



Dear Parent

We look forward to welcoming you to the College family.

As ICT Director, I oversee technology and its use across all three schools. My first love, and great passion, is the development of ICT for its ability to redefine and hugely benefit the learning and teaching processes. Increasingly our role as educators is not only to provide information but to teach boys how to select, interpret and work with it in its various forms. Our classrooms are equipped with WiFi and sophisticated technical and software back-end systems to support the teachers and boys in maximising the educational experience. There is a once-off [levy billed](#) in the first term for this.

We also use a variety of subject-specific software applications in our classes, as well as an academic Intranet of learning materials.

One of the things your son will most likely be very excited about in his first year here at College, will be the purchase of his own laptop.

New boys coming in to Grade 8 before end May

Early each year parents are invited to volunteer to serve on a laptop parent committee. The aim is to arrive at a recommended choice of machines for boys to use. This committee reviews the various laptop models available and selects a group of robust machines which offer the best combination of support, warranties and value for money. The school requires that the machines are warrantied for the full duration of each pupil's time at Bishops. We understand brand loyalty and personal preference, which is why there is more than one machine on the list. The chosen machines, purchased from the chosen supplier(s), become the **requirement** until the following year's procurement process is complete. The school asks all parents of boys coming into Grade 8 to hold off buying a machine until the laptop committee announces the choices that will be on offer. This typically happens by the end of May each year. If for some reason you absolutely have to buy a machine immediately please make an appointment to see me.

New boys coming in to Grades 9 – 11 or into Grade 8 after end May

It is policy that every boy has one of the recommended machines purchased from one of the recommended suppliers. The school also requires that the machines are warrantied for the full duration of each pupil's time at Bishops. Boys who choose Apple Macs may only work on their Windows platform during class time.

Information about what laptop to purchase and where to purchase the laptop from, is available on our website (<http://college.bishops.org.za/academic/laptops/Purchasing.aspx>), as are the contact details for i-Squared (bishops@isquared.co.za) and Digicape (bishops@digicape.co.za), the preferred suppliers for this year. The pricing for the bulk deal, negotiated by the committee, is only valid for a limited period. Once the offer has expired (typically end May) you will be able to buy one of the current models from the chosen supplier, with the required warranties, but you will sadly not benefit from the group deal, which is always an excellent offer. Both suppliers understand the school requirements and will assist. Please contact them directly.

Laptop Support

School technical support is positioned to help the boys and staff with their use of technology in the classroom, but the school is not geared to manage a big repair centre. The decision was to outsource technical repairs via a HelpDesk centre on campus.

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Quality Values Diversity

The overhead cost of the Helpdesk (partly funded by the once-off support cost) is kept low by (a) the machine warranty and (b) the economies of scale when supporting just a few recommended models. Because of this, we are able to demand an affordable solution and satisfactory turnaround on support from the company that operates the HelpDesk.

Boys know that they are responsible for bringing a working laptop to school every day and how and where to get help. They are also able to talk to their tutors if they are unsure or need additional help. The tutors will point the boys in the right direction. The HelpDesk support is limited to 'walk-in' support only and specifically excludes email and telephonic support.

If a boy's machine is taken in or sent away for repairs, he will be offered a loan laptop at no additional cost. There is thus no reason for a boy to be without a working laptop in class. Under normal circumstances a boy may use a loan machine at no additional cost for a maximum 3 days, by which time his laptop should have been repaired. In the event that you need to pay for any non-warranty repair/replacement, please do so as speedily as possible so that the loan laptop can be returned soonest, and you can save on possible additional laptop hire charges.

All boys are taken through a laptop orientation and thereafter the following will apply. Boys should know how to save their work to Microsoft OneDrive (Cloud) and how to do basic troubleshooting. We encourage boys to subscribe to our online help pages so that they are notified when software solutions and suggestions are published. Boys are made aware of the Helpdesk hours and 'rules' of engagement. Your son should have set up a Cloud folder structure to save all his work and be familiar with electronic handing in of work. Please encourage him to save/backup all his work regularly from his local drive to his Cloud folders. Anything that is only saved on his local hard drive is vulnerable should a machine fail.

These measures are in place to ensure that the school is able to focus on delivering first-class education, which includes using up-to-date technology to its best advantage and streamlining processes to keep the costs as low as possible.

Kind regards

Sally Bowes
ICT Director

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