



Shiplake Device Policy 2025-26

Teachers and pupils at Shiplake College make extensive use of online learning for both accessing lesson resources and submitting work.

We have a unified device policy which requires all our new pupils to purchase or rent classroom-ready Microsoft Surface Pro devices through a dedicated website. These devices form part of a comprehensive education toolkit and can be used either as a laptop or as a tablet, which ensures pupils can access learning in an individual and flexible way, all while providing a secure and robust learning environment.

Benefits to pupils and parents:

1. **Hassle-free** – Standardised device bundles are shipped with all the necessary productivity tools so that pupils are ready to learn from day 1.
2. **Digital note-taking** – The devices chosen enable pupils to interact with their work in a more natural way by using a stylus to highlight, annotate and design.
3. **Study notes are always available** – With digital notebooks, pupils will no longer have to worry about leaving folders at home or losing worksheets. Everything is backed up to the cloud and accessible anywhere.
4. **Safeguarding your child** – These are fully managed devices, with web filtering and reporting which ensures our pupils are safe online.
5. **Accessibility** – Feature-rich tools ensure learning is more accessible to all via dictation, reader, on-screen overlays, translators, and much more.

2025-26 Device List:

Parents must order devices through our [online dedicated store](#) which is run and maintained by our partner Easy4U. Please expect to receive communications from them directly once you have completed your order. Here are Easy4U's [FAQs](#) page for further info.

Pupils are required to have a Surface device from the list in the next section with the following accessories:

Keyboard Type Cover: This lightweight detachable keyboard accessory allows pupils to use their devices in laptop mode.

Surface Pen: There is one type of stylus available to purchase through us (Surface Slim Pen 2), but alternative styluses are widely available through retailers.

Rugged protective case: This protective case will make devices more resistant to breakages originating from drops and other incidents.

Note that **our partner Easy4U offers a device insurance plan as part of the device bundle**. The choice to standardise the insurance of pupil devices has been motivated by the value this will deliver to our families. This includes a portal for requesting fixes, accidental damage and theft cover (maximum of 3 claims) at a fixed £50 excess per claim and a loan device guarantee for our pupils to minimise any disruptions in learning arising from devices going out for repair.

Available Device Options:

Recommended Performance: Surface Pro 11, Intel Core Ultra 5, 16GB RAM, 256GB SSD.

Higher Performance: Surface Pro 11, Intel Core Ultra 7, 16GB RAM, 256GB SSD.

Entry-Level Performance:

Lower School pupils: Surface Go 4 for Business, Intel Core i3, 8GB RAM, 128GB SSD
- Please note the Surface Go has a smaller format (only suited for our younger pupils).

Further Information:

Purchasing vs Renting:

Parents needing to distribute their payments can choose the rental option, which requires a refundable four months holding deposit and a direct debit for monthly payments. At the end of the rental period, Easy4U gives parents the option to keep the device in exchange for their deposit.

For Means-Tested Bursary Holders:

- Bursary recipients will be granted a discount on devices that meet the recommended specifications. Note: this discount does not extend to accessories such as keyboards, pens, nor to extended warranties and delivery costs.
- Bursary holders receiving 100% or more assistance will have the cost of their entire device package, including accessories like keyboards, pens, extended warranties and delivery fees, covered by the College.
- A discount code will be issued directly to the parents via email. If you cannot locate your code, please contact Billing@Shiplake.org.uk so it can be reissued. This code must be entered at the time of purchase to apply the discount.

Device Delivery for International Students:

Pupils without a UK delivery address can use the College's address for shipping. The IT department will ensure that the device is delivered to the pupil upon their arrival at the College in September.

FAQs:

If you have any further questions about the policy, please do not hesitate to contact us at Devices@Shiplake.org.uk.

1) My child already owns a Microsoft Surface device, can this be used? OR

2) Can I purchase a Microsoft Surface device myself instead of through the school?

Devices must be bought via our dedicated Easy4U store. We can only accept a Surface Pro device previously purchased externally if it meets the required specifications and we have the consent to wipe it clean to allow us to set it up in line with our safety requirements. Please note that:

1. Easy4U devices will come with a Windows 11 Pro licence, whereas devices bought from retailers generally tend to be sold with Windows 11 Home, which will require us to reinstall the operating system and license it.
2. The readiness of your child's device at the beginning of the term will be dependent on the availability of our (small) IT department. In contrast, all devices purchased through Easy4U will be set up in advance of the start of the academic year.
3. We will not be responsible for backing up any existing data, so the responsibility will be on the users to ensure that their devices are ready to be wiped clean.

3) I've just purchased a new laptop for my child, do I need to buy a new one?

All pupils must have a device from our device list.

4) What is the estimated cost to parents?

All prices can be found online at our dedicated store. Means-tested bursary pupils will receive support in line with their pupil fee discount. For those who are concerned about the upfront costs, please consider the rental option.

5) When will the College next review the device list for pupils?

We are committed to using Surface Pro devices for the foreseeable future. We will review the recommended specifications within the Surface range annually to ensure they are kept up to date. The device list for the academic year 2026-27 will be made available by the beginning of the summer term of 2025-26.

6) Will the College offer support if my child's device is physically damaged?

While the IT department is always open to pupils during lunch and break and should be used in the first instance for minor troubleshooting, Easy4U provides a parent portal to raise requests for fixing damaged devices.

7) How long is the expected shelf life of a device?

Microsoft Surfaces last an average of four to five years. We encourage parents to consider buying the Easy4U Assurance bundle for a similar period to ensure maximum protection of their investment.

8) Your prices are not as discounted as I expected. Can you access a better discount on devices?

The College devices are commercial (Business) devices rather than consumer (Home) devices. These devices come with extra security features and with Windows 11 Pro rather than Home, which allows us to centrally manage the devices and apply security policies remotely. We have benefited from bulk and education discounts to bring the cost of these devices down below the Home device counterparts but sometimes retailers will sell Home devices at very competitive sales prices.

9) What are the advantages of the additional device functionalities for teaching and learning?

The focus for 2025-26 is to extend the use of digital inking, which can be accomplished through Microsoft applications such as OneNote. This feature will only be fully utilised by pupils when using their Surface device and pen. It is, therefore, important that parents ensure pupils arrive at the College each morning with a full kit.

10) How was parental feedback taken into consideration in this new strategy?

We have continuously been surveying parents, teachers and pupils, as well as reviewing the general IT experience onsite to establish many of the key points of our strategy. We have an upcoming survey planned for parents in the academic year of 2025-26.

11) With the price being higher than other laptops, I feel anxious about my child breaking their device. What is your advice?

Easy4U sells the devices with full protection (via their Assurance Bundle), including accidental damage. However, you can also take up additional content insurance as a backup in case you worry your child will exceed Easy4U limit on device fixes.

12) Why has the College chosen Surface Pros instead of... ... other Windows laptops?

Surface Pros make for a very natural digital note-taking experience, which is the key feature of these devices when it comes to classroom use. Feedback received from the parental survey last year indicated that pupils struggled with the organisation of their notes. We are planning to use OneNote for note-taking in the future (once other key productivity tools are fully implemented) to help our pupils with that aspect of their organisation by making notes searchable, accessible from anywhere and fully backed up for peace of mind. Another feature which attracted us to Surface Pros is the use of Windows Hello (facial recognition). This allows pupils to use their devices with the highest levels of authentication security whilst limiting password fatigue. For parents worried about these 2-in-1 devices not feeling like a standard laptop, they will be pleased to know that the Surface Pro 11 comes with a much sturdier keyboard than previous generations and is now fully kitted with mechanical keys, both of which contribute to a robust typing experience.

... Apple laptops?

We did look at all ranges of devices in the market but Apple devices were found to push the price higher, to not meet the requirement of being a laptop with inking and we were concerned that the learning curve for our pupil body would be steeper as more than 50% of pupils did not already use MacOS. We needed versatile devices that would be suitable for every classroom and we were not satisfied that MacBooks would meet this requirement. Also, given almost every university in the UK makes use of Microsoft 365, we felt overwhelmingly positive about staying in a full Microsoft environment to further prepare our pupils for life beyond school.

... iPads?

This is for the same reason why the superseded device policy did not include the use of tablets - they lack multitasking ability, are not as versatile, and are not in line with workflows that pupils will find after they leave school.

12) How is payment for the devices made?

This is done using Stripe via the Easy4U store. They accept credit and debit cards, including Amex.

13) Is the Surface Type Cover enough to protect the device?

No, the type cover is a keyboard and, while it protects the screen from scratching when used in a closed position, it is not meant to protect the device if dropped. That is why the Easy4U bundle includes a rugged case.