# CDS Laptop Program FAQs

***How does the high school laptop program serve the overall mission of the school and vision it has for its students?***

Covenant Day School is committed to the type of instruction that equips students with essential digital-age skills across all curricular areas to be "salt and light" for Christ in a globally and digitally interconnected world. Students will be challenged to use technology and information to think redemptively and to solve problems effectively and efficiently. Teachers, as chief learners, will be effective as they design, implement, and assess learning experiences to engage students and improve learning; enrich professional practice, and provide positive models for students, colleagues, and the community.

Technology is a pivotal teaching and learning tool that, in the hands of competent teachers and engaged learners, broadens and deepens our capacity to focus on explicitly preparing students for college, career and life as ambassadors for Christ in a 21$^{st}$ Century world.

***What is the high school's philosophy concerning the use of technology in the classroom?***

- In order to understand the following core beliefs, **effective use** of technology is that which provides collaborative opportunities, student engagement, meaningful and timely feedback, organization, knowledge accessibility, and desired efficiency.  Simple substitution from paper or material form to a screen is not an effective use by definition, although it can certainly be acceptable.  Furthermore, effective use of technology requires teacher planning which suits the technology activity to the learning goal and supervision which minimizes student distraction.
- Creativity and engagement can increase with the **effective use** of technology.
- Communication and active collaboration are enhanced with the **effective use** of technology.
- Critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills increase with the **effective use** of technology.
- Research and information fluency skills are taught comprehensively with the **effective use** of technology.
- Digital citizenship skills, informed by a Biblical world and life view, and their relevancy, increase with the **effective modeling and use** of technology.
- Technology operations and concepts are best learned in context through project- and inquiry-based learning rather than teacher direct instruction/lecture combined with passive notetaking.

***How does CDS view the body of research on the use of technology in schools?***

The following are important bullets to consider when answering this broad, but important question:

- Research on the use of technology in education is a relatively new field
- Like all fields of research, this kind of research is influenced by human agenda
- Social science research (e.g. in education) is often about correlation and relationship, not about causation.  This is particularly true when there are so many factors which impact classroom

learning. Unfortunately, correlations, if they genuinely exist, can be stated in such a way which sounds causal.

- It is important to distinguish between good research, bad research, and mere opinion.
- There is research which seems to support the effective use of technology as helpful for student learning. There is research which seems to support the non-effectiveness of technology in the classroom.
- We are interested in excellent research methodologies which support specific, and effective use of technologies which enhance student learning. We are interested in intentionally abandoning technology uses which have no proven effectiveness for enhancing learning.
- Parents interested in discussing research further should consult with the principal.

### What are the inevitable and inherent risks and dangers of using technology (laptop or smartphones), particularly in an undiscerning, undisciplined way?

- Student Distraction
- Decreased face-to-face opportunities, stunted social skill development, or worse, social isolation
- Video Game and/or internet addiction
- Physical symptoms related to eyesight or neck muscles
- Immoral content choice
- Cyberbullying
- Poor stewardship of time
- Operational headaches
- Concentration affected by multi-tasking; prolonged study time
- Difficulty practicing or valuing the discipline of solitude
- Getting sleep/rest
- Loss of civility
- Blind acceptance of shoddy information or data

All of these risks can seem daunting and overwhelming. The role of parents and the school in guiding students to use technology wisely is of paramount importance in the maturation of students.

### Why do we need a 1 to 1 program?

We believe that a 1 to 1 program ultimately serves our mission for students to be "salt and light" for Christ in a globally and digitally interconnected world. The 1 to 1 program at CDS serves as a critical vehicle for training and equipping students to "be in the world" (e.g. technologically literate), but not "of the world" (e.g. victim to the dangers and risks).

Because the effective use of technology is integral to our mission, it is important to consider the student to device ratio necessary for a quality instructional program. CDS believes the 1 to 1 ratio is essential for a quality instructional program, when delivered by competent, trained teachers to engaged learners. This ratio can be accomplished by either personally owned devices OR classroom sets which are accompanied by student home computers. The decision for the former and to require ownership is informed by the practical realities of the classroom (which are significant), financial factors, and the devices available on the market.

### In practical terms, how are teachers using laptops in the classroom? How are they NOT?

CDS teachers…..

- Commit to growing in their effective use of technology
- Write effective use of technology into lesson plans
- Supervise students to prevent distraction
- Circulate among students during technology activities to provide supervision and accountability
- Consider alternate seating arrangements during technology activities
- Allow for paper notetaking and require it when a student misuses a laptop
- Explain to parents how these practices are manifest in their courses
- Explicitly state to students when homework does and does not require technology

CDS teachers do not…..

- Teach without regular exposure to student screens
- Allow passive use of technology that is unplanned
- Prescribe the use of technology when it doesn't meet the definitions of "effective use"

### *How much time are students spending on laptop screens during the day at school?*

- High school students at Covenant Day spend more than half their classroom time with the laptop put away.
- Approximately 20-30% of classroom time is spent on planned and purposeful activities designed by the teacher.
- Approximately 10-20% of classroom time has been spent with passive activities like notetaking. Some students must take their notes on laptops due to learning or organizational challenges, but no students are required to take notes on laptops; many do so by hand.
- Laptops are used often in study halls.
- While many textbooks have online versions, our students have hard and soft copies of books and novels for use at school and home.

### *How is student behavior managed in the classroom?*

- Student smartphones and laptops may be taken by the teacher and given to the assistant principal when used for anything other than a planned activity
- Teachers exercise reasonable supervisory measures to prevent student distraction
- Students may eventually lose smartphone or laptop privileges if irresponsible use continues

### *What protective measures are in place on laptops to prevent exposure to inappropriate content?*

- The wireless student network is protected by an institutional filter which is continually safeguarding against inappropriate content.
- Student laptops are not protected if connected to another wireless network.  This is true for the student's own home, while off campus, and if they bypass our network at school using their smartphone.  We encourage the use of products like Net Nanny, Safe Eyes, Covenant Eyes, and Bark for internet protection at home or off campus.
- While at school, students are not allowed to use their smartphones to create hotspots and internet access on their laptops for themselves.  Doing so is a serious breach of the rules and

does carry consequences.  Parents with special concerns regarding content exposure, gaming, social media distraction, etc., are encouraged to have their child leave their smartphone at home or in their car during the day.