

FAQ's - questions raised from the parent information evening and from emails.

1. Can parents purchase a laptop privately for their child to participate in the program?

- Laptops need to have the Education Queensland (EQ) Managed Operating Environment (MOE) installed on them. MOE is a state wide system EQ has put into place to provide security and service to all state schools in Queensland and it controls the access to all IT services such as Internet, email, accessing servers and school purchased software. For a laptop to have MOE installed it needs to be purchased and owned by the school. We cannot install MOE on privately owned computers.
- Laptops purchased through the school come with MOE preinstalled and are covered by the manufacturers Education agreements. This includes extended 3 year warranty and a "next day, onsite" service. This is not standard on privately purchased laptops. It is available from some manufacturers at an extra cost. With EQ purchases it is part of the standard purchase.
- Because laptops are purchased and owned by the school we are legally able to install our school owned software onto them. We have a wide range of software that totals more than \$1500 in value that will be included on the laptops. This software will need to be removed at the end of the 3 year contract but will be available for students to use at home during the 3 years, as well as at school.

2. What benefits are there to having MOE on the computers?

- Computers with MOE installed are able to connect to all school servers. This is important for sharing, storing and receiving documents and information in a secure place. It also provides for a back up of data.
- MOE also provides a firewall security system for Internet use, which is a managed government level of security. This protects users against many websites that may contain prohibited material.
- Having MOE installed on laptops also provides an added technical service. Technicians at EQ level are able to remotely troubleshoot and fix issues that may occur at school. This means less down time for users.

3. Why are parents asked to pay?

- State High Schools have received government funding for one-to-one programs in the last year, but primary schools have received no financial funding for this. School P & C's are not able to raise the type of funding required to enable this type of program to run and there are very few external grants available that apply to these programs. The types of grants that are available our school does not qualify for.
- The only option to most primary schools is a user pays model. Over the past 18 months we have looked at various other models running in other primary schools until we found one we feel can work to the benefit of parents and the school. We did not want to rush into a program until we had found something we felt was not only functional for us, but reasonable for families.

4. How much is the parent contribution?

- The exact contribution has not been finalised as yet because we are still in discussion with Dell and other suppliers involved.
- The estimated contribution is around \$1500, which is payable up front and covers 3 years participation in the program.

5. What does the parent contribution cover?

- The contribution covers many services and products: Purchase of the laptop, access to EQ servers, technical support at school and services (Internet), school purchased software, extended 3 year warranty, 3 year insurance against accidental damage, Dell education customer support 24/7 including Microsoft Office support and advice,

backpack, mouse, school based technical support with our school paid technician and subscriptions to some websites.

6. What happens at the end of the 3 years?

- At the end of the 3 year agreement the school is able to write off the laptop from our system and parents will have first right of purchase for the laptop their child was using.
- The right of purchase requires the GST component of the device is paid plus a service fee (from Dell) which covers the computer being restored to factory default.
- All school software and the MOE system will be removed from the laptop before handing over to parents as part of this agreement.

7. Will the students still be expected to practice handwriting skills?

- While students will use the laptop for many activities, lessons and tasks they will also be required to hand write some things at time.
- From year 5 the specific teaching of hand writing itself is not part of the curriculum. Hand writing fluency develops through the writing process and written work in all subject areas.

8. What additional skills will the students be focusing on?

- One of the more important skills the students will need to practice is typing. This will form part of the class program as well as homework.

9. What does the insurance cover?

- The insurance, with Dell, covers any accidental damage to the laptop for 3 years. Things like having water bottles tipped over the keyboard, damage caused when closing the lid with a pencil on the keyboard, the laptop being accidentally driven over or dropped (examples from Dell).
- The insurance does not cover fire and theft. Parents are advised to include the laptop under their household insurance for fire and theft. All Dell laptops come with a function called Computrace, where a laptop can be tracked to its current location using GPS technology, if it is stolen.

10. How is the program used in the laptop classroom different from a non-laptop class?

- The laptop classroom will follow the same curriculum, as dictated by Education Queensland, but it will be delivered in a more visual, interactive way using digital resources made available to the students individually.
- Students will interact, collaborate, learn and publish using online pathways such as websites, a virtual classroom, the Learning Place (from Education Queensland) and other sources available to us.
- The program as such is not different in a laptop classroom, the way it is delivered and received by the students is the differentiating factor.

11. What will happen if there are too many people who want to participate next year?

- If we receive more than 28 expressions a selection policy will be developed to make the process clear and transparent. We are currently investigating policies other schools with existing programs are using to help guide us in this area.

12. Will there be 2 classes if there are enough people interested?

- In 2011 there will be only one laptop class running. We need to have a trial before we step out and expand to more classrooms. This approach requires a change in teaching pedagogy and the teachers need to be ready to take on this type of learning style. Therefore teachers require appropriate training and support, rather than just being expected to start a class of this nature. We, at Robertson, want to ensure the laptops are utilised to their potential and do not become an expensive pencil.
- In 2011 we plan to train additional staff so more classes can be offered in 2012.

13. Where else are laptop classes running in Primary schools?

- There are over a dozen laptop programs currently running in Queensland, and even Brisbane, schools. Some examples are: Warrigal Rd SS, Marsden SS, Jindalee SS,

Ironside SS, Burrowes SS, McDowell SS, Peregian Springs, SS, MacGregor SS, Crestmead SS and Mable Park SS.

14. Will the class be chosen as a gifted class?

- At this stage there is no set policy on how the class will be chosen. It is anticipated there will be a gifted cluster of students, as we currently have in all our classes. The intention is to have a spread of abilities and characteristics in the class.

15. As the fee needs to be paid upfront, does it mean that it is non-refundable if the child changes school due to whatever reason?

- If, for any reason, a student leaves our school there are a couple of options open to us.
- The laptop is loaned to the student, if the new school is an Education Queensland State School we can maintain that loan for the 3 years and you take the laptop with you. At the end of the 3 years you would either return the laptop or take the option to purchase for the GST and servicing fee
- The second option is we can ask those families on the waiting list (those who did not get into the program initially) if they would like to be part of the program and take the child's place. Under this option an agreement will be made to a part payment made by one family to the other, pro-rata, for the laptop as per the original agreement price (eg if it is after one year \$1000 would be the amount payable by the new family to the one leaving). This would naturally depend on those on the waiting list wanting to accept a position at the time.

16. If the child is not participating this year, does it mean that she will not be participating in Laptop Class in yr 6 & 7?

- 2011 is a trial year for us. At this stage we cannot say whether other classes (straight or multi-age) will be opened up afterwards. The initial plan is to have one class in 2011, then offer additional classes the following year. How many will depend on the teachers who are trained and willing to teach in such a program and the parent interest for the year level.

17. How much time (in terms of hours, approx) a child will be spent on using the computer daily?

- Approximate hours that students will be using laptops will vary and depend on the subject. From other programs we have seen they are used around 65% - 75% through the day. The usage they will have will not be hours sitting in front of a screen on a laptop. We intend to incorporate interactive activities and collaboration with the laptop use. For example - in English they may work in groups or with a pair, to plan a task, research together and produce a final piece of work. During this time there will be instruction from teachers where they will be required to look away from screens and focus at different distances, also when working together in pairs or groups they will be sharing tools and not focusing on one spot for a length of time. The seating we are hoping to have will not be standard student desks. They will be group desks that are interchangeable so students can move around and work with different groups for different activities. We are aware of not only tired eyes but also posture and neck issues associated with prolonged computer use. We plan to build into our teaching understandings of appropriate safety for computer use which involves personal, physical safety as well as online etiquette and behaviour.

18. Would the children in this class be disadvantaged in spelling and grammar or tests and competitions due to relying too much in computer or handwriting?

- The short answer is no. With spelling and Grammar we intend to utilise online literacy resources to provide an interactive, engaging environment for them to learn, practice and consolidate skills. Many software programs have in built spell checkers, but these can be turned off so students rely on their own strategies and skills. This will still be a focus, just like any other yr 5 class. Students will still be required to hand write certain work. We will be practicing hand written writing tasks for

NAPLAN and maths will require hand written equations and working out. We will incorporate the digital and manual methods of learning so students get an all rounded approach to cater for them individually. Many exams are multichoice which will not be affected, others that are not will be practiced as we currently practice for them.

If you have any questions not answered in this section please email Ms Anita Bingham:
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