BYOD Parent Information Booklet

Welcome

The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with information about the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach, hopefully answering many of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Damien Marshall
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1. Introduction

At Raffles World Academy (RWA), technology is a key part of education. Digital technologies provide unique potential to dynamically transform our students' learning experience. They enhance the opportunities for them to be engaged thinkers, active global citizens and central participants in the learning process. Today's digital technologies enable students to not only do things differently; they allow them to do things that would otherwise not be possible inside classrooms using traditional learning tools.

Why does RWA have a BYOD programme?

With many of our students owning their own device and using these for their personal use, we have recognized the need to encourage students to utilize technology in a seamless fashion for their education. The BYOD approach helps to support our drive towards developing learning environments for our students which will develop the skills they need to be successful to live and work in the 21st century.

How will the technology be used in the classroom environment?

In our BYOD classes, as in all classrooms, we view technology as a tool in the classroom which can enhance and much more effectively personalize the learning experience. Technology at RWA is not seen as something which replaces all previous approaches. We still firmly believe in developing key skills such as handwriting and bookwork, just as we believe in developing key 21st century skills such as communication and collaboration, critical thinking and creativity.

How much is the technology used in class?

It is difficult to give an exact time, as each class is slightly different. However, it should be noted that when planning their lessons, teachers consider issues such as managing screen time, and ensuring their students are not on devices for too long consecutively (or in one day). As an 'on average figure', the devices may be used between 1 – 3 lessons in a day. However, it is important to note that in these lessons, the students will not be on their device all of the time (i.e. much of the work may involve them working in a book and using the device to get information, share their work with classmates/teachers, etc.).

Which type of device is recommended?

In our upper primary school we currently have 12 1:1 (iPad to student classes). We have found the iPad to be a great device for students of this age, with it being very user friendly. Additionally, Apple has a wide range of educational content available to users on the apps store which is another huge benefit that we see on this platform. Next academic year in Grades 3-5 we will be moving to full 1:1 (iPad to student) classes and we therefore recommend that if you are purchasing a device now, you purchase an iPad. However, if you already have a different type of device, they are able to bring this in for the BYOD approach this year.

How does the school help to protect my child while they are online at RWA?

While on the RWA campus, the devices will be protected with our school firewall, with this helping to ensure that our students do not access inappropriate content. Additionally, to log onto our student networks, students need a username and password. For all student networks, these usernames are different for each student. When purchasing a device, we do not recommend purchasing the 3G/4G enabled devices as you will be enabling your child to have connectivity via a cell phone plan, which will allow them to bypass the campus network, firewall and web site filters. If your child brings a 3G/4G-enabled device to school, we will require that this is turned off and that only the Wi-Fi is used while on campus.

How is RWA ensuring the students are not overusing the devices?

RWA has become a pioneer in Dubai with our 'Healthy Technology Habits' program. This program has included information sessions for students and parents on topics such as managing levels of technology and personal health issues such as eye health and good posture. We also have a policy that states no devices are used before and after school, as well as during break times. Finally, teachers work with the Head of Digital Learning in planning to ensure that the devices are not overused in the classroom, balancing out utilizing their potential and managing our students' health.

What training and technology support will my child and their teacher receive?

The Head of Digital Learning works closely with classroom teachers and students in how to effectively use their device in the classroom. Teachers at the school also receive ongoing professional development about this as well, and will transfer this knowledge and skills to their students.

Are the children allowed to have games on their devices?

The purpose of the students bringing their devices to school is to support their learning. While at school the students **are not** to use their devices for personal purposes (i.e. playing games, sending emails, etc.). However, we do recognize that not all families are able to have multiple devices (i.e. one for home, one for school). Therefore the students are allowed to have a few games on their devices, on the following conditions:

- they do not play these while at school (including before and after school); and
- they do not impact upon the students ability to save work (i.e. not having so many that they take up too much room on the device).

2. Device Specifications

What research was done by RWA to make this informed decision?

Before implementing our approach to technology at the school, it was carefully researched, with similar approaches taking place around the world. Over the past few years our school has been enhancing our approach towards enhanced integration of technology into our classrooms. Our 1:1 (iPad to student) programme has developed from one pilot class in 2013-14 to 12 classes this academic year, as well as the implementation of the BYOD approach in the primary school from last year. Over the time it has been running at RWA, we have surveyed our student and parent community regularly, with modifications being made to the programme based on this feedback.

There have been a number of studies done in the field that identify the many strengths of using these devices in the classroom, as well as some of the challenges school must address to ensure that these are used effectively. As a school we are well aware of all of these, and work tirelessly in our approach to their use to ensure that they are being used very effectively. Below is a link to a few articles/websites which you may wish to read:

- 10 Big Benefits of Using iPads in Schools
- 17 Benefits of using iPads in the Classroom
- iPads in the Classroom (BBC)

Also, this is a video that was made by one of the current students, Lea Fink, which gives you an insight into some of the ways that the use of the devices in our 1:1 classes.

What are the minimum specifications for the device?

The following chart will help you in selecting and purchasing a tablet for your child to use while they are at RWA. We recommend an iPad as this is what they will require next year in Grade 3 but this is not mandatory this year.

Machine Type	Tablet
Screen Size	7 inches or greater
RAM	4GB or Higher
Hard Drive	16 GB or Higher
Wireless	802.11g or Higher
Ports	Audio in/out, In-built microphone

Who is responsible for the device?

Students are responsible for the safekeeping of this device, on the way to and from school, as well as while they are at school. The school will provide a safe environment for the storage of devices; locked cupboards will be available in each class for students and they will not be allowed to take them outside at break times, or have them out before or after school when they are not with their parent/caregiver.

3. Healthy Technology Habits

At RWA we understand the importance of a healthy balance between the use of technology and physical activity. While we do seek to use technology to enhance our learning environments, we also actively promote a healthy attitude and approach towards technology use by our students, both while they are at school, and at home. As a school, we are very conscious of managing screen time while the students are at school, and these guidelines have been developed to help you in how to manage screen time at home.

Some of the negative consequences of excessive screen time include:

> ➢ Make it hard for your child to sleep at night
> ➢ Raise your child's risk of attention problems, anxiety, and depression
> ➢ Raise your child's risk of gaining too much weight (obesity)

While technology can be used to help children with their schoolwork, surfing the internet, spending too much time on Facebook, or watching YouTube videos is considered unhealthy screen time.

What rules should be set at home for their device use?

As with any rules, clear and patient communication between you and your child towards setting boundaries and maintaining good study skills are always recommended. The device will not change your communication, but will offer the opportunity of a new discussion towards responsibility and growth. RWA encourages parents to remain up-to-date on current device technology and to utilize parental control options on their child's device to lock certain functions, if necessary.
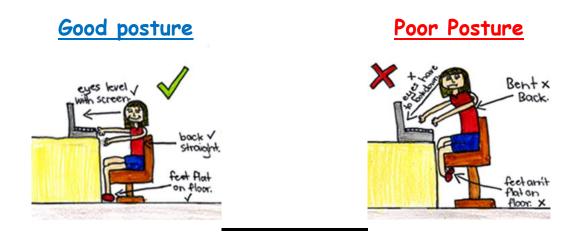
Recommendations for Managing Screen Time

Cutting down screen time at home can be hard because technology (e.g. TV, computers, etc.) may be such a large part of daily routines. But you can help your children by telling them how excessive amounts of sedentary activities affect their overall health. It is important that as parents you talk to them about things they can do to be healthier. Below are a few strategies you may choose to implement in your house to help manage screen time more effectively.

1) **Manage levels of television use:** there are many strategies that can be implemented to minimize their television use, including:
   > ➢ Limit TV on school days and try to avoid television before school.
   > ➢ Don't allow TV watching during meals or homework.
   > ➢ Decide which programs to watch ahead of time and turn the TV off when they are finished.
   > ➢ Keep a record of how much time is spent in front of a screen. Try to spend the same amount of time being active.
   > ➢ Be a good role model as a parent. Decrease your own screen time to 2 hours a day.
2) **Implement a technology curfew:** technology must be turned off during meals and by a certain time each night (e.g. 8pm). Don't allow phones to be kept on during the night in your child's bedroom.
3) **Make bedrooms off-limits for technology** - Require that computers and smartphones be used in public spaces and charged in a central area – like the kitchen.
4) **Offer alternatives:** Challenge your family to go one week without watching TV or doing other screen-time activities. Find things to do with your time that get you moving and burning energy. Suggest other activities such as family board games, puzzles, or going for a walk.

Consequences

Be very clear about the consequences. If your child won't comply with your technology rules, the technology goes away. First offense – they will lose their technology privileges for one week. Second offense – they lose their technology privileges indefinitely. This may mean that when they are not at school, they'll have to use the computers only in the company of a parent only to complete their homework as they have lost their right to use technology independently. Having consequences for misuse is important, just as having consequences for all types of misbehavior is important.

Good Posture

Eye Health

A rule that we have in our classrooms at RWA is the 20-20-20 rule. This is

Every 20 minutes
Look 20 feet away
For 20 seconds