

St. George's High School Laptop Program

FAQ

How do students use laptops in the classroom?

Most courses in the high school have students use the laptop on a regular basis for note taking, data collection, research, data analysis, graphing, and writing assignments. Teachers integrate the laptops when and where it is appropriate to facilitate the child-centred approach to instruction in order to lead to enhanced student-learning. In addition, the variety of media-based software installed on the computers lead to enhanced learning and creativity (i.e. video creation, long-distance video-conferencing, etc.). Accessibility and portability leads to “anytime, anywhere-learning”. Students are given a brief introduction at the start of the school year with the basics of use and care of the computer, as well as Computer Science classes in junior grades.

How does the School encourage responsible use of the laptops and the Internet?

The school encourages an atmosphere of responsibility, and we, as in all situations, expect students to use good judgment. Students must be aware of the Responsible Use Policy (RUP) found in the Student Handbook, and they are held accountable if they violate any of the rules outlined in the RUP. The school uses Web filters to prevent students from accessing inappropriate web sites, social media and games. Responsible digital citizenship is an important part of the curriculum.

Why were Apple MacBook Air laptops selected?

13-inch MacBook Air laptops were selected for their extremely lightweight design, as well as their completely solid-state interior which provides much better reliability. Their successful use at St. George's over many years has also confirmed our decision.

Were tablets such as the iPad considered?

The school considered iPads, Windows-based laptops and tablets, MacBooks, and Chromebooks. The disadvantages of switching to tablets included limited software and a lack of a comprehensive file management system. The general consensus was that tablets are a great alternative for those who previously did not have a one-to-one laptop but that it would be a step down for our students to use as a primary machine who are used to the robust computing power of a laptop.

How does the laptop lease work?

Students entering Grades 7-9 will receive a laptop that may be new or used, depending on the cycle of the lease. While they may have some slight cosmetic blemishes, they have all been inspected for internal damage and passed through diagnostics to ensure that they are completely functional for school purposes.

All students entering Grade 10 will receive a new laptop. Upon graduation, they will have the ability to keep the laptop (a small fee may be required) for use in post-secondary (note that the laptop will be reset to factory-settings for legal purposes before they take it). Students moving on to Grade 12 will continue to use the school laptop and keep it following completion of the program.

Will students be allowed to install their own software?

There is a repository of approved applications available for students to install as needed. They may not install software outside of this list. If there is an application that is required for classwork or a school-run co-curricular activity, they should ask their teacher to request it of the Technology Department.

Will we be able to connect to our home network and printer?

Yes. However, our school technicians will not be able to assist you with this process.

Wouldn't it be cheaper for me to just buy my own computer for my child?

No. It is a misconception that it is more cost-effective to purchase your own computer or bring an older one in to use at school. Below are some of the reasons why.

1. There are no up-front costs (purchasing a MacBook Air with AppleCare+ and tax can cost upwards of \$1,700).
2. Purchasing a new computer in Grade 7 will mean that by the time your child reaches graduation, the computer will be 5 years old, which can mean a lot of wear-and-tear and outdated technology.
3. Because the Grade 7-9 computers are leased and returned to Apple, the cost is significantly lower than the purchase price spread over three years.
4. Laptops purchased individually are not covered by our repair program, potentially resulting in very expensive repairs (a broken screen can be \$600) and lengthy downtimes for the student.
5. Software costs would be much higher, as the school cannot install educational licenses on non-school-owned computers.

What if the laptop is accidentally damaged? What is covered in the warranty?

It is the student's responsibility to ensure the computer remains in good working order. It is therefore highly recommended that a strong protective case be purchased.

If applicable, an electronic invoice will be sent to parents in the amount of the AppleCare+ deductible, which must be paid prior to returning the laptop to the student. Computers that are stolen or lost will require full replacement cost of the computer from parents, as determined by St. George's School of Montreal.

What if my child loses his laptop? Do I need to insure the laptop?

In the event of theft or loss, parents are responsible for the full replacement cost of the computer as determined by St. George's School. Some parents choose to include the laptop in their home insurance to cover these costs.

Whom do students contact for technical support?

St. George's is an Apple-certified Self-Service Provider and provides maintenance for the laptops. The laptops should not be taken elsewhere for repair (including the Apple Store) without the express consent of the Technology Department. Note that any outside service may result in the voiding of the manufacturer's warranty.

What is included in the Technology fee?

Each student is charged a technology fee which not only covers the cost of the leased computers but also software programs and licenses, dedicated on-site support, infrastructure costs such as servers, internet and wireless connectivity, and other technological services and products used within St. George's. This fee is set annually and is a separate line item on your invoice.

Why are technology fees different from school to school?

It is very hard to compare technology fees across schools as there is no consistency as to what is included in the charge. For example, some schools include tech support in their numbers while others do not. Also, because a large portion of technology costs are fixed, a school with a large student population over which to spread these costs will appear to have lower fees per student.