

Computer/Device Purchase Guidance – SY 25-26

Rochambeau, French International School

At Rochambeau, our student device protocol is as follows:

GS – CM1:	iPads (Stay at School) ¹
CM2:	Chromebooks (Stay at School – Stylus/Touch enabled) ²
6eme – 3eme:	Chromebooks (Travel – Home/School - Stylus/Touch enabled) ³
2nde – Terminale:	Bring your own device (BYOD)

Rochambeau is a platform agnostic school, supporting all computing platforms equally. As students' progress in our educational program, we recommend the use of computing devices over the use of tablets as a primary device.

For parents of 2nde through Terminale or families looking to provide computer access to their children at home, here are some things you should consider if/when you are in the market to purchase a new device.

Factors to consider:

1. Is this device going back and forth to school? (weight)
2. How much time will this device be used each day? (weight/screen size/battery life)
3. Does your child have advanced skills they will be exploring on the device? (video editing, advanced image editing or coding, 3D design or rendering)? (Performance, screen size)
4. How long should the computer be used before considering a replacement? (performance/specifications, grade level)
5. Do you predominantly use one platform or another at home? (Mac vs. PC vs. Chromebook – support, software purchases, etc.)
6. Larger computers are generally cheaper because they are less popular, but they weigh more, however, gaming laptops, thin/light OR workstation-level laptops are the opposite (cost more)
7. Computing platforms don't matter as much these days. What matters most is software compatibility/availability – Is there something your child needs to use that **ONLY** exists on one platform or another?
8. If you have different types of computers at home, support is typically handled through the manufacturer or third-party service (Apple, HP, Lenovo, for example or via Microcenter/Best Buy Geek Squad, etc.) – If you are using a single platform at home, consider the implications of adding a different one. Many families have a variety of devices at home (Mac/PC/iOS/ChromeOS).
9. Generally speaking, newer processors, with increased RAM (16GB or more) and larger hard drives, will last longer, but will also be more expensive.
10. Average lifespan of a computer is 2.5-4 years (can be longer or shorter on some platforms and/or with advanced processor/RAM/hard drive configurations). NOTE: There is a relationship between cost, platform, and longevity
11. Business-class computers will typically last longer than consumer models and may have better warranties (up to 3 years vs. 1 year)

¹ Device assigned for in-school use. Additional uses may be allowed under certain circumstances

² Device assigned for in-school use. Additional uses may be allowed under certain circumstances – May change in the future

³ Devices travel to and from school daily.

12. Where possible, try to avoid the three months to a year of a brand-new technology (processors, operating systems, etc.) as they may have bugs, complicated updates, or other issues/growing pains that you will need to work through
13. We are not going to talk about desktops here, but the specifications noted below will also apply. There are other features in desktops like video cards, etc. to consider if it will be used for more advanced tasks (gaming, programming, graphic design, video editing etc.)
14. Touch screens and 2-in-1 computers are more common now for PCs. Many are stylus enable as well – Small increase in price for more engaging input options
15. If you need a larger screen, consider purchasing an external monitor for your home OR purchased a laptop above 15.6”
16. Neural Processing Units (for speeding up AI processing) are becoming more prevalent in PCs and Chromebooks. Watch for these features

Specifications you should look for in a new computer:

Processors:

Apple: M-series processors (current processor is the M4) on 13-inch MacBook Air/Pro/iMac 24” (desktop), M4/M4 Pro/ M4 Max for MacBook Pros

Chromebook: Intel Celeron/Pentium/N-series, Intel Core and AMD Ryzen Processors (higher-end Chromebooks)

PC: Core Ultra or Gen 14s can be found easily on the market

Intel Core Processors - <https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/products/details/processors.html> - We recommend an i5 or faster OR AMD Ryzen AI Pro, Pro or 6000 Series or higher -

https://www.amd.com/en/products/processors/laptop/ryzen-for-business.html?gad_source=1&gclid=Ci0KCCQiwahr6_BhD4ARIsAH1YdjD3Q3OFitPu4quio3WPBbWzbxDyBDBldDx5e7Uog7rWPLyyn9II9mAAh1FEALw_wcB

RAM:

Apple: 8-16 GB of RAM (NOTE: RAM is an expensive upgrade on all Apple Products)

Chromebooks: 4-8 GB of RAM (NOTE: Average Chromebooks come with 4GB)

PC: 16 GB of RAM (NOTE: Some manufacturers charge quite a lot for RAM) – 16GB is fairly common and increases the longevity of the computer

Hard Drive Capacity:

Apple: 256-512 GB (Consider storage in relation to your cloud storage)

Chromebook: 32-128GB (NOTE: As this is a Google device, most of the files are stored in the cloud, higher-end Chromebooks will have storage like a PC/Mac 128-256GB)

PC: 256-512 GB (higher-end machines may come with 1-2 TBs)

Screen Size (Size should be based on use):

Apple: 13.3” - 16” (13” is “standard”)

Chromebook: 11”- 15.6” (11” – 13.3” is “standard”)

PC: 13.3”- 17.3” (13.3” – 14.1” is “standard”)

Typical price range for a new computer⁴

NOTE: Lower-priced computers will usually mean shorter lifespan. Price ranges represent the average price of a computer you would buy a student.

Apple: \$1000-\$1800

⁴ Tariffs are going to have a large impact on computer prices – please consider that when consider your next computer purchase

Chromebook: \$200-\$900⁵
PC: \$700-\$1400⁶

Examples:

Apple:

MacBook Air (4 is the current standard – Some M2/3 can still be found but are a few years old now – great prices)
– 13” OR 15”
MacBook Pro 13” OR 14” (M4 is the current standard)

Chromebook (Chromebook Plus devices are now on the market):

Acer Chromebook Spin Plus– Various Sizes and Models with (314, 514, 515, 714, etc.)
Lenovo 500e (our current device) (12.2”) – Current model is a 500e Gen 4
Lenovo Flex 3/5 Chromebook
HP Chromebook x360 14c
HP Elite Dragonfly Chromebook
Lenovo Chromebook Duet (3 or 5)
Asus Chromebook Plus CX34 (2025)

PC:

Dell XPS 13/15
Asus Zenbook 14 OLED/Asus ProArt
HP Envy 13
HP Spectre x360 – Various Sizes/Versions
Microsoft Surface Pro and Surface Laptop (Age, features, and version will affect price dramatically) Newest versions are more adept at AI processing
Lenovo X1 Carbon
Lenovo ThinkPad X9 14

Best Places to Purchase:

Apple:

Microcenter
Amazon
Best Buy⁷
Apple (usually have deals for students in the mid to late summer – Generally college)

Chromebook:

Microcenter
Amazon
Best Buy
Directly from the Manufacturer⁸
Costco⁹

PC:

Microcenter
Amazon

⁵ Chromebooks are based on Google technology and are added here as it is a platform that we use at the school. It doesn't run programs like a traditional computer (Mac/PC). Higher priced Chromebooks should be looked at carefully for features/performance

⁶ More if you are looking for more specialized computers with advanced screens, wireless, processors, storage, etc.

⁷ Microcenter and Best Buy routinely have sales on Apple Products, where Apple does not

⁸ Manufacturers typically will have regular seasonal and Back-to-School sales and may also offer student discounts

⁹ Costco, on PC products typically offers a free, extended warranty on computers

Best Buy
Directly from the Manufacturer¹⁰
Costco¹¹

Links to Sale Sites (may stop working when sales/promotions are over):

Best Buy (will change as we get closer to the start of School (Mid-July through parts of August):
<https://www.bestbuy.com/site/back-to-school/parent-hub/pcmcat1530201105801.c?id=pcmcat1530201105801>

Microcenter:
https://www.microcenter.com/search/search_results.aspx?Ntt=5206&Ntk=Adv&N=4294967288

Apple:
No Current K-12 promotions – If you have a child in college, you can buy through those promotions:
<https://www.apple.com/us-edu/shop/back-to-school>

Costco:
<https://www.costco.com/laptops.html?keyword=OFF>

NOTE: If you have a child enrolled at a university, their bookstores also offer discounts to students and should be considered for students that may be graduating or for an additional home computer.

Final Thoughts

Purchasing a new device for your child or family is an important decision. Given the current market, things are about to get more expensive

When are the best times to buy a computer?

- January
- Holiday weekends
- Back-to-school season
- Black Friday
- Small Business Saturday
- Cyber Monday

Refurbished computers are also available at places like Micro Center and Amazon. These computers will typically come with a 90-day to 1 year warranty and may offer much more computer for a lot less money. You can typically save between 20-40%.

Warranties on computers are tricky and usually add between \$150-\$400 to the price, depending on features like accidental damage coverage, battery coverage, data backup/protection etc. Check the base warranty on the device you are considering (90-days to 1 year; three years are sometimes standard for higher-end or business computers). There are dozens of devices out there to choose from so focus on specifications, needs, price, and online reviews to provide some guidance as you work through this process. Make sure to invest in great accessories (padded bags/backpacks/cases) to ensure a long and happy life with your new device!

¹⁰ Manufacturers typically will have regular seasonal and Back-to-School sales and may also offer student discounts

¹¹ Costco, on PC products typically offers a free, extended warranty on computers