

Bishop Dunne is a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) environment. Internally, Bishop Dunne will permit almost any device access to the network and filter content in accordance with Bishop Dunne Internet Policy and the law. Beyond this point lay a number of limitations that are out of our control. Mostly, these limitations are imposed by eBook, web design and content providers, and the evolutionary shifts in the technologies that drive the “internet”.

In order to minimize these limitations, we have found that certain platforms will cooperate better than others. Generally, the best performance will be gained from a device running a standard operating system such as Windows or MacOS.

Therefore, the decision making process is reduced to selecting a PC or Mac. Either platform will cover all education scenarios in use in the school today. Both platforms share similar advantages and disadvantages with content provided by educational content publishers. However, we can generally overcome many performance issues experienced throughout the school year on either of these platforms.

When choosing a computer, the goals of the student can factor into the buying decision. If your child is leaning toward photography or videography, a more robust computer will be required to make the experience flow smoothly. If this is the case, a more “high end” machine might be appropriate. Such a machine would need to contain the latest generation CPU and graphics elements, more RAM and larger storage capabilities.

What follows is a brief overview of the PC and Mac platforms.

Microsoft Windows and generic PC computers.

Recommendations for a typical PC laptop include a machine with Windows 10 Home or Windows 10 Professional. The hardware configuration should include an i5 or i7 Intel processor (8th Generation, or higher), at least 8 GB of RAM memory with a minimum of 500 GB of hard drive or SSD storage, and Wi-Fi access. Screen sizes should range from 13” to 15”. This screen size range proves comfortable viewing and maximum portability. Laptops now have cameras, speakers, microphones built in. A few will still have a DVD drive for loading software or watching DVD movies but, these are unnecessary. Battery life is also a major buying decision factor, as the longer the battery life, the better the experience.

We strongly recommend that any PC come with a paid subscription to an anti-virus, anti-malware software product. We use Sophos within the school and this software is available for home use for up to 5 devices. This software can be found at www.sophos.com Bishop Dunne does not provide this software.

Bishop Dunne provides free access to the Microsoft Office suite for all active students. This suite covers Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Teams, etc.

Bishop Dunne also provides free access to the Adobe software suite if instructional requirements dictate its use.

I would always recommend going to a store (Costco, Sam’s Club, MicroCenter) to get a feel for what is comfortable to use and a price point you can manage.

Apple Mac

Most of what is listed for PC applies to a Mac as well. Macs generally come complete but with a couple of options that allow memory and hard disk increases. 8 GB of RAM is generally a minimum. Hard disk or SSD sizes start at about 256 GB, and go up from there. A 13" screen is generally adequate for ebook reading and day to day work. Rule of thumb for both RAM and Hard Disk is "more is better". As far as Operating Systems go, try to have at least MacOS 10.15 (aka: Catalina) or later. The core processors these days are primarily Intel Cores, much the same as PC's. If the machine was made in 2019 or later, you are good to go. It should be noted that Apple are now transitioning to their own CPU cores. (The latest is an "M1 chip").

Battery life on most models runs between 5 and 8 hours depending on the health of the battery and machine vintage.

Macs also have the advantage of being relatively ignored by the hacker community when it comes to malware and viruses. However, they are not completely immune. Sophos for Mac is still recommended and can be found at <https://www.sophos.com>.

Macs do come with a premium price, but there are a couple of things in your favor that can reduce the sticker shock. Apple sell refurbished current models for about a 10-15% discount. You should also be able to get a student discount. If you work for a company on their list, there are discounts that generally save you about 9% on new machines.

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The refurbished machines are prime quality, with new cases, the current release of MacOS and full warranty – like new. I would recommend an AppleCare extended warranty, especially for a student. You can also purchase used machines from other sources, but the age and state of such machines can be somewhat questionable, and the warranty (if any) will be weak. I recommend taking a trip to an Apple store, Costco, etc., and playing with the machines. Get a feel for the screen size comfort level and speak with a representative.

In closing...

Most PC's and Macs are quite robust and will survive typical bumps and knocks, especially if the storage medium is an SSD (Solid State Disk – No moving parts). Students are hard on the machines. No matter how careful they are, accidents do happen. We have seen many casualties that we cannot fix such as broken screens. Such a catastrophic loss will affect your child's ability to do their work, as repair times or replacement costs will certainly become problematic. Some of the most robust machines we have dealt

with include products from Acer, HP, Asus, Apple and Dell. There are also options to explore for insuring the device against most accidents.