QUESTIONS, ANSWERS and updated FURTHER INFORMATION v2
ON A PARENT FUNDED PROGRAM

What’s happening now?
To ascertain from the parent community the viability of a parent funded ‘one to one’ Macbook program. We are planning for Year 4 & 5 classes in 2013 to have ‘one to one’ Macbook environments. These students are currently in Year 3 and Year 4 and ideally we would like all of these students to have their own machine.

What if we don’t participate in the ‘offer’?
There needs to be 80% of parents willing to commit in order for us to proceed. If less than 80%, then the proposal is not viable and will not proceed. Alternative ICT planning will then take place, but we will review this again with the school community during 2013.

What will happen if the proposal goes ahead and we don’t supply our child with a Macbook?
Students will have access to a computer as is currently the arrangements i.e. on a shared basis using one of the current machines or by having their class ‘book’ a session in the computer lab.

What will happen in 2013 for Year 6 & 7 students?
Students currently in Year 6 & 7 have access to one of 28 school owned Macbooks. These machines will be available for students in Year 6 & 7 next year and will be a shared machine as there are not enough for each student to have one each. This means that a Macbook may not always be available as it is may be used by others throughout the school.

What if we already have a Macbook, can we use that?
Yes- but it will need the school network ‘image’ to be installed in order to operate on our network and access resources such as printers and internet.

Why 3 choices of machine?
Any of the machines will suit the learning requirements at school for this age group. There are differences in battery life, memory, speed etc. The choices are what best suit family tastes and the home environment. The specifications for each machine can be viewed on the link outlining the pricing bundles. Please refer to your email sent by Deborah Brunette on 10th September.

What software will it come with?
The school image will have the required software built into it including antivirus. In addition the bundle offered has $70 for iworks which is the equivalent of word, excel and powerpoint.

Who do we pay/lease from?
This is managed by Winthrop Australia for purchase and Flexirent for leasing. The school doesn’t handle the purchase or leasing of student machines. Your child’s machine is ordered once Winthrop receives your on-line order agreement and payment details.

Why are we doing this?
This has been shared with the parent community with school ICT plans and additional information found on web links on the school web site.

In brief, the trend in education is no different to that for the rest of the community. Students find ICT engaging and motivating which facilitates learning.
In May 2008, Education Ministers issued the third Joint Ministerial Statement on ICT in Australian education and training: 2008-2011 acknowledging that ICT’s “are enabling the change of the curriculum and changing the way students and educators operate, learn and interact”. Ministers have agreed that: “Australia will have technology enriched learning environments that enable students to achieve high quality learning outcomes and productively contribute to our society and economy.” Joint Ministerial Statement on ICT in Australian education and training: 2008-2011.

Keeping safe on the Internet
Schools and parents will need to work together to build on and ensure that the students have the right skills, knowledge and understandings to use technology such as macbooks and other technologies safely. We all have a vested interest to be involved, keep children safe and make sure that there are limits and boundaries set, correct language, etiquette is used etc. The macbooks have features which enable parents to set time limits where the machine will shut down at a given time, restrict access to the children etc. More information can be found on the Apple web site at Parental Controls.

Every internet request and download is recorded, logging user ID, time, page element accessed, size of element, method of access and the machine from which the request was made. No internet filtering mechanism will be perfect. Students found to be accessing inappropriate material and social networking sites will be referred and managed within the school behaviour management policy. The action taken will vary depending on student age and may include notification to parents and limitation to internet access and other ICT privileges.

In addition, the school will be updating and reviewing the Acceptable Use Policies for ICT learning and becoming an ‘E-Smart school’ where we will implement a comprehensive cybersafety plan for the school community.

What about Government funding for this?
The Federal Government has recognised the need and provided an Education Tax refund. The State government provides schools with funding for their ICT infrastructure on a 1:4 ratio. This funding is also for networking, computer servers, technical support, whiteboards, projectors, printers and supplies etc.

What is important now is to ensure funds you spend are for your child.

What will happen when my child goes to high school or leaves the school?
Secondary schools all over are recognising the need for technology in learning. There are moves now to have the final exams of Year 12 online just the same as driving tests are online. Melville SHS issues their Year 9 students with a Macbook. This is to provide value for money for their existing PC licences and comes from Federal funding to secondary schools.

If you leave the school and leave leased a machine, then you can return the machine. There is more detailed information about this on the Flexirent Site found on the Winthrop link.

Additionally, at the end of the lease period, if you pay for one more month lease, you then own the machine and have another 3 years of cover and protection. Again, refer to Flexirent web link.

Why one each?
The student's individual need to access to a computer is imperative, especially if they are to achieve their potential. As every home has a computer the competition from children and parents in the home will demand a second and eventually one each. It is important that students have one with the same software just like a textbook.

What notebook and how much?
There are 3 parent funded bundles to choose from each with Apple Care 3 year warranty, phone support, an Apple store credit to download software, a carry case and an external hard drive. This is an integral part of developing good maintenance habits for the children. They need this and it will be kept at home so that each day they can backup their day’s changes. This means that if their
machine is broken, stolen or lost, when they get another they can simple upload from their external hard drive.

Insurance is covered under Home contents policies but it is strongly advised you will need to check your policy to confirm that this is the case in your particular situation.

Licence ownership of the machine and software is with the home/purchaser. Required upgrades will be decided by school and communicated accordingly.

What about the different platforms?
It will not be unusual for a home to have a Windows and Apple/Mac mix. It doesn’t matter. Children are adaptable and need to be. They need to be able to generalise knowledge and understandings across different areas not only computer systems. It is very easy and the Mac accommodates Windows far easier than vice versa.

What about anti-virus?
The Apple/Mac is not worried by viruses to the extent of PC machines. However under the Memorandum of Understanding we are required to sign with the Department (DET), McAfee will be provided free. This ensures protection of the DET system.

Are there any on-going costs?
This is unforeseeable however the only one that may be a consideration is software upgrades.

What other buy options are available?
Some marketing will suggest you can pick up a Macbook for less, however you need to be mindful that by the time you factor in purchase of software and technical support, the cost has blown out.

Parents have a choice of:
1. Purchase outright (insurance cover by parents home content policy)
2. Consumer Loan / Rental with Flexirent and optional insurance cover.

The Wii, games box, TiVo, blue ray, DVD recorders, video cameras, stereos, mobile phone, etc are all individually expensive and many have made this investment – for fun/recreation.

The Macbook will be an educational investment and one that can be used by the family as well as the student. The Family Tax Benefit is provided to families on a means test basis and families may be able to access a rebate. There is a link on the Winthrop viewing page to assist in determining if you qualify for this.

Will our child care for this?
The care that students take for the computer is a family/personal issue however, our experience from the students who were part of the Macbook trial is that they did take care with no damage or issues. The students are responsible for their machine, own it, use it in class and parents can support with teaching how to care and respect such a costly item.

What are the advantages of purchasing and leasing?
As a parent you would need to ask your tax accountant as each families finances vary. If you leased over 3 years, the cost of the machine would vary depending on which one you chose.

There is the additional option of a buy back option. Flexirent has a deal where if you make one more monthly payment this increases the rental period for another 3 years with insurance. This one additional cost means you have the machine for 6 years. A very attractive proposition!

What about staff expertise?
Training has been and will be provided for staff with some teachers already being proficient Macbook users. They know that the programmes and operation of some software will be similar to
what we already have with our Windows system. Most teachers find that they regularly use ICT as part of their own personal productivity and classroom preparedness.

What about the health of students?
In our primary school classes we already move around and change lessons frequently. Nevertheless we will have a 50% benchmark so students are not engaged in viewing for more than 50% of daily class work. This of course is spread over the day not all at one time and they will still have their normal break times. In reality, we will never be able to get away from explicit teaching when we will be holding whole class instruction, however what will change is the flexibility and differentiation in the learning program that can be offered to meet individual needs with challenge and support.

What if things go wrong?
The time spent on issues around Macbooks has been less than a Windows machine. Students will be having a daily back up in case things go awry. The school has an arrangement for technical support of both the wired and wireless networks and associated infrastructure which would also support students. This is in addition to the support provided with the machine which is on-phone support from 7am to 7pm and weekends.

The damage/theft possibility should be handled through your contents policy and specifying the Macbook and adding it to your policy or lease agreement. It is very important to ensure your insurance covers the Macbook outside/away from your home. The school or Department does not carry contents insurance for students.

From Apple: For tracing a stolen/mislaid Macbook, students need to have their machine’s serial number, an iCloud Account, and have enabled ‘Find my Mac’. The school has a trolley of 15 Macbook pros that other classes access but can also assist on the occasion when such problems arise.

Macbook Use in the Classroom
The nature of the Macbook environment is that students will have their Macbooks with them and available for use throughout the school day. This does not mean though that they will be used in every lesson. Like other learning tools, the use of Macbooks will depend on the particular learning activity and this is at the discretion of the teacher. Macbook activities will blend with others such as writing, reading, discussion, debate and testing and students will find that their use of Macbooks will vary from day to day.

Handwriting, Writing Skills and Macbooks
The nature of school and state wide testing continues to dictate that students are required to take the bulk of tests by hand. With this in mind, school guidelines state that handwriting skills and handwriting activities will remain as regular activities across the curriculum. However, this is not to say that the use of Macbooks for writing tasks causes a deterioration of handwriting skills. Though it may seem counter-intuitive, research from a very large scale study (Silvernail and Gritter, University of Southern Maine, 2007) of the impact of 1:1 laptop use on writing skills in the US state of Maine over a five year period has found that laptop use has a positive impact on writing skills. It is argued that as students learn to take advantage of computers for writing, their writing strategies change. Revisions of drafts become easier and accepted as a normal part of the process, improving the overall quality of writing. The study concludes that using laptops for developing and producing writing helps students to become better writers both when using a laptop and when writing in longhand. The research report may be found at: http://www.usm.maine.edu/cepare/Impact_on_Student_Writing_Brief.pdf

How to See Your Child’s Work
We believe that it is important for parents to be as involved in as many aspects of their child’s work as possible and parents are encouraged to regularly spend time with their child asking them to explain the work on the Macbook. This is likely to include movies, podcasts, web pages, simulations, drawings, photo essays, artworks, musical compositions and animations. The creativity expressed in this work will be supported by the interest of parents as well as teachers and looking through it on the Macbook should be as regular as looking through workbooks.
Occupational Health and Safety

Instruction on use of Macbooks in a good ergonomic environment will be presented to students new to the School or to the ‘one to one’ Macbook environment at the start of each year. This will focus on good posture with attention to the position of the chair, desk and Macbook as well as demonstration of stretches and other exercises. Additionally, we advise students to avoid looking at any screen (including television) for extended periods of time. It is for this reason that access limits to both the internet and any laptop use have been put in place.

In applying best practice, we are mindful of the fact that students differ in their usage from other Macbook users, eg in the workplace. Generally, they are not seated in the same place for long periods of time whilst using the Macbook and take frequent breaks from the keyboard and screen, even in the same class.

Evidence from within and other schools with longer experience of laptop use is that the combination of educating students about good ergonomic practice and young people’s natural habit of changing posture frequently addresses the issue of physically safe use successfully.

Access Limits

The operating system includes content filtering which gives the machines built in protection anywhere, anytime. This breakthrough means that for the first time, schools which adopt this particular technology can extend the protection offered by the school to the home. This filtering extends also to social networking sites so that pages which contain offensive language or other content will not be able to be seen on the Macbook. In the meantime and as a general rule, it is recommended that parents include the Macbook in any limits on ‘screen time’ which includes television and video games.