

BYOL

Year 4, 5 and 6
Bring Your Own Laptop
Program

HANDBOOK



Albany Hills State School

A High Performing Independent Public School

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Introduction

BYOL (Bring Your Own Laptop) is a program that will allow students who have suitable personal laptops to bring them to school to use for educational purposes to meet their learning needs under the direction of their teacher.

The Albany Hills State School BYOL program is an extension of the Department of Education's BYOX (Bring Your Own Device) program. It was first successfully trialled in Year 5 only in 2014. It was then extended to Year 6 in 2015 and has become one of the distinctive offerings of our school for students in the upper years. From 2019, the initiative has been offered in Year 4, allowing students to maximise their time in the program to three years.

Albany Hills State School has a future vision, aiming to be proactive in incorporating eLearning strategies to engage and empower all learners (students and teachers) and preparing them to contribute confidently, effectively and innovatively within existing and emerging global communities. The BYOL program is a key element in this vision.

General aims

The main aims of the BYOL program include:

- Meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum in a more efficient and effective way, to engage students and maximise learning potential;
- Providing more relevant and meaningful learning experiences with ICTs being more readily accessible to students;
- Raising student awareness of how ICTs are used in the world around them and of the potential benefits it can provide;
- Supporting problem solving and learning across the curriculum, with laptops being used in all learning areas;
- Using resources innovatively;
- Maximising use of laptops by offering the program over the three upper years of primary school;
- Assisting in the development of the necessary skills associated with the Digital Technologies curriculum.

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About the program

The BYOL program is not a pedagogical practice in itself. The program allows laptops to be used as a tool for learning across the curriculum. By adopting this approach it means that students in a given year level who are not participating in a laptop program will experience the same curriculum program as students in the program; it is simply the mode of teaching and learning that may vary.

The use of laptops in curriculum delivery is complementary to the overarching pedagogical practices in place at Albany Hills State School. It has clear links and application to our signature pedagogy of Explicit Instruction, based on the gradual release of responsibility to students. (*"I Do, We Do, You Do"*). Combining this pedagogical approach with the use of laptops allows teachers to more effectively tailor learning to the differentiated needs of the range of students in their class. Tasks and activities may include using programs that are web based or from the Office suite of programs, aimed at developing the skills of creating, communicating and inquiring included in the Australian Curriculum.

Benefits of the program

The benefits of the BYOL program include:

- Allowing for personalised, differentiated learning;
- Potential for improved student learning outcomes through greater engagement and higher levels of motivation;
- Improved collaboration;
- Allowing for greater student choice, independence and ownership of their learning;
- Creating a model for lifelong learning;
- Development of skills which can easily be transferred between school and home environments;
- More efficient and effective student access to online resources.

There is an abundance of research available that supports the implementation of a one-to-one laptop program for students in schools. Three examples of such research that was considered by the planning team in developing the Albany Hills State School BYOL program include:

- Research completed by the NSW Department of Education
- Research published in *Educause Quarterly*; and

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- An Australian Dell project.

In addition to this, on a more local level, the report produced by the Queensland Department of Education Information and Technologies Branch in the document *BYOX – If You Are Serious*, was considered. This document reported on the trials conducted in five schools in South East Queensland in 2013.

The benefits of a one-to-one laptop program have also been highlighted on the *Smart Classrooms* site, referencing *The Journal of technology, Learning and Assessment*, which found that such programs may:

- Increase student and teacher technology use;
- Increase student engagement and interest level; and
- Contribute to modest increases in student achievement.

Parents should consider the research, the benefits outlined by the school and the information provided at the annual BYOL information sessions (early Term 4) in making a decision as to whether they wish to purchase a laptop and allow their child to participate in the initiative. Participation is voluntary.

Information and monitoring

The BYOL program is monitored by the school Technology Team using the expertise of the school information technology (IT) technician where necessary. The school will support the program financially by way of provision of an IT technician to support the BYOL classes as required. It may also provide additional resources to year levels to support students who are not part of the BYOL program.

Ongoing monitoring may include review and consideration of the following:

- Pedagogical implications;
- Teacher capability and professional development;
- Device usage and suitability;
- Equity of access;
- Network, bandwidth and infrastructure capacity;
- Technical and financial support;
- Provision of resources;
- Implications for the program in future years.

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From time to time, feedback from parents, students and teachers may be sought, including through the School Opinion Survey, School Review and Strategic Planning processes.

Information is provided annually, and/or upon enrolment, to prospective parents interested in having their child take up the offer of bringing a laptop to school to assist and enhance their learning.

This document, along with supporting forms and other documentation, is available at any time to parents on the school website and via the QSchools App, or upon request through the school office. Teachers of BYOL classes provide necessary information to parents in a timely and efficient manner throughout the year as well as at the parent information evenings held early in first term.

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Frequently asked questions

The following questions have been frequently asked during parent information sessions and through other feedback processes.

Is the program available to all students in Years 4, 5 and 6?

The BYOL program will be made available to all students prior to their enrolment in Year 4, or for students new to the school, during the enrolment process. Acceptance will be through a written application process which outlines the responsibilities of all participants.

Will the program continue through to Year 6?

Students who commence the program in Year 4 are eligible to continue in the program in Year 5 and 6.

What if my child doesn't commence in Year 4, can they join later?

Yes. Students who do not commence Year 4 with a laptop may do so at any time during their upper school years (Years 4, 5 and 6).

What are the arrangements for students not participating in the BYOL program?

Students in Years 4, 5 and 6 not participating in the BYOL program will be supported by the provision of other shared computers in the classroom and additional time allocated in the computer laboratory.

Is there an option for iPads?

At Albany Hills State School, iPads are used in the early years classes to support learning and motivate and engage students. Laptops are the most suitable device to support learning in Years 4, 5 and 6 and best suit the requirements of the curriculum program. School iPads are available for use by upper school students if they are required for a particular task or purpose.

What are the necessary specifications for students' laptops?

The minimum specifications are reviewed annually and provided to parents considering the program for the following year, after the information session in early Term 4. Any laptop that meets these specifications is suitable for use in the program. Parents do not need to purchase top of the range devices for the BYOL initiative.

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In what learning areas will devices be used?

Laptops may be used across all learning areas. This will vary depending on the units and topics being studied at any given time. Some learning areas and topics lend themselves more readily to the integration of laptops. They may be used for activities such as research, online activities or publishing of work.

How many hours per day will laptops be used? What will be the frequency of use?

The time that laptops will be used will vary from day to day, however, they will be used on every regular school day. As mentioned above, this will vary depending on the learning area and units being studied. In a typical day, laptops may be used for activities such as Mathletics and providing written responses to tasks.

Do parents still need to purchase the requirements on the booklist?

Yes. Laptops do not remove the need for pads. Students are still required to complete written work and develop their presentation skills as part of their class work.

Will there be support provided for students to learn typing and keyboarding skills?

Students will be supported in developing their typing and keyboarding skills prior to and during Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers will do this at the classroom level. An appropriate program for use across the school is being investigated. Parents are able to support students by providing opportunities to develop keyboarding skills at home.

What about the development of students' handwriting?

Handwriting is still a necessary skill to be taught and enhanced in the upper years of primary school. The daily program at school will include a balance of handwritten work and work on devices.

Will laptops be used for Homework?

Laptops are one tool that teachers may use for the completion of homework, particularly through online programs such as Mathletics, Reading Eggs and Spelling City. Expectations will be communicated to parents at parent evenings at the beginning of the school year and through year level newsletter communication.

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How will laptops be stored at school?

Shelving units are available in all BYOL classes for students to store their laptops during the day when not in use. Each student has their own individual allocated space for their laptop and peripherals.

What are the general safety and security provisions in place for laptops at school?

When not in use, laptops will be stored in the shelving units provided in each classroom (one device per pigeonhole). If being used in a specialist lesson (e.g. Japanese) laptops are transported in their bags.

Students are not permitted to take devices out of the classroom at break times, nor to use them before or after school. Classrooms are locked at break times when the teacher is not present in the room.

Who is responsible for any technical problems with the laptops?

Parents are responsible for repairs to laptops. Acceptance into the BYOL program is dependent on parents agreeing to ensure laptops are kept in good working order including having any repairs completed in a timely manner. It is recommended that a two year warranty is purchased with the laptop to cover any such problems. The school IT technician is able to assist with minor technical difficulties and software issues.

With three year levels participating in the BYOL program, is the school's infrastructure sufficient to cope with the demands?

Yes. Wireless access was extended across all teaching blocks in 2016. The specification list for student laptops now includes a dual band wireless network card which ensures better reliability when connecting devices to the school's wireless network.

How will issues around Cybersafety be addressed?

Students and parents are required to sign a *Student Participation Agreement* for the BYOL initiative which clearly states the expectations in regards to safety and security. It is also outlined in the *BYOL Program Handbook* that each family will receive. Consequences may be imposed on students deemed to be in breach of this agreement. The school's *Code of Conduct* also supports students by providing related expectations, guidelines and consequences.

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Annually, students in Years 4, 5 and 6 will participate in cybersafety sessions conducted at school. Class teachers will regularly remind students of their obligations and responsibilities.

Resources are also available for students and parents on the school website.

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Appendix:

- BYOL Student Participation Agreement
- BYOL Acceptable Use Policy
- BYOL Program Handbook
- BYOL Requirements List

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