

Holy Trinity Church of England Junior School

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Exemplary education for all, through God's amazing grace

Learning, Integrity, Dignity, Love, Confidence.

Learning together, as we journey with God in Love, we act with Integrity, treat others with Dignity and grow in Confidence.

17th of March 2021

Dear Parents,

Re. Chromebook initiative

As you know, our governors and staff are working for exemplary education for all of the children in our school.

The background to the initiative

Prior to March 2020, we were developing children's skills within the IT curriculum, with a mixture of pcs, Chromebooks and laptops. These were being transported around the building in trolleys or carriers, and classes were *taking turns* to use them, to learn specific computing skills in the national curriculum. This took significant time and planning, to make sure they were carried safely and charged for each class. After learning the skills, the hardware was also being used for cross curricular links, such as interesting ways to record work curriculum topics, to present work or access information.

Technology moves on quickly and there has been a rapid development of possibilities of ways to use technology to help to *inform learning* and help children to *retain learning*. As a school, when we decided not to join any multi-academy trust in 2019, governors decided instead to spend money on technology, to allow more access to the hardware for the children.

Then Lockdown 1 happened. Some schools were able to move their whole school to online learning straight away and some (like us) had to make the best of the situation and make use of their websites to post work, make printed work available and make phone calls to stay in touch! In that lockdown, lots of our children needed work to be printed each week. Soon after that lockdown began, we started to explore how other schools, with more technology available, had been able to achieve their online learning. From that fact finding and due to the vision of the school, we wanted to be able to give everyone the same access to technology, which is why we decided to rent a Chromebook for every child. We committed to that order in July 2020 and unfortunately, even though we ordered the Chromebooks in the summer, a third of the order arrived in December 2020 and the rest arrived on the 12th of February 2021. By the time the whole of our school order had arrived, we had mustered and lent out 56 of our previously held Chromebooks (which had already had extensive use in school) and 34 which we were able to ask for as an emergency, from the DfE, in these exceptional circumstances. Meanwhile, thankfully, in school, the key worker children and staff were able to make use of the new Chromebooks delivered before Christmas. We allowed the key worker children to use the new Chromebooks because those Chromebooks stayed in school overnight.

This extra-ordinary year has developed as it has and we now know how invaluable and helpful the Chromebooks are for children's learning! They have enabled essential communication between children and teachers, enabled clear learning structure to be given, mechanisms to set and return work, and enabled the children to practise key skills independently such as spelling, reading and Maths. They have even enabled mentoring and individualised support, where helpful or needed. So, now what?

Will we need Chromebooks in the future? What for?

Yes, we will need the Chromebooks. We are planning to make use of the Chromebooks regularly, both in school and at home. We will be using the Chromebooks to improve key skills, such as reading, spelling and Maths, as well as develop a range of transferable computing skills. These discrete computing skills will be used in the growth of knowledge and presentation of knowledge in foundations subjects as well.

We don't need a school Chromebook; we have enough devices at home.

Having had Lockdown 3, whilst 25% of the children needed to borrow a Chromebook from school, 75% of the school were able to function on some other kind of device at home. This may have been a phone, pc, Chromebook of their own, or laptop. This may have been shared with another family member or may not have been.

We would like to be able to move ahead with our initiative of each child having the same Chromebook, over the next three years. We would like each child to be able to use their own Chromebook, both at home and in school, on a regular basis. This will be for a range of purposes, but we will also need to ensure that children can write and meet the requirement of the rest of the national curriculum, e.g. art and D.T.

The great thing about all of the new Chromebooks is that the children can not only benefit from all the attributes outlined above, but it also means that the children can all be taught the same skills on the same devices. It will be so much easier for each child to have their own Chromebook available in school, which they can use when needed, instead of booking a time for use each week and having to transport them round the building! Additionally, in leasing Chromebooks via Cygnet, who manage our school internet safety, they can guarantee online safety for all of our children who use these devices.

Although we have yet to assess all the learning that has happened, we already know that we want to be able to use Chromebooks for the children's future retention of knowledge. Please be assured that we will choose carefully what they will be used for and will continue to value holistic education.

Costs to school

This is a large cost for the school – approximately £27,000 per year (approximately £9000 per term); and we now know that the Chromebooks are essential for up to date education. The governors and staff are committed to our vision of 'exemplary education for all'.

Asking for contributions to the costs

We would like every child to have one of the new Chromebooks. We would also, however, like to ask for a contribution per child, per term, for the lease of the Chromebook, each year. We think that asking for a contribution of £10 per term (per child) is very reasonable. In future, when we have a full academic year, parents may wish to pay the £30 all at once in September, for the academic year, or may wish to pay £10 per term, if that is easier to manage financially. If everyone makes that contribution, we get back approximately £3600 per term and approximately £10,800 per year, which would be a very welcome help to our budget! Having had additional costs this year due to COVID, this is very significant. To be clear, the government have spoken of giving money to schools. They have given money and this is specifically to be used to fund interventions for catching up gaps in learning, which we are assessing again now. We will include our use of Chromebooks in the planning for this, but Chromebooks will not meet all the needs - by far. Each pound that you give helps invest in your child's education and the education of others across the school.

For the rest of this academic year, there is only one term and two weeks. We would like to ask that parents make a £10 contribution for the rest of the academic year. We would like to ask for the contribution to be made as soon as possible. As the contributions are received, we will then give out the new Chromebooks for the rest of the academic year, collecting them all back in near the end of the summer term 2021, to be checked by Cygnet and updated where necessary.

We think that **the £10 per term** is a very reasonable ask for **every family**. However, if your child qualifies for free school meals and you are not able to pay the monies, please contact the school office. No child will miss

out on the opportunity for financial reasons but without parental support we will be unable to sustain the costs involved long term.

This £10 contribution per term will equip your child with: The Chromebook; a case; a wifi filter system on the Chromebook, which will work through home wifi and is as robust as the one we use at school (WebScreen 3); insurance and access to educational software. This can be paid via [ParentPay](#).

Families have already signed the **acceptable use policy**. However, since the first lockdown, we have revised **the Chromebook agreement**, so this will need to be signed again by all families. Both must be signed before any Chromebook can go home with any child.

On-line safety

There are a number of measures we have in place to ensure the children are safe when working online using their Chromebook: (for more information please see our online safety policy).

- Children can only log in with their Holy Trinity domain name. This allows us to monitor internet usage and our domain will be managed by our IT support, Cygnet.
- The Chromebook settings are set to the highest safety level. When in school, the filter system, Web Server 3, offers the correct protection level and internet usage is monitored by staff.
- The Chromebook is set to use *LGfL home filter* system which offers the highest level of protection at home. As per the Acceptable Use Policy, we also ask parents to monitor their child's internet usage at home.
- The Chromebook is controllable by Cygnet and can be 'blocked from usage' if required.

Chromebook user agreement

Based on our experiences of Lockdown, we have updated our Chromebook user agreement, so all families must review this and agree to the updated one please– click [here](#) to view and accept or by visiting <https://forms.gle/Q5vNPG5U5xippWW78>

Most families have already signed our acceptable use policy (AUP) – those who haven't must do so.

If you have any queries, please email the office. We will be happy to answer.

Yours Sincerely,



Mrs S Gruffydd
Headteacher