

# The New School at West Heath

## Policy on Student Individual Laptop Computers and other electronic aids

### Introduction

Laptop computers are an expensive and valuable resource with the potential for great benefit to the individual students who use them. They are particularly helpful for those students who

- Find the process of writing by hand difficult
- Need the use of supporting software to help record their work
- Require considerable access to the internet or other electronic storage such as CD ROMs
- Do not have access to a personal computer at home.

However laptops also present opportunities for misuse and harm. Additionally they present significant challenges for those students who experience with difficulties with taking personal responsibility or personal organisation. Clear arrangements are essential and this policy sets them out. This policy has been written in the light of accumulated experience. It is a requirement of the New School that these students and their parents sign to say they agree to and accept the conditions of use outlined in what follows.

### Aims & Objectives

The aim of this policy is to provide a clear statement of the responsibilities and obligations of those parties who have an interest in laptop computers for individual students - whether funder, purchaser, user or supervisor.

### Strategies

Different arrangements are required according to the particular source of funding. These are set out in the table below.

Issue	Local Education Authority Funded	Parent Funded	School Funded for Senior Staff
<b>Purchase</b>	In order to ensure that the most appropriate machine is purchased the School will recommend a particular model and supplier working to a spending limit agreed with the	Parents to make own arrangement. The School is willing to provide advice to parents on appropriate models and reliable suppliers.	The School

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	Local Education Authority. After approval by the LEA the school will place the order. In order to enable the LEA to reclaim the VAT the supplier will invoice the LEA direct but the machine will be delivered to the New School.		
<b>Ownership</b>	Some LEAs fund laptop computers for students when this is specified on the Statement of Special Educational Needs. In such cases the computer remains the property of the <b>local educational authority</b> . When the student leaves our school the authority will be asked to state whether the machine may transfer with the student (say to college) or be returned to the LEA.	Laptops funded by parents remain the property of the <b>parents</b> (or student if they wish). As for all expensive items they are brought into school entirely at the owner's risk and agreement from a member of the Senior Management must be sought first.	Laptops purchased by the school remain an asset of the <b>school</b> . Generally speaking these laptops are provided for shared staff use. They may exceptionally be allocated on a temporary basis to particular students or members of staff. Their use by students is only occasional and occurs when a desktop machine is unavailable.
<b>Commissioning, including installation of authorised software</b>	The School	Parents	The School
<b>Location and removal</b>	Laptops may be taken to and from school and be used within a variety of	Laptops may be taken to and from school and be used within a variety of	Laptops may be used within a variety of locations within the school. Their

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	<p>locations within the school. Their use within lessons should always be with the supervision and direction of the teacher. Proper use should be made of the protective case with handle and shoulder strap. Due caution should be taken when carrying them around.</p>	<p>locations within the school. Their use within lessons should always be with the supervision and direction of the teacher. Proper use should be made of the protective case with handle and shoulder strap. Due caution should be taken when carrying them around.</p>	<p>use within lessons should always be with the supervision and direction of the teacher. Proper use should be made of the protective case with handle and shoulder strap. Due caution should be taken when carrying them around. School laptops should remain in school. Only very exceptionally will permission be granted for a laptop to be taken home.</p>
<b>Insurance liability</b>	<p>While in school, the school accepts liability for the repair and replacement of these machines should they be stolen, lost or damaged. If the machine is lost or damaged at home, this cost will be born by the parents / carers either directly or as part of the home insurance policy cover.</p>	<p>Parents of the student - usually as an additional item on their home contents insurance. The school can accept no liability for these items, which should not be brought into school unless this is agreed to.</p>	<p>The school is liable for the repair and replacement of these machines should they be stolen, lost or damaged.</p>
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>	<p>The School will fund all repairs including accidental damage and fair wear and tea. However, if there</p>	<p>Parents</p>	<p>The school</p>

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	is persistent negligence on the part of the student, restrictions will be placed on the circumstances and occasions when its use will be permitted.		
<b>Warranty issues</b>	Laptops normally have a year's warranty from new. No additional arrangements are usually funded unless the LEA requests this and funds them.	Parents	The school
<b>Use</b>	The designated student only and for educational purposes only with the agreement and supervision of the teacher in school and parents at home. Students do not have the authority to allow other students to use them or to loan them to others.	In school with the relevant teacher's agreement and supervision. Home use is entirely a matter for the parents.	In school only and with the relevant teacher's agreement and supervision.
<b>Safekeeping</b>	<u>School Day:</u> The student is responsible for the safe keeping of his / her own laptop. When not required - as for example with a PE lesson, it may be left in the school office. Machines should be signed in and out by the student	The student is responsible for the safe keeping of his / her own laptop. When not required - as for example with a PE lesson, it may be left in the school office. Machines should be signed in and out by the student and they	School laptops are the responsibility of particular teachers who will make their own arrangements for their safekeeping. When not in use they may be stored in the Bursar's office in a lockable cupboard.

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	<p>and they will be kept in a locked cabinet. However, whilst every care will be taken to ensure its safekeeping the school cannot be liable for any loss.</p> <p><u>After school and holidays:</u> Laptops should be returned to the school office for safekeeping. Alternatively they may be taken home for educational use provided that the student and parents are confident that the machine will be looked after safely.</p> <p><i>Note: It will be assumed that a laptop is with the student unless it has been signed into the school office for safekeeping.</i></p>	<p>will be kept in a locked cabinet. However, whilst every care will be taken to ensure its safekeeping the school cannot be liable for any loss.</p>	
<b>Internet</b>	<p>No internet access is permitted at school using students' own laptops. All students may access the world wide web through the school's computers. Parents are responsible for ensuring that any internet access</p>	<p>No internet access is permitted at school using students' own laptops. All students may access the world wide web through the school's computers. Parents are responsible for ensuring that any</p>	<p>Laptops available for students do not normally have internet access. For such purpose a designated desktop machine with appropriate virus protection and internet site filtering arrangements should be used.</p>

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	that occurs at home is properly regulated. They should satisfy themselves about arrangements for virus protection and access to unsuitable sites.	internet access that occurs at home is properly regulated. They should satisfy themselves about arrangements for virus protection and access to unsuitable sites.	
<b>Games</b>	No games apart from approved educational games may be installed.	The installation of games is entirely a matter for parents. However their use is not permitted in school during lessons. Should this become a contentious issue permission to bring the laptop into school will be withdrawn.	No games apart from approved educational games will be installed.
<b>Software</b>	Only approved and properly licensed software may be installed.	It is expected that parents will ensure that software installed will be age appropriate and properly licensed with effective and up to date virus protection software.	Only that approved by the School. Students may not install their own software on these machines.

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<b>Inspection and checks</b>	The School reserves the right at any time to make a check on the software and files installed on any laptop that is in use at School. The student will normally be asked to be present when this is being done. Parents will be consulted if there are any concerns.	The School reserves the right at any time to make a check on the software and files installed on any laptop that is in use at School. Parents will be consulted if there are any concerns. The student will normally be asked to be present when this is being done.	The School reserves the right at any time to make a check on the software and files installed on any laptop that is in use at School.
<b>Back-up of files</b>	Students are expected to make appropriate backup copies of files on floppy disks, memory sticks, CD ROMs and hard copies. This is good practice and students are expected to take responsibility for their own work.	Students are expected to make appropriate backup copies of files on floppy disks, memory sticks, CD ROMs and hard copies. This is good practice and students are expected to take responsibility for their own work.	On those rare occasions when a student has been given special permission to use these machines, students are expected to make appropriate backup copies of files on floppy disks, memory sticks, CD ROMs and hard copies. This is good practice and students are expected to take responsibility for their own work. Students should bear in mind that work saved on the hard drive will not be kept. They should also be aware that other students might have access to their files.
<b>E-mail</b>	Students are	Students are	Not available

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	encouraged to use e-mail to communicate with teachers and to submit homework electronically where this is possible.	encouraged to use e-mail to communicate with teachers and to submit homework electronically where this is possible.	
<b>Other issues</b>	It is expected that parents will provide guidance and supervision about web conferencing and chat rooms. This is not available or permitted at School.	It is expected that parents will provide guidance and supervision about web conferencing and chat rooms. This is not available or permitted at School.	Web conferencing and chat rooms not available.

### Special Circumstances

Laptops are currently only provided for those students who have special funding from their sponsoring authority or their parents. The annual review is the appropriate forum for reviewing the effective use of this provision and the ongoing need. It is entirely within the brief of this meeting that a recommendation be made to withdraw this additional element of provision should this be judged to be appropriate.

In the case of misuse, the Principal has the right to suspend the use of a laptop computer pending an investigation or a review meeting.

<b>Laptop Computers for Students</b>	
<b>This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:</b> Curriculum, SEN	
<b>Appendices:</b> Parental Consent form	
<b>Monitoring of Policy Implementation is the responsibility of:</b> The Senior Leadership Team	
<b>Lead responsibility:</b>	Vice Principal - Education
<b>Relevant Legislation:</b>	To be detailed in the next release
<b>Annual Policy Review Required:</b>	Yes / No
<b>Approved by:</b> S.S. Committee	<b>Date approved:</b> 29/09/04
<b>Ratified by:</b> Trustees	<b>Date ratified:</b> 11/2004
<b>Reviewed – no changes</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Reviewed – with revisions</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Revision No.</b>	1.2

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### Student Individual Laptop Computers: Parental Consent Form

*Students will only be permitted to take home laptops funded by the LEA or school when this form has been signed.*

I have read and accept the above policy.

Please tick a. or b. if the laptop does not belong to you.

a. I accept liability for use at home or have made insurance arrangements.

b. I do not wish my child to use this equipment at home.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent** \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and accept the above policy

I will use my laptop under the direction of my teachers.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student**

\_\_\_\_\_

**This copy should to be retained by the parents for reference**

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### Student Individual Laptop Computers: Parental Consent Form

I have read and accept the above policy.  
Please tick a. or b. if the laptop does not belong to you.  
c. I accept liability for use at home or have made insurance arrangements.   
d. I do not wish my child to use this equipment at home.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent**

I have read and accept the above policy  
I will use my laptop under the direction of my teachers.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student**

**This copy should be returned to the school office prior to the release of the laptop computer**

# Alpha Smart Keyboards.

## Information Sheet for Parents, Teachers and Students

These machines have been purchased for use by students who have difficulty writing by hand and who find it easier to type.

They are not fully functional laptops. They are text entry devices with an integrated word processor and spreadsheet. Students use them to enter their text (a relatively time consuming process) which they then upload to a classroom PC using a USB cable for backing up, formatting, merging, and final printing.

Our experience has shown that for this purpose it has a number of advantages over a laptop:

- ◆ They are instantly bootable - 5 seconds. In practice, a student with a laptop takes about five minutes to set up in a lesson and nearly as long at the end packing away.
- ◆ They are easier to use.
- ◆ They are light and easily portable.
- ◆ They are extremely reliable.
- ◆ They are robust less vulnerable to accidental damage.
- ◆ The potential for misuse is negligible whereas laptops with other programs installed represent a potential distraction.
- ◆ Laptops are expensive to repair.

Combined with the associated use of a shared classroom PC to complete work this represents a really useful tool. A recent survey showed that 95% of our students had access to a PC at home with Microsoft Office and Internet access. With improved reliability and capacity of storage devices many students take home files begun on the AlphaSmart to complete and develop.

The school has a programme for purchasing these machines for the shared benefit of students who use them responsibly and who keep to the protocols for signing them in and out and taking care of them.

Chris Moffett  
Monday, 09 May 2005