

# Your child's digital device

A handy guide



MEONCROSS  
SCHOOL

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## Introduction

Technology has become a fundamental part of education, not only as the vehicle to deliver great teaching and learning, but as a platform for collaboration and productivity. We witness first-hand the positive impact technology can have on continuing outstanding learning in and beyond the physical classroom. The use of technology helps put students at the heart of their learning by increasing agency over their work, developing intrinsic interpersonal skills and preparing them for the future of adult life.

The next phase in Cognita's digital learning journey is to provide students with a 1-to-1 device. 1-to-1 is defined as a school-managed device that is assigned to only one student for their education. A school-managed 1-to-1 device brings immeasurable benefits including:

- **Accessibility** — creating a seamless learning experience whenever and wherever students require technology
- **Safety** — utilising web filtering and monitoring features to ensure students are always using their device positively
- **Support** — using identical devices in school means that technicians can quickly fix issues, and teachers can create content that is accessible and consistent on every device in the class.

Cognita is an extraordinary family of schools joining forces in an inspiring world of education with one common purpose: building self-belief and empowering individuals to succeed. Together, **our schools provide a uniquely global education that goes beyond grades to develop all-round academic excellence** – equipping young people with the confidence and resourcefulness that prepares them to grow, thrive and find their success in a fast-changing world.

**Our 1-to-1 programme allows learning to continue, and gives the best possible resilience against disruption to education.**

# What are the benefits?

We believe that 1-to-1 devices are powerful tools that augment and transform the learning experience. They will be used in balance with other teaching methodologies and woven into lessons in a planned and meaningful way to support the learning outcomes. **Here are five key benefits to using 1-to-1 devices in the classroom:**

## 1. Students become more engaged with their own learning

In a 1-to-1 environment, the learning shifts from the traditional instructor-led model to become more student-centred. Access to online learning tools gives the student options that naturally engage them and enables them to take ownership of how their learning goals are achieved. Students experience greater independence, greater task completion and a more efficient workflow with the ability to electronically manage and share tasks in a single environment.

## 2. Greater collaboration

Students can benefit greatly from 1-to-1 in the development of their collaboration skills. 1-to-1 devices can support the communication and joint reasoning that's essential to team collaboration. By sharing a digital workspace, students can create and edit content together, refine each other's contributions and share information and ideas. Teachers can help students engage in expressive activities by allowing them to choose their communication tools and encouraging students to work together to **'show what they know'**.



## 3. Creation of a 'Digital Portfolio'

By using the school's chosen online platform students can build a digital portfolio of their work. This gives students alternative modes of expression and means to demonstrate learning, which can lead to increased self-confidence and achievement. Teachers can easily access each student's area to provide digital feedback, giving them up-to-date, formative advice on how to progress. Students can leave confirmatory responses or pose further questions to aid their learning, helping to focus their communication skills. Digital portfolios allow students to track and demonstrate their growth over longer periods of time. While paper portfolios get stored or discarded at the end of a term or school year, digital portfolios can remain available and easily accessible to students, parents and teachers.

## 4. Personalised learning and differentiated instruction

Students do not learn at the same pace and in the same way. 1-to-1 technology makes it possible for students to receive differentiated content and assignments, using a variety of methods and tools. For example, students can pause videos and review media content multiple times. In addition to video, electronic and online resources can be selected and shared with students, ensuring that the content is being delivered and standards are being met, in a way that can be best understood by all students.

## 5. Improved assessment and digital feedback

Students can receive feedback in a myriad of new ways. Teachers can digitally annotate a piece of work (uploaded, or a photo of work in a book), leave voice recordings, a video, or a link to additional support online. The ability to leave voice marking creates a more personal, formative conversation in which the student can respond in a similar way. **This shows teachers that their feedback is being acted upon which is critical for student progress.**

# Staying safe online

These devices provide immense opportunities for personal development and learning, but it's important to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to protect children from inappropriate material online and misuse of online content. Safeguarding your child from harm, and promoting their emotional wellbeing, is our priority.

## 1. Supervising use

All devices are pre-installed with AI (Artificial Intelligence) monitoring software that runs regardless of whether the device is being used in the classroom or at home. No matter where your child is using their device, this software is always working in the background to filter inappropriate content (based on the age of the student) accessed through either a browser or other application software. The software will trigger alerts to warn us of any unusual activity or potential points of concern.

Safety filtering features help to support the prevention of cyberbullying, self-harm and any other inappropriate or harmful content. If a student's online behaviour triggers an alert, it will be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Leads in school together with an activity log that shows what the student was doing online before and after the event in order to gain further information about the context. It is important to note that, while this monitoring will be happening in the background, the school will not be able to react to any alerts outside of school hours or during school holidays.

During lessons the software provides teachers with the tools to:

- Remotely control open browser tabs to keep students focused during the lessons
- Lock students' screens
- Control what they view on their screens
- Share links
- Broadcast their own screens
- Block or limit access to certain webpages
- View website browsing (in real-time)
- Track browsing history.

We are confident that with these systems and software in place your child will be protected without being compromised on access to the very best resources for digital learning. Please do contact the school should you have any questions or concerns; they will be able to support and advise you.

## 2. Talk with your child

Active supervision of your child at home will help maintain a safe environment for them to participate in internet activities. Take an interest in what your child is doing on the internet and initiate conversations with them about their activities on the device.

- Encourage your child to be careful when making new friends online — they might not be who they say they are
- Make it clear to your child that they should never arrange to meet an online friend that they have never met before, unless a trusted adult is with them
- Show your child how to report inappropriate content to the web administrator of the website
- Advise your child not to share their username and password with anyone and not to leave their computer logged in — this is to stop anyone from using their account to post damaging material using their details.

**This is an opportunity time for you to have another general conversation with your child about keeping safe online. Keeping your child safe means making them aware of the risks. Your child also needs to be aware that they have a trusted adult they can talk to if they see something online that makes them feel uncomfortable. Should you require any support or information with regards to this, please do reach out to someone at your child's school.**

### 3. Protecting personal information

Students may be inclined to post private information about themselves (such as their name, contact details, photographs and the personal details of friends or family) online without recognising the implications, such as identity theft. They may also be tempted to respond to messages that attempt to deceive them into giving out information (such as bank details). These scams or phishing messages are sometimes hard to distinguish from legitimate messages.

To help protect privacy, parents should encourage their children to consult with them before giving information about personal details online, and to treat any unexpected message with caution:

- Consider who is emailing and what are they asking
- Confirm the details with a legitimate source.

Parents may also wish to support sensible social networking by:

- Determining when your child can engage with a social network or share personal information via a set of house rules
- Encouraging your child to think about content they post before making it available online - some websites don't allow information to be taken down
- Blocking location access to all social media apps
- Reviewing the security settings and recommending your child set their profiles to private, so they can control who sees the information they post.



# Student wellbeing

Technology is a powerful tool that can enable expanded learning opportunities for our children. However, for learning to be effective, a student's wellbeing must be prioritised. Sleep, diet and exercise, connecting, doing and giving are all central to wellbeing – indeed, these are the central pillars of Cognita's Be Well Charter. There are several ways in which parents can support healthy use of the device.

## 1. Posture

It's important for your child to develop and maintain a healthy posture to avoid stressing the body during use of their device. Creating the right ergonomic posture and workspace is especially important if long term use (more than an hour) occurs. You can help your child by adjusting the space they work in to suit their physical needs:

- Teach them to sit tall, positioning their backs flat against the seat, their feet flat on the ground and their knees facing forward (cushions can be added to provide extra support). This encourages good posture, enables a suitable sitting height, and avoids pressure on the back of the thigh which promotes good circulation
- Provide sufficient lighting and arrange the work area so that reflections and sun glare do not cause a visual disturbance
- Tilt the screen so their eyes are at the top. This encourages the use of the eyes rather than the neck to adjust the line of vision.

## 2. Movement

Like us, your child will naturally be excited to have their own new device for learning. This may mean that your child wishes to use the device for extended periods at home, at least initially. It will be very important that you proactively manage your child's screen time and ensure that they have regular breaks for movement and getting a drink.

Devices should not be used as an excuse to avoid being active every day, or as a reason not to connect with friends and family. As a parent, you may also wish to avoid permitting use where students can close themselves off from the rest of the family, such as the bedroom.

**Parents may wish to set break reminders. After 20 minutes of use get your child to look in the distance or, where possible, encourage them to:**

- Regularly rotate between laptop and school activities that do not require technology
- Switch between typing tasks and browsing tasks

Encourage your child to change posture or stretch on a regular basis for at least 20 seconds so as to avoid interfering with circulation. Taking a break can stop your child from feeling tired, restore concentration, improve circulation, and prevent eye strain.

## 3. Sleep

Students who have consistent sleep routines are happier and healthier. As such, students should be encouraged not to take devices into the bedroom overnight.

## 4. Expectations of use

We would like to reassure you that your child's school will support both you and your child with regards to setting expectations about how the device should be used for learning at home, what it must be used for, and the length of time it should be used each day. This will vary across our schools, and be dependent on the age and stage of your child, and their individual needs.

# Caring for the device

Parents should reinforce to students the importance of caring for their device. Students are responsible for taking care of their device and keeping it clean. Regular gentle wiping of the device, including the screen and keys, with a clean cloth will ensure that hygiene is maintained. Cleaning agents should not be used. Younger children will be expected to leave their device in school at the end of the day. Older children will be responsible for taking their device home and returning with it the following day.

## To and from school

- Devices should travel in the student's bag fully closed at all times and within the device sleeve provided, for full protection
- Although these devices are robust, to avoid damage students should place their bag gently onto a surface or the floor rather than dropping it down
- Laptops will not be charged at school and battery chargers should not be brought to school unless specified by a teacher for a specific purpose e.g. a multiple day excursion. **iPads** should be left at school at the end of each day for charging overnight, unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Students should not leave their device unattended during their journey to and from school
- Students should switch hands or shoulders frequently when carrying a bag with only one handle or shoulder strap
- If carrying the device in a backpack, students should use both shoulder straps to spread the weight.



## To and from class

- Devices should be carried in the student's bag fully closed and within the device sleeve provided
- When the device is not required for lessons, it should be stored securely to prevent theft e.g. in a locker or bag
- As mentioned in the 'To and from school' section, the bag should be placed gently onto a surface at all times rather than dropped
- When in use, devices should not be carried around while the screen is open, nor by the screen edge
- Devices should not be on display outside of home or the classroom, unless on a field trip
- Devices should not be left logged in at any time, and students should not share their username and password with anybody; devices are configured to be used only by the student.

## At home

- Students are expected to charge their laptop at home, ready for the following school day
- Students may back up their device by storing documents on Microsoft OneDrive or Google Drive, which will ensure they are accessible from anywhere with a Wi-Fi connection. Devices are also permitted to connect to external storage devices such as USB drives
- When the device is not in use at home, it should be stored in a safe place, out of reach of younger children and away from areas of excessive heat.

# Support and responsibility

## 1. Support

Cognita provides ICT facilities and resources to its schools for educational purposes. These devices form part of those resources and, alongside the physical devices and software, we also provide technical support. *You and your child will have access to a technical support desk (OnlineLearningSupport@cognitaschools.co.uk) that can help with any queries or difficulties.* We will also be managing software updates in the background, so there will be no action required on the part of the student where these are concerned.

## 2. Liability

Upon receiving this device your child will also have received a User Agreement which outlines the expectations we have of them to care for their personal device. Further, there is a certain level of accountability that we are expecting of students. Our full digital policy is available on our website; please take a moment to review this.

## 3. Damage and repairs

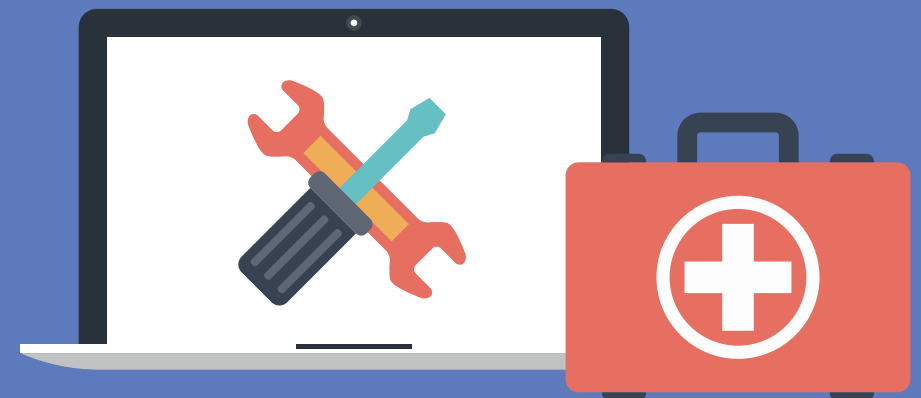
*Every device is covered for accidental damage and theft (please note that this cover excludes the digital pen and batteries) and a procedure is in place for a replacement device to be provided if necessary. An excess of £50 (€50 in Spain, 50 CHF in Switzerland) will be chargeable for each claim. Repair is dependent on the extent of the problem, the age of the laptop or how the laptop was damaged. If a school elects to repair a laptop, students may be loaned a school laptop whilst waiting for repair.*

## 4. Theft

If theft occurs outside of school, parents should inform the police immediately and file a crime report. The crime reference number should be provided to the school when the student reports the incident to the school.

## 5. Contact us

For any further support or information with regards to your child's device, please contact the School Office.





# FAQs

- **What device will be issued to my child?**

The devices are either an iPad, or a HP ProBook x360. Both devices are touchscreen, include a digital pen, and have all-day battery life. Your school will have issued either one or both of these devices; carefully chosen to suit the environment of the school, and the needs of the students.

- **How much will the device cost?**

The devices that we are supplying are leased to you and we will be covering the cost of the first year together with the purchase of the accessories (digital pen, batteries, protective sleeves) and set up costs. We have chosen to lease the devices in order to keep pace with technology and be able to upgrade and refresh devices at appropriate intervals. This will enable us to continue to accelerate the ambition for our school to be a leader in EdTech as well as to ensure the continued educational provision in the case of further lockdowns. In year 2 onwards, the cost will be incorporated into school fees and this is estimated at approx. £4 per week — this low cost is achievable by negotiating at scale to lease devices across all of our European schools.

- **What happens if my child forgets their device?**

It is an expectation that students remember to bring their device to school each day fully charged. There might be an opportunity for a spare unit to be loaned for the day, but this is not guaranteed, nor should it be depended upon. As the device is a tool much like anything else brought to school, sanctions may also apply in the same way as forgetting a textbook, or PE kit.

- **Can my child use their own home device instead?**

No, safeguarding of students is the school's main priority. If a student uses their personal device, the school will not be able to monitor internet usage, protect from viruses and malware, and keep students safe online. It is for this reason that all 1-to-1 devices are school-managed.

- **What happens if my child breaks or loses the device?**

The school will provide an immediate loan device and a replacement will be sourced with an insurance excess charge to parents of £50 (€50 in Spain, 50 CHF in Switzerland).

- **Will 1-to-1 devices be used in all lessons?**

There is no expectation that the device will be used in all lessons. The device is a tool in the students' learning toolkit and it will be used where it adds value to the activity or the lesson.

- **How do these devices align with Cognita's Be Well Charter?**

It is essential for students to get the balance right to support the physical and mental contributors to wellbeing. This includes managing the amount of screen time they dedicate to work, and making sure that they switch off at a sensible time, as well as leaving the device out of the bedroom overnight. However, it is important to note that not all screen time is equal. These devices will be used positively for educational activities, which has a different effect compared to the endless scrolling of social websites.

- **How will writing tasks differ on a digital device?**

Using 1-to-1 devices gives students a greater number of options when writing. They can type using the keyboard, write directly on the screen using their digital pen, or continue to write on paper, whereafter they can take a photo and upload the work onto their computer for future media manipulation or text recognition. This opens up the door to how students take notes, write essays and stories, and organise their work.

- **How will these devices equip my child with skills for the workplace?**

Digital readiness is a vitally important part of preparing for a life in the workplace, but more important are the transferable skills that technology can help develop, such as creativity, critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills. It is fair to say that whilst many industries are starting to use technology more, the above skills cannot be replicated by machinery, which is why it is so important that students leave school with these lifelong abilities.

- **What if my child loses the pen?**

Digital pens and batteries have been purchased for each student as part of the first year package but any subsequent losses will need to be replaced by parents as they are not part of the overall leasing agreement.



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Meoncross is part of the Cognita Family of Schools