

Student Laptop Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Participation:

Q. I have two students at NTHS. Which one is invited to participate or can both participate?

A. All students may participate.

Q. What does my student need to do to enroll in the program?

A. Parents should review the rules of the program and general computer usage at New Trier with their student and complete the application form. Our Student Technology Specialists can insert the technical information – such as serial number, MAC address and operating system – needed on the enrollment form.

Your student should bring the signed form and the laptop to Computer Lab 377 in Winnetka or Computer Lab D224 in Northfield. We will then complete the form with information from the computer and configure your network connection.

The enrollment registration will be forwarded to our network services department who will authorize the student's access. This may take a few hours depending on staff availability.

Q. In what classes will this program be used - either this year or planned for next year?

A. The goal is to provide more access to technology. The computers aren't required in any particular class; rather they are to be used to complete work that may be assigned in any class. Some teachers may allow students to use the computers in the classroom; others may not.

Hardware / Software Requirements:

Q. We are going to purchase a new laptop for our student. What are the minimum, recommended requirements?

A. Hardware:
The technical requirement is that the computer has wireless networking capability (which most laptops from the past five or so years have).

Software:

In terms of software, they should have Microsoft Office. They may also be interested in some of the same software used at school. For example, if your child is an art student who uses Adobe Photoshop, you may want to consider purchasing that program.

The best way to determine software needs is to discuss with your child what programs are used in class, and then decide if they are needed on the laptop. If you identify programs you need and want more information about where to obtain them, feel free to contact Chris Johnson, Director of Technology, johnsonc@newtrier.k12.il.us.

Q. Is New Trier offering any kind of a laptop purchase deal like colleges do?

A. We currently do not offer a purchase program. Surprisingly, the prices in those programs are often higher than those you may find on the internet. One site which offers daily coupons is: www.techbargains.com.

There are often academic versions of software that are substantially discounted from commercial versions. That includes Microsoft Office Home and Student 2007. www.journeyed.com and www.academicssuperstore.com are two sites that offer academic versions and discount prices.

Miscellaneous:

Q. Is there any mechanism (other than LoJack) to prevent theft?

A. LoJack is the only mechanism we are recommending to prevent theft. There is a risk of theft or loss (just like there is for cell phones, iPods, etc.). We are asking parents to talk to their children about treating the laptops responsibly.

There are other security measures available. Most computers come with a small, oblong slot which is known as a Kensington Security Slot (or K-Slot or Kensington lock). The slot is used to secure a lock and cable to the PC and then to a secure item, like a desk. The problem of course is, "What do you lock it to?" That could be used for extra security in a locker. We do not have a specific recommendation.

Computers may be covered under your homeowner's insurance policy. There may be additional coverage required, so you should discuss this with your insurance agent.

Q. Would the students be required to put them in their lockers after whatever class it is used for?

A. The entire responsibility for the safety of the student's computer rests with them. They may be permitted to use their computer in a class with the teacher's permission.

Q. Would they have to bring their battery chargers with them?

A. They may bring chargers and charge laptops in available outlets.

Q. Is there any way to prevent the students from using the computers at other times outside of class? I think my child already spends way too much time on Facebook and instant messaging and I think the computer would be used for this.

A. Your student would be subject to the same restrictions that are on a school computer – meaning he/she could not instant message or use Facebook. Even with these particular sites blocked, it is still possible for the computer to become a distraction by surfing the web or writing e-mails.

One of the major reasons we are asking for parental permission is that we feel parents are in the best position to know if their child can take reasonable steps to protect the physical security of the computer as well as using it responsibly, and not allow it to distract them from schoolwork.

Q. I have both positive and negative feelings about this. Please address.

A. We understand that you have mixed feelings. Do not feel that you must allow your student to participate; he/she will not be at a disadvantage academically if he/she does not participate in the program.

Q. Who can I contact if I have more questions?

A. Feel free to e-mail me:

Chris Johnson, Director of Technology
johnsonc@newtrier.k12.il.us