



ST. ANN'S ACADEMY  
ESTABLISHED 1880

December 7, 2017

Dear SAA Parents,

Recognizing the expanding role technology plays in education and after consultation with school staff, the SAA School Council has approved a policy that will require **all high school** students to have a **Chromebook** as part of their personal school supplies, commencing **September 2018**. A Chromebook is a laptop that runs on Google Chrome's operating system (as opposed to Windows 10 or the mac OS) with most applications and documents living in the cloud. Other types of laptops will not be supported on the school network. Chromebooks are produced by many different computer manufacturers but at SAA we have a preference for the **Lenovo brand** due to its protective case and convenient carrying handle (subject to availability of current model). Laptops and tablets that do not use the Google Chrome OS will not suffice and personal phones are not to be used for educational or personal use in class.

There was discussion around the Council table of creating a policy that would allow students to bring a variety of personal devices (a Bring Your Own Device policy) but it was determined that there are definite and compelling benefits to having all of our students using the same Google platform:

- Google Apps for Education (GAFE) is designed to provide educational institutions with a safe platform for data, offering better security and reliability than SAA can achieve on our own.
- GAFE can help streamline academic tasks and promote collaboration (an important aspect of the redesigned BC curriculum). Because everything is 100% powered by the web, emails, documents, calendar and sites can be accessed and edited anytime and anywhere.
- GAFE has helped SAA to reduce costs to maintain our servers and/or software, allowing the school to direct these savings to other valuable educational resources.
- Since most SAA students and staff were familiar with some Google tools inside or outside of school, we have experienced a high rate of adoption with students and staff this year.
- The price of a Chromebook is quite reasonable (under \$300) when compared with other mobile devices.
- While GAFE may be accessed from other computer platforms, Chromebooks use the Google Chrome OS and make it that much easier for students to use at school. Chromebooks are also compatible with our school WiFi network.

School Council decided to make Chromebooks mandatory, rather than Windows and Mac laptops, due to a number of factors:

- If all students are using one type of operating system, teachers do not need to learn multiple operating systems to support the programs they want to use. Some programs are also not available on all systems.
- Some older laptops students have been bringing to class are not capable of connecting to the school-based Wi-Fi, and tech support is not always available to help students connect to the internet. Chromebooks are always up-to-date and connect easily to the schools network.
- Chromebooks will not introduce viruses into the network in the same way that Windows and Mac computers can.
- Chromebooks have enough battery to be powered all day. Other laptops generally last for 2-3 hours before needing to be recharged. The school does not have the power capacity for students to plug/charge their laptops in classrooms.

School Council is aware that many students may already have their own devices and this means parents may need to purchase another device. However, Chromebooks are much more affordable than other types of laptops and it makes sense for the cheaper device (Chromebook) to be the one going back and forth between school and home (when there is an increased risk of damage/breakage).

There will be more information for our parents coming later in the new school year in preparation for this exciting transition. In the meantime, parents may wish to purchase the **Lenovo brand** of Chromebook from the **Kamloops Computer Centre**. Kamloops Computer Centre is an authorized sales and service provider, and regularly stock the product. Please mention that your child attends SAA as they have guaranteed to offer a reduced price based on the current market value.

If this initiative will present a financial hardship for your family, please contact administration. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact School Council.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Vos  
SAA Council Chair