

Laptop Requirements 2019/20

Suggestions to consider when purchasing a laptop for your child/children

Is your child entering Grade 5 or Grade 12?

This has an impact on the size and weight of the laptop you consider. A small child in Grade 5 should not carry around a heavy laptop, so consider smaller lighter models, such as a MacBook Air, or a Surface laptop.

What are your child's interests? If your child will only be using the laptop for typing notes, creating spreadsheets, writing essays, and researching, a powerful laptop is unnecessary. If your child enjoys working with Photoshop or playing games, you might consider something a little higher-end.

How much storage space do we need?

Many people get confused between storage capacity and RAM. RAM is usually measured in GB, whereas storage will be measured in hundreds of GB. Laptops have adequate storage capacity, with 128 GB of storage; however, 256 GB or more allows for more video editing, photographs, songs and movies.

Which processor is better? This is a question of preference, as there is no correct answer. Intel chips are preferred; however, they tend to be slightly more expensive than AMD. Currently, Intel chips come in three tiers: consider i3 for entry level (least expensive), i5 for mid-range (balance of speed and value), and i7 for pure power. M processors are another option. Although they do not perform quite well as full "i" processors, they are designed to extend battery life.

How much RAM does the laptop need?

Assuming the laptop is running a new processor (64bit), a minimum would be 4 GB. If your child intends on processing video and editing photographs, 8 GB or more would be suitable.

Which brand of laptop should I buy? Again, this is a matter of preference. The school buys Microsoft Surface laptops and tablets as well as Macs. Speak with friends and other Meadowridge families for their opinions.

Should I buy the extended warranty?

Some laptops come with a 3-year warranty while others only come with one. Purchasing an extended warranty that covers everything from drops to spills is another option. When making your decision, consider asking yourself, "If I had to replace this computer in XX months (years) would I be frustrated because I didn't buy the warranty?". You may also consider leveraging the extended warranty on your credit card. Check with your bank because many credit cards double the warranty on electronics.

Do I buy Windows or Mac? There is no correct answer as it depends on the individual and their learning style. Support for laptops can only be provided for English operating systems. Students will receive support for any version of Windows or OSX (Mac). Microsoft offers discounts on their products for students. For more information, please contact the IT Department.

Do I need any other software? To improve communication with their teachers, students must submit work that is supported by the Microsoft Office suite. Because we are members of ERAC, students can download and install the Microsoft Office suite for free. If students use their Meadowridge credentials when logging into Office 365, they will have access to the software. Don't forget the anti-virus - even for the Macs! Popular companies are Symantec (Norton), McAfee, Kaspersky and AVG.

Can my child use an iPad or other tablet?

iPads can certainly be used for composing emails, surfing the web, and other ways of consuming information; however, they begin to show limitations, especially with older students, when it comes to creating longer pieces of written text, and when tasks become more complex. Your child will also have limitations with required software at older grades. Your child is welcome to bring an iPad as a second screen, or even third screen.

What else do I need? Don't underestimate the value in a good laptop bag. The laptop will be transported to and from school every day and will surely get bumped along the way.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our IT Department at 604.467.4444.