

Technology for Grade 6 Students

Our grade 5 students have had the opportunity to work with a variety of devices this year to determine their effectiveness with different learning tasks. We have compiled their feedback in the attached chart to help guide families in making an educated decision regarding what kind of device they will need for grade 6 and beyond.

Student feedback has also helped to guide a plan for more effective use of technology as a tool for learning. All grade 6 students will be assigned a Google Apps for Education account that will provide them with access to productivity tools such as email, word processing, and presentation. They will be trained on how to use them effectively on their device, so there is not a requirement for students to all have technology that has Microsoft Office loaded - in fact, MS Office works well with Google Drive. We have many students and teachers who are now using Google and feel that it is time to introduce it to all our mid-school students.

Technology Requirements (from the Digital Life section of the Westmount Charter website)

Students are permitted to bring whatever device best meets their learning needs. Although we won't recommend specific models or kinds of devices, if you buy a computer or tablet for your child we encourage you to buy a device that features:

- Wireless networking capability (the school provides filtered wireless access)
- A virus protection program (if purchasing a Windows or Macintosh laptop)
- An external keyboard if buying a tablet (either a separate keyboard or keyboard case)
- A minimum of 6 hours of use from one battery charge
- A full-functioning, recent web browser
- Productivity software or cloud-based apps (such as Microsoft Office, Office 365 account, Pages, or a Google Docs account)
- A case that protects the device from damage if dropped
- Portability for carrying to and from school

Students should bring their devices fully charged to school as power outlets are limited and stretching cords in the classroom to plug them in creates a hazardous environment.

All students will be required to review the updated Responsible Use of Technology agreement in their classes in the fall, and it will be posted on the school website at this time.

Device	Pros	Cons	Best used for
Apple iPad and iPad Mini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small and light Fast Has a touch screen So many apps from app store Can carry it everywhere Have the option to sync with Bluetooth keyboard Joins Wi-Fi network quickly Can use all of Google Drive and Google Apps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't have Microsoft Word Storage can be limited depending on size Can't replace battery No attached keyboard Typing is more difficult on touch screen Battery life not great Can't see all the info on Edmodo without using app No Adobe Flash No USB connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good for taking pictures and doing research Facetime with people outside the school Checking Edmodo, email Creating videos, presentations
Apple MacBook Air (Mac laptop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light to carry Built in keyboard Lot of storage and battery life - lasts all day Fast processor Not as much malware to download accidentally Charger is magnetic - easy to use Good display Can rest your hands on it USB port 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The trackpad can be tricky Crazy expensive Not that sturdy Shaped like a wedge - easier to break 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good for band - Garage Band Good for research Typing up assignments Making charts Checking in on Edmodo, emails Printing Showing video, images
Chromebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheap Can fold it all the way back like a tablet Our version has a touchscreen Light and portable Fast for accessing Google Chrome and internet Can use all of Google Drive and Google Apps Has a normal keyboard like a laptop Also can pinpoint areas on the screen Can't download malware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet device only - can't load software on it Kind of slow Because it flips over like a tablet some students use it like a game Covered in fingerprints, touch to see Screen is small 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research Streaming the web Checking your email Nearpod - could use touchscreen and keyboard which is more effective Short activities

Device	Pros	Cons	Best used for
Lenovo ThinkPad (PC laptop)	Synched to Wi-Fi network easily Large size Has Adobe Flash Easy to operate, find what you need The F keys made sense because of the symbols on them Can load Microsoft Office products on machine and save to it The red dot is a little mouse in middle of keyboard - easy to use Page up page down buttons for scrolling through document Can download malware	Heavy and bulky to carry The red dot can be distracting - use as a game Too easy to bend the screen back Need to adjust settings to keep it from going to sleep Keyboard is a little too big - too many functions Can be slow Keyboard doesn't light up	Typing up documents Working on long projects that require a lot of functions - multiple browsers Printing documents
Samsung Galaxy tablet	Cheaper than laptop Small and pretty quick Light, not lugging around something heavy Easy to operate It can fit in your bag Good battery life Access to Google Drive and Apps Can make it portrait or landscape to view things more easily Can zoom and make things larger using touchscreen Can sync to a Bluetooth keyboard	Can be a little small Doesn't have a keyboard Uncooperative keyboard sometimes Screen gets really dirty Sometimes tough to control Doesn't have MS Office	Research Leisure - entertainment Click on something with your finger Watching something for a short period of time Videos