Frequently Asked Questions

What's happening?

The Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry, announced details of the Labor Party 2016 election commitment to allocate secondary students with portable computing devices for learning under the *Better schools for our kids – technology enabled learning* initiative.

Through this initiative we want to further engage our secondary students, enhance their learning experiences, provide them with opportunities to collaborate and to discover and in doing so produce responsible, literate and knowledgeable digital citizens. This directly aligns with the Australian Curriculum - ICT capability:

> "To participate in a knowledge-based economy and to be empowered within a technologically sophisticated society now and into the future, students need the knowledge, skills and confidence to make ICT work for them at school, at home, at work and in their communities. Information and communication technologies are fast and automated, interactive and multimodal, and they support the rapid communication and representation of knowledge to many audiences and its adaptation in different contexts. They transform the ways that students think and learn and give them greater control over how, where and when they learn." (https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/information-and-communication-technology-ict-capability/)

The infrastructure required to support secondary student access is already in place and this program of work will build on and complement the highly successful Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and *Learn anywhere* programs already adopted by our schools and school communities.

Why is the ACT Government doing this?

The ACT Government will provide every student in years 7 to 11 in 2018 with a Chromebook device. This is a device for learning – to ensure every student in years 7 to 11 has the same access to a device, ensuring that irrespective of family circumstances, every student has an equal opportunity to learn wherever they are and whenever they need it.

When will the devices be handed out?

Over the next three years Chromebooks will be handed out to:
- Year 7 to 11 students in 2018
- newly enrolled Year 7 cohorts and any other new secondary students in 2019-2020

Why Chromebooks?

Chromebook laptops have been selected because these devices will best align with existing Canberra public school ICT infrastructure.

- **Students** are already equipped with access a specialised Google educational platform where they access a Google classroom and Google apps. Chromebooks integrate seamlessly with these apps and will ensure all students are using a safe, secure and easily managed platform.
- **Teachers** are already familiar with these existing platforms and extending their means can focus on improving learning and teaching without needing to learn different technologies.
- **Support staff** already have the knowledge and skills to support students and teachers to use and get the most out of their Chromebook and the Google education platform.

Who owns the device?

Under this initiative the ACT Government owns the device, but secondary students are responsible for the upkeep of the device once it is allocated to them. It is allocated to them to use for learning, in and outside of school.

What is the expectation for usage?

It is common for students to bring devices into school to support their learning and our approach to device usage has always been balanced and focused on educational best practice and alignment to the Australian Curriculum. Not all learning requires a device and there are many existing programs and opportunities in schools that will always be on offer to provide students a rich learning experience.

How does the Bring Your Own Device Program (BYOD) program fit in with this new initiative?

This initiative doesn't replace the existing BYOD policy that is already in place across our schools. It builds on and complements portable electronic device (PED) use. If they wish, secondary students can continue to use a device of their choice that meets the ICT requirements set out in the school's BYOD policy.

Can parents/guardians have the money instead of the device?

The intention of the initiative is equity - equity of opportunity brought about by equity of access. The devices used for this initiative are fit for purpose. They will support students across the curriculum and as more and more software becomes available online they will increasingly offer access to more complex, high end

applications. Aiming for equity and supplying high quality devices to all secondary students provides this. It also gives the ACT Government the ability to leverage value for money through bulk purchasing.

Can anyone use a device allocated to a student?

The devices issued to secondary students under this program will be configured to only allow Canberra public school students to log into and use them. This is not just to deter theft, but to ensure the devices are tailored best for our students.

What if the device gets damaged, stolen, lost or needs repairing?

One device Chrome book will be offered to each participating student only. It is the responsibility of the student to look after the Chromebook. Lost, damaged or stolen Chromebook must be reported to the school as soon as possible and the school may ask for evidence about what happened, such as a statutory declaration or police report.

What happens if my child goes to school without the device?

Students are expected to bring the Chromebook to school every day, fully charged. Schools have a bank of spare devices for student use and can make arrangements to provide access for students when they don't have access to their Chromebook, however, the number of available devices are limited and students should not rely on a spare Chromebook being available.

What about buying software?

There is no cost to parents/guardians for the applications used on the Chromebook and they do not require additional software.

Does my child have unrestricted access to the Internet?

The devices will only work on the SchoolsNET platform using the Google Chrome Operating (Chrome OS) System. The secure connection is filtered to limit the ability to access inappropriate material; however outside of school filtering is controlled by the network the student connects to.

Parents/ guardians are responsible for the use of their student's Chromebook outside of school hours, any appropriate internet filtering and supervision. For further information visit the iParent page on the Office of eSafety Commissioner's website.

All Canberra public schools teach students about safe and responsible online behaviour.

Where should these devices be stored?

Each school will provide guidance on where the Chromebook should be stored when not in use while at school. Families will need to consider appropriate storage for the device at home.

Should the Chromebook be used at home?

Absolutely, students can engage in their learning whenever it suits them, all they need is access to Wi-Fi and they are away. In saying this, it is important to maintain a balanced approach to device use.

What can be done to support balanced, safe and responsible device use at home?

School digital citizenship programs, conversations at home and role modelling desired behaviour all help in teaching responsible and productive computer use.

The Office of eSafety Commissioner's website is a great resource to go to get information on supporting young people have safe and positive experiences online. In particular, the iParent page offers a number of practical strategies to assist parents/guardians to manage internet connected devices at home. These include restricting screen time, preventing access to certain sites and games, and receiving alerts to potentially harmful social media activity. The Young and eSafe page is specifically designed for secondary students and young adults and covers online safety with respect to resilience, critical thinking, responsibility, empathy and respect.

We encourage parents to ensure responsible use at home and support school efforts in promoting responsible online behaviour. Tips for parents/guardians and links to useful sites are also posted on the ACT Education Directorate's Learn, Anywhere: ICT for Students

Schools will continue to provide their school community with access to cybersafety information and students are explicitly taught safe and responsible online behaviour.

How can students connect when they don't have internet access at home?

Secondary students who do not have access to the internet at home have a number of options for accessing the internet free of charge outside of school hours, including - the school, public libraries, ACT Government free Wi-Fi zones all provide internet access.

What happens to the device once a student finishes or leaves the school?

If a secondary student is leaving the Canberra public school system permanently then the device needs to be returned to the school before they leave.

Where a student moves from one Canberra public secondary school to another, the Chromebook will follow the student to the new school.

What about students in our specialist schools with additional needs?

The Directorate recognises that a Chromebook may not satisfy the particular learning needs of some Canberra public school secondary students. The Directorate will work specifically with schools and secondary students who have particular ICT needs to ensure equity of funding and access to appropriate technology to meet their learning needs.

What about primary students?

Canberra public primary schools will continue to receive funding to support a minimum 1 device per 3 student ratio at school.

What about Year 12 students in 2018?

These students are not in the scope of this initiative. The ACT Government allocates $1.5 million to schools to supplement access to ICT. These students will continue to have access to ICT through this funding.

2019 Year 12 students will have a Chromebook that was issued to them in the 2018 rollout.

What personal information does the Territory collect, use and disclose in relation to the use of the Chromebooks?

Privacy and safety of personal information is important to the ACT Education Directorate. The Chromebooks connect to the existing Google Apps for Education platform used in Canberra public schools, which was subject to a full independent Privacy Impact Assessment prior to its launch in 2014. The assessment was led by a former Commonwealth Privacy Commissioner and has been made publicly available on the ACT Education Directorate's Publications A-Z webpage, listed at the letter 'G'.

We protect student information and work with schools and parents to achieve this. The information we provide is to give parents informed choice prior to the service being enabled for their child. Information regarding student use of privacy associated with Google apps and Office 365 are located on the following the Resources anywhere: Digital Backpack webpage.

Where can I obtain further information?

Additional information about this initiative can be found on the Better schools for our kids – technology enabled learning webpage

ACT Education Directorates policies that apply to the use of Chromebooks in schools, is available on the ACT Education Directorate's Publications and Policy webpage.