some of parents' most common questions regarding technology at Blair:

**Q.** Do students have to bring a computer?

**A.** **Our recommendation is that parents make every effort to provide their child with a laptop during his or her time at Blair.** We encourage teachers to design their curriculum in such a way that students may use their laptops for schoolwork in class and when doing homework, rather than be limited to school computers in desktop labs. While school computers continue to be available for those students who need them, having access to a personal laptop is an increasingly important part of being able to do school work at Blair. Your child is likely to be asked by several of his or her teachers to regularly bring a laptop to class for classwork. Furthermore, students routinely use their laptops with the school wireless in their dorm rooms, in the library and in the campus center. All students are assigned computer accounts upon arrival which will give them an email account and access to the Internet.

**Q.** Should students bring a Mac or a PC?

**A.** **Students may do their school work with EITHER type of computer.** Our goal is to have a computing environment in which students can use either a Mac or a PC. Last year, roughly 80 percent of the student body arrived with Macs. Many Blair classes are using Google Apps for Education, which has the advantage of working on any type of computer with Internet access.

**Q.** What about tablets and smartphones?

**A.** **Although an increasing amount of school material can be accessed through the web browsers of such devices, laptops continue to be a better choice for the full range of computing tasks students need to perform.** We have a growing number of students bringing tablets and smartphones to campus, iPads and iPhones being the most popular. If your child is committed to using an iPad instead of a laptop, we recommend including an external keyboard to facilitate classroom writing exercises. A smartphone by itself is not an adequate replacement for a laptop. Smartphones are, however, an excellent way for students to access school email, especially in the event of an emergency.

**Q.** If I'm buying a new computer, what do you recommend?

**A.** **The best thing you can provide for your child is a lightweight laptop with a built-in wireless adapter, which he or she can comfortably carry around campus.** We don't provide minimum specifications, other than to note that students are usually happier with newer, faster laptops with plenty of memory. A carrying case which is roomy enough for the laptop, the charging cable, and whatever odds and ends the student is likely to carry around will be helpful, particularly for day students. Affixing a label with the

student's name on the laptop and the carrying case may help avoid confusion during moments when large numbers of laptops or laptop cases may be left outside the auditorium or dining room.

**Q.** Can you repair computers on campus?

**A.** **The best strategy is to get a full warranty when you purchase the laptop, so that the laptop can be shipped directly to the manufacturer during the school year if repairs are needed.** Blair Academy provides support for students connecting to the school network and preliminary troubleshooting of computer problems. However, we do not repair computers, and there is no local facility in Blairstown to do so.

**Q.** Is the Internet on all night?

**A.** **Freshman and sophomore Internet access is disabled from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.** Juniors are allowed to use the Internet until midnight. At the discretion of the Head of School, seniors are afforded 24-hour Internet access in the spring term, as they prepare to transition to a college environment.

**Q.** Are cell phones allowed?

**A.** **Students are encouraged to have cell phones.** However, the School sets limits on when and where students are allowed to talk on a cell phone, limits which are described to them at the beginning of the year. The School encourages students to focus on interacting with other members of the community at the appropriate times.

**Q.** Do you block any web sites?

**A.** **We filter pornographic and gambling web sites.** We are not able to effectively monitor the use of each student, or set special policies which limit access for individual students. Occasionally, when concerns arise about a student spending too much time on the Internet, we will turn off Internet access for that student for a brief period of time. In these instances, the student's advisor and housemaster are both involved in working with the student to establish healthy patterns.

**Q.** What if I have more questions?

**A.** Please email all questions to [tech@blair.edu](mailto:tech@blair.edu).