

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. We are extremely fortunate to have a competent and passionate technical and educational team who support this vision.

Increasingly our role as educators is not only to provide information but to teach students 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 students in maximising the educational experience. There is a once-off levy billed in the first term (of your joining year) for this.

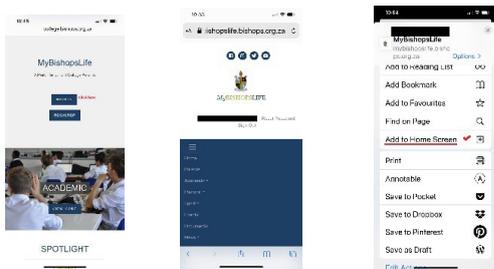
We also use a variety of subject-specific software applications in our classes, as well as an academic Intranet of learning materials.

**MyBishopsLife**

MyBishopsLife is our parent portal, a secure area designed to develop a partnership between home and school and to enable parents to support their children during their academic studies. Please register on our website, with the email address that the school has on file for you. This can only be done when you are a current active parent in the academic year that your son begins at the College. After you have received confirmation of successful registration you will be able to log in and see your son(s) profile(s); his timetable, teachers, reports and rolling average of ‘live marks’. There will be an academic presentation where the features will be explained to you.

Please add MyBishopsLife to your home screen on your phone. To do this follow the steps:

1. Navigate to college.bishops.org.za on your phone and click on the ‘sign in’ button and enter (and save) your username and password. 
2. Next please add to your Home Screen. On an iPhone, click on the ‘share arrow’ (  ), on a Samsung, click on the ellipsis (  ) and choose ‘Add to Home Screen’.
3. Thereafter you can click on that MyBishopsLife icon for access.



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## **Sports App**

Our sports app will allow you to access sports fixtures, results, and other information, shared by our coaches and managers, on your electronic devices.

Please follow these steps to access sporting details:

Laptops, PCs and mobile phones:

- Go to a browser on your smartphone and browse to the address [www.bishopssport.org](http://www.bishopssport.org)
- Click on the Sport tab and choose Fixtures and Results from the drop-down menu
- Bookmark this page on your laptop, PC or tablet
- On your mobile device, choose 'Add to home screen' and call it BishopsSport
- Now at a click of a button from your cell phone you can see 'What's on', access Maps, details of fixtures and more
- When checking click on the 'What's On' page, choose the date and sporting code and then click on the relevant team.

Please note that the team sheets are password protected. The password is Bish@ps

The Sports coaches will use this platform to communicate important information, regarding details around the various fixtures. We are hoping this will limit the need for email communication and hence we encourage you to use this platform as your first port of call.

## **Email**

Email is Bishops' preferred method of communication with you. Please remember to keep Bishops informed of any change to your email address. It is important that you follow the recommended steps [linked here](#) to assist us in delivering your mail successfully.

Your son will be given his own Bishops email address. This will be a Microsoft Cloud account that he can access on any device with Internet connectivity. Staff will use the appropriate platforms to deliver curriculum content (Intranet) or put up sporting information (SOCS). Other communication will be sent via Teams or email and your son will be expected to check his Teams messages and his email inbox regularly. He will attend an orientation programme when his laptop arrives and will be given training in this area.

It is also important that your son has his own, private email address e.g., a Gmail address. During his time at Bishops, he is likely to subscribe to numerous online platforms and while his school address is his to use, he would be inconvenienced when his school email expires after he leaves Bishops. It would thus be best for him to keep his school and personal digital activities separate.

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### **AUP**

Schools are constantly being challenged with regard to how computers and personal devices such as cell phones/smart phones/tablets can be used in constructive and educative ways, especially in classrooms and as part of the learning experience at school. Please go through the [AUP](#) with your son and return to admissions.

### **Laptop**

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 students coming into Grade 8**

Each year parents are invited to volunteer to serve on a laptop parent committee. The aim is to choose a range of suitable machines. The chosen machines, purchased from the chosen supplier(s), become the requirement until the following year's procurement process is complete. 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 student's time at Bishops. We understand brand loyalty and personal preference, which is why there is more than one machine on the list. The school asks all parents to hold off buying a machine until the laptop committee announces the choices that will be on offer.

Please note that purchasing an alternative make/model of laptop from an alternate supplier is not an option and we ask parents to respect this decision. A great deal of work goes in to finding the most robust and suitable make and model that can be supported within the school structure. The prescribed machine is not sold or configured by the school but by an independent supplier(s) chosen by parents.

Please make an appointment to see me, should you wish to discuss this further.

### **New students coming into Grades 9 – 12**

It is policy that every student 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 student's time at Bishops. Please make an appointment to see me, should you wish to discuss this further.

Information about what laptop to purchase and where to purchase the laptop from, is available on our website (<https://college.bishops.org.za/academic/laptops/Purchasing.aspx>) as are the contact details for i-Squared ([bishops@isquared.co.za](mailto:bishops@isquared.co.za)) and Digicape ([bishops@digicape.co.za](mailto:bishops@digicape.co.za)), the current preferred suppliers. The pricing for the bulk deal, negotiated by the committee, is

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only valid for a limited period. Once the offer has expired (typically end October) 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. All suppliers understand the school requirements and will assist. Please contact them directly.

### **Laptop Support**

School technical support is positioned to help the students 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 housed on campus.

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.

Students know that they are responsible for bringing a working laptop to school every day and how and where to get help. The outsourced Helpdesk is there to support them and to solve their technology issues. Bishops' technical staff will assist teachers in classrooms when introducing new technology or when additional technical expertise is needed.

We encourage the students to take responsibility for their learning and that is one reason that the HelpDesk is for students and staff only. The students also know that HelpDesk support is limited to 'walk-in' support only and specifically excludes email and telephonic support.

Students are also able to talk to their tutors if they are unsure or need additional help. The tutors will point the students in the right direction and arrange specific technology support if necessary.

If a student's machine is taken in or sent away for repairs, he will be offered a loan laptop at no additional cost, provided that his machine is under warranty. No student should be without a working laptop in class. Under normal circumstances a student 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 students are taken through a laptop orientation and thereafter the following will apply. Students should know how to access their class Teams, emails, and electronic content on / off site, how to print and how to do basic troubleshooting, including finalizing the regular software updates pushed centrally to their devices. Students should have set up a Microsoft OneDrive (Cloud) folder structure to save all school work and be familiar with the electronic submission of work. Please encourage you son to save/backup all his work regularly from his local

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drive to his Cloud folders. Anything that is only saved on his local hard drive is vulnerable should a machine fail. Students are also advised to sign up to non-Bishops' related websites with their private email so that when they leave school, they retain access.

We encourage students to subscribe to our online help pages so that they are notified when software solutions and suggestions are published.

These measures are in place to ensure that the school can 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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Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa  
Quality Values Diversity

DIOCESAN COLLEGE FOUNDED IN 1849 MEMBER OF THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA