

GCHS TABLET INITIATIVE

GLOUCESTER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Answers to frequent questions

Q: When and why did you implement this tablet program?

A: We had several major reasons for implementing our tablet program during the 2016-2017 school year, among which are: to provide a 21st-Century educational experience to our students; to help students learn

how to use technology effectively and ethically to foster their educational experience; to provide access to the vast array

of educational resources available on the Internet; to allow students the ability to do real-time research under the direction of our faculty; to provide more immediate and useful access to our RamsNet system; and a desire to reduce the number of physical books our students need to carry. An extensive survey was conducted of faculty, students and parents near the end of our first year. We hope to work on some of the concerns and improve the initiative this year.

Q: This is an added cost! Why am I being asked to pay an

additional cost, when I already pay tuition?

A: We understand the impact of this additional cost on our families, which is why we did extensive research on the most cost-effective, but useful, tablet for our students. Our main goal was to

utilize a device that accomplished the tasks needed for a more powerful educational experience, while keeping costs down for

our families. In addition, we are confident that these tablets will help us bring down the costs of books, etc over the span of your student's career at GC, thus making this purchase even more cost-effective.

Q: Will every student be required to have a tablet?

A: Yes. Every GCHS student in grades 8-12 will be required to have a tablet. Because the tablets will become an integral part of our classroom experience, we need to insist that each student have one.

Q: Who will own these tablets?

OUR TABLET INITIATIVE

After much thought and discussion, GCHS decided to implement a tablet program beginning in the 2016-2017 academic year. By doing this, we were not trying to simply follow trends in the educational world, but rather to harness the power of this technology and the Internet to provide our students with a 21st-Century educational experience. We took our time with this decision in an effort to ensure that our students would continue to experience the face-to-face, family atmosphere of GC, even if they have the temptation of a screen in their possession.



A: The tablets will be owned by you. While the student attends GCHS (which includes summer months), we will "lock down" the device and control/monitor what can be loaded on it. Upon leaving us, however, we will unlock the device so you or the student can use it as you like.

Q: Is insurance included with the tablet?

A: In an effort to grant our parents the most flexibility, we have opted to NOT make warranties mandatory on these devices. Therefore, it is not automatically included with the tablet purchase. You can, however, opt to purchase an extended warranty or accidental damage plan (on new devices only) through our vendor when making your initial purchase. Parents who do not purchase a warranty, however, will assume full responsibility for purchasing a replacement device for their child if the device is lost, damaged, broken, or stolen. For this reason, we recommend that you seriously consider purchasing a warranty.

Q: Do I have to purchase a specific case?

A: No. Although we recommend purchasing a case to protect the device from normal wear-and-tear, we are again leaving this decision to the discretion of our parents.

Q: Can I use a tablet that I already own?

A: In order for this program to work as effectively as possible, we need to maintain a standardized platform and user experience. All devices will have a GCHS-monitored, standardized user interface while the student attends our school and teachers will be familiar with it. The software used to ensure this experience will only work the way we intend with certain devices. This will facilitate the use of the devices in the classroom and minimize the impact of technological "glitches" with which our teachers need to deal. For this reason, the only approved devices currently in use will be the Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 or Samsung Galaxy Tab A. If you already own a Samsung tablet, you can seek approval for it from GCHS, but a condition of approval will be to allow all mandated GCHS restrictions be placed on it.

Q: What preparation has occurred with teachers?

A: Teachers had these tablet devices for the entire 2015-2016 academic year, in an effort to allow them to become familiar with them. A number of formal professional development workshops were offered, as well as weekly "User Group" meetings to help teachers develop a comfort level with the device. Teachers were also encouraged to research ways that the devices could foster the educational experience in their specific classrooms. Departments have had discussions about the

integration of the devices and their related resources into their respective curricula and classrooms.

Q: How much control will the school have over the devices?

A: The school will use a management system to control the devices by: allowing only the installation of specified apps and stopping students from being able to install apps on their own; controlling the screens available to students and the content that appears on them; "pushing" content (websites, books, documents) to the devices; having the ability to view student screens (either in real time or by taking a snapshot of it); while at GCHS, controlling web content using the same filtering mechanism used by our wired devices. Students can request that certain apps be added to the allowed list by going through the approved process.

Q: Will all textbooks be on the tablets?

A: We will be *gradually* transitioning books to the tablets, to the degree that this makes sense. Some books may not have digital versions or there may be another good reason to exclude a particular book from a digital version. While we may never have 100% of our resources accessible on the tablet, we do anticipate that most books/resources will eventually be loaded on or accessed through them.