

George School Student Computer Specifications

Most Mac or PC laptops purchased in the last four years will work on our network and meet basic academic needs. At an absolute minimum a computer must have wireless network capabilities and be able to run the latest version of Microsoft Office and a current web browser.

The technical guidance below is to help evaluate if a laptop will meet a student’s academic needs at George School, whether it’s a laptop you already have, or one you are considering for purchase.

	Minimum	Recommended
OS	macOS 10.15 (Catalina) or later Windows 10	macOS 12 (Monterey) or later Windows 10 or 11
CPU (Processor)	Intel i5	Apple M1 Intel i5 or better
Memory (RAM)	8 GB	16 GB
Mass Storage Size	256+ GB	500+ GB
Mass Storage Type	Solid State Drive (SSD)	Solid State Drive (SSD)
Wireless Network	802.11n (Wi-Fi)	802.11ac (Wi-Fi)

Apple iPads, Android tablets, and Chromebooks are wonderful, powerful tools and are welcome on our network. However, they cannot integrate fully in our environment and cannot be used in lieu of a full Mac or PC laptop.

Also please note that Linux, Chrome, and other operating systems are not supported (no documentation or assistance is available) and do not meet our computer requirements, though they are allowed on the network.

Students are required to have their own Mac or PC laptop to meet their own general academic computing needs in and out of class.

Webcams and Audio

Students must have a good quality webcam, speakers, and microphone for use with their computer. Most laptops already have these included as a standard. An external webcam can be used if the student’s laptop does not have a webcam or it is of insufficient quality. Students that may be working near others will need headphones or earbuds to use with their computer.

Form Factor

Students often carry their computer with them for use in their classes and around campus. For this reason, mobility should be a major consideration when selecting a new computer so carefully factor computer weight, dimensions, and battery life. The 13” MacBook Air and Windows “ultrabook” class laptops are a good balance of power and mobility. Hybrid tablets or 2 in 1 laptops provide a great blend of capability and mobility if you are considering a Windows computer. Laptops with screens 15” or larger are typically too large and heavy to be carried around comfortably or used on classroom desks.

Graphics and Display

Students that are interested in work such as video editing or gaming would benefit from a discrete graphics card with dedicated memory. Windows users purchasing a new computer can consider a touch screen to take advantage of touch features and digital inking.

Storage

Choosing a solid-state drives (SSD) instead of a traditional hard drive improves speed and boot time, while increasing battery life and overall reliability. 500 GB or greater size is recommended for a main computer. Smaller disks may be sufficient for running the computer and storing MS Office documents and limited amounts of media. Do not rely on a 128 GB drive alone to store large music, photo, or movie libraries.

Digital Inking

Students may benefit to have digital inking ability where a digital or active pen can be used to hand write notes or math, annotate documents, and produce digital art. Hybrid Windows tablets or 2 in 1 laptops have this capability built in. Students with Apple computers and standard (non-touchscreen) Windows computers can use an accessory pen tablet made by Wacom or other manufacturers.

Warranty

A three-year warranty is recommended for new computers. Accidental damage insurance should be considered depending on the habits of the student in the care of electronic devices and the tolerance of the parents to pay for repairs or replacement.

Low Cost Laptops

Be wary of low-cost laptops. A laptop that costs less than \$600 may be made from cheaper components and not last.

Software

George School is standardized on the Microsoft Office suite of software applications including Word, Excel, OneNote, Outlook, and PowerPoint. **This software is provided free of charge to all students via the Office 365 web portal.** Most other software and tools used in courses are web-based, like Google G Suite, or are free to students under George School license, like Adobe Creative Cloud.

Support

Information Technology Services (ITS) Service Desk provides technical support for the users of George School's information technology hardware, software, and services. The ITS Help Desk does not repair personal computers not owned by George School, but does assist users with troubleshooting and configuration assistance. A pool of laptops is maintained for up to a 30-day loan to students while their personal computer is being repaired or replaced. Each academic building also has a few laptops to borrow if an emergency need arises in class.