



Dear ISL Parents/Guardians of students in grades 5-7,

We are in the process of finalizing our school improvement plans for the 2016-2017 school year and beyond. One of our key objectives is to increase utilization of technology to further develop ISL as a 21st century learning environment. There is substantial evidence that using technology as an instructional tool enhances student learning and educational outcomes. Overwhelmingly, studies of laptop programs indicate many positive effects for students.

Studies indicate that students using laptops in school:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are more self-directed in learning• increase their research skills• spend more time working collaboratively• can present information more effectively | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improve problem solving and critical thinking skills• have increased access to information• have increased engagement in learning• are engaged in more project-based work |
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(State of New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, Curriculum K-12 Directorate, 2009)

In an effort to meet these goals, the parents/guardians of all Middle School students, grades 6-8, are required to supply their child with a laptop computer and a charger that can be used in school on a daily basis in the 2016-2017 school year. Participation in the BYOL program is not optional.

The system requirements/hardware specifications for student laptops are as follows:

- ❖ WiFi capable
- ❖ Attached keyboard
- ❖ Less than 3 years old
- ❖ USB and headphone jack

This program utilizes laptops **not** tablets/iPads because there are limitations with tablets that may prevent a student's' full participation in the educational program provided at ISL. Do make certain to insure the laptop before your child brings it to school. ISL will not be responsible for any damage. An updated User Agreement will be sent home with your student during the last month of school. Both the student and one of their parents/guardians must sign this document before a student is allowed to participate in the BYOL program.

We wanted to share this requirement to provide your child in grades 6-8 a laptop for school use with you now to allow you as much time as possible to purchase a device. Many families travel and may find it easier and less expensive to purchase a laptop during their travels. If you prefer to purchase a laptop locally, ISL has used Capital, a company based in Riga as a supplier for a number of years. Capital will offer an educational discount to the families of ISL students. Please visit their website, <http://capital.lv/>. Google Chromebooks also offer a suitable, low-cost option that meets the ISL device specifications and can be purchased online at <http://www.neostore.lv/>.

If there are any questions or concerns about purchasing a laptop, or questions about whether the laptop your child is currently using will do, please contact the ISL technology department, at tech@isl.edu.lv. Please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the ISL website at <http://www.isl.edu.lv/faq>. You can also see us at the Parent/Student/Teacher conferences in April, we will be available both days in the sport hall.

We are excited about the teaching and learning opportunities made possible by this initiative. We are confident that ISL is ready for this step, and that our students will be better prepared for success.

Sincerely,

The ISL Technology Department

Tech@isl.edu.lv