Which device should I use?

Melba Copland Secondary School recommends

MCSS recommends [Chromebooks] as the device students bring to school. The advantages offered by these:

- Low price (generally around $350)
- Ease of use
- boots up in 9 seconds
- portable
- is ready 'out-of-the-box'
- requires no additional software

Survivability

- There are no moving parts (i.e. CD drives and hard drives) reducing the likelihood of data loss and damage if the device is knocked around or dropped

Future-proofing

- Since the main purpose of the device is to access the web, the performance requirements are well and truly met for your child's high school years

Secure for one user or many

- Since all data is 'in the cloud' and behind a Google account, multiple users can share a chromebook without any issues
- The Chromium OS is highly secure with no need for additional security software and can be 'managed' within our Google Apps for Education' environment
- School filtering can be applied
- Documents and projects can be easily shared with teachers and parents
- e-books and subject specific apps

We're using them too!

MCSS has purchased a large number of chromebooks and are using the Google Apps for Education (GAFE) platform to ensure student access.

The following is a list of other devices that can be utilised in the BYOD environment
All devices need to be able to have a chrome browser or drive web apps installed.

- ## Full Compatibility - Highly Suitable

These devices listed below have full support for the Google Apps environment. They will be able to access the internet, email and be able to create and share Google documents at school with no additional cost beyond the purchase of the device.

Windows PC/Laptops:
Windows based PCs/Laptops are the most common computing device that students will encounter. They offer the greatest flexibility, but are relatively bulky, expensive and require software to be purchased before they can be fully functional. They also require anti-virus and security software. Expert knowledge may be needed to configure the device and correct any faults. Modern laptop battery performance is highly variable - MCSS recommends laptops with at least 5 - 6 hours of battery life for daily usage.
Recommended specifications - Anything released in the last 8 years. Chrome browser is preferred. Opera and Firefox are also very compatible and Internet Explorer 8 or better will work adequately.

Macbooks/iMacs/Mac Pros:
Apple computers are similar to Windows PCs in most respects, with the same advantages and disadvantages. At present, Macs do not suffer from virus threats to the same extent that Windows based computers do. However, expert knowledge may be needed to configure the device and correct any faults. Macbook battery performance is usually good enough for a whole day.
Recommended specifications - Any Intel-processor based mac computer. Chrome browser is preferred. Opera, Safari and Firefox are also very compatible.

Windows Netbooks:
Windows based netbooks offer the flexibility of a PC, but with greater portability, at the cost of slower performance. Most netbooks offer excellent battery performance. These are highly suitable for most classroom tasks. However, expert knowledge may be needed to configure the device and correct any faults.
Recommended Specifications - Any current model Windows 7 based netbook. Chrome browser is preferred. Opera and Firefox are also very compatible and Internet Explorer 8 or better will work adequately. Older netbooks (more than two years) may have performance issues - check with ADHS before purchasing a preowned netbook. ADHS does not recommend netbooks that do not have a Windows operating system.

iPad and iPad mini:
iPads offer all the computer capabilities of a full computer in a highly portable and highly secure device. Apps for iPads are usually very cheap and can offer similar features to full programs on PC and Mac computers. Set up and operation is usually very simple. They are expensive and comparatively fragile, so a protective case is highly recommended.
All models supported. Chrome browser and Drive apps are recommended. A keyboard is recommended with the iPad mini.

Android tablets:
Android based tablets are very similar to iPads in terms of software and portability, however their performance varies considerably. Set up and operation is usually very simple.
All models supported. Performance will vary depending on processor power. Chrome browser and Drive apps are recommended. A keyboard is recommended for any tablet 7" or smaller.

Windows 8 tablets and Surface Pro:
Not to be confused with **Windows 8 RT**, these are essentially full Windows laptops in a tablet form. They can run the same software that your home PC can. They enjoy the same benefits and limitations as a PC, but with the advantage of the extra portability and convenience of a tablet. **Given the similarity in branding between Windows 8 and Windows 8 RT, please double check with the re-seller before purchasing.**
Chrome browser is required. A keyboard or keyboard case is recommended.

- **Basic Compatibility - Somewhat suitable**

The following devices offer some functionality that will be useful in a classroom environment, but may have some limitations that make them less suitable than the devices listed previously.

iPhone/iPod Touch and Android smartphones:
These devices can theoretically do everything that iPads running the same software can do, however their small size is a major limiting factor on their usability.

Windows RT Tablets/'Surface RT':
These tablets use a 'cut down' version of Windows that is not directly compatible with Windows PC software. In terms of features and performance versus price, they compare quite favourably to Android and iOS. Office is pre-installed, but all other software is downloaded in app form much like Android and iOS, so you may need to purchase some programs twice and some programs may not have an RT equivalent. A number of students have successfully been using these at ADHS with GAFE, but we're still investigating to see if there are any incompatibilities.
Chrome browser is required. A keyboard or keyboard case is recommended.

- **Unknown Compatibility - We don't recommend these**

The following devices have theoretical compatibility with our network and GAFE, but have not been tested or have limited support from Google, and as such are not recommended by MCSS for BYOD.

Light Clients and Linux PCs/Laptops:
Most Linux-based OSs have Chrome compatibility. Performance will vary depending on processor power. Chrome browser is preferred when available.

Windows Mobile Smartphones:
Inconsistent access and functionality within the GAFE environment. Screen size is a major limiting factor for producing work.