Digital Strategy 2024-25

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

As part of our continual review of the College's IT provision, we have chosen to adopt a unified device policy for all our new pupils and will be making classroom-ready Microsoft Surface Pro devices available for our parents to purchase. 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 devices 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.
6. **Greater value –** Our access to education discounts makes buying devices through the College more cost-effective than standalone purchases.

All new pupils from September 2022 are requested to have one of these new devices. A two-year transition period was given to current pupils, but they must upgrade their devices to a Surface Pro by no later than September 2024.

2024-25 Device List
Pupils will be required to have a Surface device from the list below with a type cover (keyboard) and Surface pen (a stylus).

Available Device Options
Parents can order devices through https://shiplake-college.myshopify.com/. This online store is run and maintained by our partner First Technology, so please expect to receive communications from them directly once you have completed your order. The College receives an educational discount on these devices which is passed straight on to parents.

Recommended Performance: Surface Pro 10 for Business, Intel Core i5, 16GB RAM, 256GB SSD.

Higher Performance: Surface Pro 10 for Business, Intel Core i7 16GB RAM, 256GB SSD.

Entry-Level Performance:
- **Available to all pupils:** Surface Pro 10 for Business, Intel Core i5, 8GB RAM, 128GB SSD.
- **Lower School pupils:** Surface Go 4 for Business, Intel Core i3, 8GB RAM, 128GB SSD - Please note the Surface Go has a smaller format, which is best suited for our younger students.

Accessories

We will be making the following accessories available to order online, although parents may choose to purchase them from [other sources](#):

> **Keyboard Type Cover (compulsory):** This lightweight detachable keyboard accessory allows pupils to use their devices in laptop mode.

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

> **UAG case (optional):** This protective case will make devices more resistant to breakages originating from drops and other incidents.

Additional Protection

We offer a Pupils' Personal Effects Insurance Scheme, which is a very cost-effective way to protect your investment from accidental damage and theft. This can be purchased through Admissions (if you're a prospective parent) or Finance (if you are a current parent).

Further Information

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.
- To obtain a personalised discount code, parents are required to contact billing@shiplake.org.uk. This code must be entered at the time of purchase to apply the discount.

Payment Plans for All Pupils:
- Parents needing to distribute their payments throughout the academic year can request a payment plan by emailing billing@shiplake.org.uk. A code will be provided to enable purchase online and a direct debit will be setup between the parent and the College.
- It is important to complete all payments by the end of June. Consequently, the number of instalments available to parents will decrease for orders placed later in the academic year.

Device Delivery for International Students:
- Pupils without a UK delivery address should 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?

From September 2022, new devices should meet the requirements above and have security features set up by our IT department. Therefore, we can only accept a Surface Pro device

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. The readiness of your child's device at the beginning of the term will be dependent on the availability of our IT department. In contrast, all devices purchased through us will be set up in advance of the start of the academic year.
2. 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. Our devices will come licensed with a Windows 11 Pro licence, whereas devices bought from retailers generally tend to be sold with Windows 11 Home, which is not as feature-rich as the former. For a comparison, please visit [this page](#).

3) I've just purchased a new laptop for my child, do I need to buy a new one?
From September 2024 all pupils must have a compliant device.

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 contact the Bursar, Mr W Dixon, to discuss a suitable payment plan (bursar@shiplake.org.uk).

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 2025-26 will be made available by the beginning of the summer term of 2024-25.

6) Will the College offer support if my child's device is physically damaged?
Whilst can help our pupils with software-related issues, we are not able to fix physically damaged devices inhouse. We highly encourage parents to purchase a rugged cover for the devices and take up insurance with accidental cover to ensure minimal disruption arising from device breakages.

7) How long is the expected shelf life of a device?
Microsoft Surfaces last an average of four to five years.

8) Your prices are not as discounted as I expected. Can you access a better discount on devices?
The College is purchasing commercial (Business) devices rather than consumer (Home). These devices come with extra security features and with Windows 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. For more information on Business devices, please visit [Surface for Business – Microsoft Store](#).

9) What are the advantages of the additional device functionalities for teaching and learning?
The main focus for 2024-25 is 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 and pen, so it is important that parents ensure pupils arrive at the College with a full kit.

10) How was parental feedback taken into consideration in this new strategy?
We have analysed the results of a parental survey from the end of last academic year and surveyed teachers and pupils, as well as reviewed the general IT experience onsite to establish many of the key points of our new strategy. These gave us a clear and strong understanding of the direction we needed to take.

11) With the higher price being higher than our previous Chromebook, I feel anxious about my child breaking their device. What is your advice?
The College strongly recommends buying a sturdy protective case and adding the device to an insurance (or any equivalent protection) in case there is accidental damage or theft.

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 new Surface Pro 10 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 in order 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.

13) How is payment for the devices made?
This is done as a bank transfer to our partner First Technology. All relevant payment information will be shared once the other is placed.

14) 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. We offer a case on our shop.