

LAPTOPS AT MICHAELHOUSE FAQs



MICHAELHOUSE

03 August 2021

Purchasing a laptop in D to B Block

“As education leaders in Africa, we pledge to develop significant men of understanding, thought and culture by future-fitting them for a global, connected world to serve, to think, to lead and hereby reaching their full potential” (Michaelhouse Academic Vision, 2021).

One of our objectives in achieving this is: *“Integrating progressive and cutting-edge technologies into our teaching and learning to prepare our boys for an ever-changing world”* (Michaelhouse Academic Vision, 2021).

WHY LAPTOPS AT MICHAELHOUSE?

Blended learning is a pedagogical approach that focuses on in-person teacher and student relationships, while simultaneously integrating appropriate technologies to enhance teaching and learning. It is human-centred and focuses on authentic, relevant learning that provides students with the potential to research, evaluate, critique, design, create, amplify, and disseminate ideas, understanding and knowledge on an exponential scale. It is an effective and meaningful way of integrating 21st Century competencies into a traditional place-based classroom.



In short, a device such as a laptop at school, when used appropriately, supports a blended learning environment and the best of in-school and digital learning. It is more than a quick fix. It is a way to enhance and accelerate learning by providing student-centred approaches to meet diverse learners’ needs. Blended learning therefore puts more responsibility on the student, encouraging more discovery-based methods of learning.

WHY HAS MICHAELHOUSE CHOSEN LAPTOPS INSTEAD OF TABLETS?

We know that tablets or iPads are innovative devices; however, these devices are predominantly aimed at younger learners who require simple applications and learning tools and are also aimed at consuming content (browsing, email, social media, etc.). While our boys are now older, their engagement with technology requires different skills and applications that are generally more available on fully functional and feature-rich laptop applications. We also need to ensure that our boys have the necessary skills and tools that will stand them in good stead in their future world of meaningful work, be it in tertiary institutions or in the workplace. Equipping them with the necessary skills and experience will ensure that the boys have a strong foundation to build on.

Laptops also offer a wider range of applications and tools that may be required should the boys need any type of assisted learning or in-class support.

At this stage, it is not practical for the boys to work solely off a tablet, neither can we expect each boy to have both types of devices. Therefore, a laptop is our chosen device to engage with learning and technology.

WHAT DEVICE HAS BEEN CHOSEN FOR E BLOCK 2022?

After discussions at multiple levels and comparative research across various brands, manufacturers and other schools, Michaelhouse have chosen the Dell Latitude 3410 laptops for E Block 2022 as our prescribed device.

Dell Latitudes are known for their robustness, reliability, and longevity as they are business-grade laptops. We do believe that this laptop, with this hardware specification, should last to the end of the boys' A Block year.



WHY ARE WE PHASING IN PRESCRIBED DEVICES IN E BLOCK 2022?

We believe that we have struck a balance between affordability, functionality, and support. We do not wish to under-spec the laptop to bring the costs down and neither do we wish you to invest in an excessively expensive computer with unnecessary functionality. From our research, the prescribed device needs to be:

- affordable for both parents and at a minimum required spec for effective teaching and learning
- well-supported
- a popular choice with boys. If we do not choose a device that boys will enjoy using, parents may be pressured to purchase other brands that do not meet our high levels of support and standardisation.

Furthermore, standardising a prescribed laptop not only assists the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the classroom, but it also allows for quick turnaround times in support and availability of hardware and most importantly ensures that all boys are on an equitable learning platform. No boy should be disadvantaged should they not have the 'right' laptop.

Having a prescribed laptop and the accompanying support, means that should a laptop become faulty, the IT team and Dell will ensure a quick turnaround time. Not having a standard, prescribed device might be disadvantageous to the boys should the non-standard laptop need to go out for repairs as this



might take longer than otherwise. The laptop will be used in class daily.

There may be other manufacturers that offer laptops with similar specifications, but Dell are one of the few manufacturers that offer a 5-year support package and 5-year accidental cover.

WHAT MINIMUM SPECIFICATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR BOYS IN D – B BLOCK WHO NEED A NEW DEVICE?

The laptop should have the following specifications:

- Intel® i5 processor (9th Generation or above)
- 8GB RAM
- 256 GB Solid State Drive
- 14 FHD Monitor*
- 5-year support agreement**
- 5-year accidental cover**
- Microsoft Windows 10 Pro operating system
- Windows Defender Anti-virus

* If a good 2-in-1 device (device with stylus) can be found with the above specs, then this would be recommended for Maths and note-taking. Boys taking EGD as a subject may want to confirm the minimum graphics card specifications for this subject.

** For boys in C Block or above in 2022, a 3-year support agreement and accidental cover will suffice.

WHAT PLATFORMS ARE IN USE?

Michaelhouse has chosen to standardise on the Microsoft platform using Microsoft Teams as our LMS (Learning Management System). We will continue to be open to the use of all other leading platforms, applications, and tools, e.g., Google, Moodle, where it enhances our delivery of meaningful teaching and learning.

DOES THE DEVICE COME WITH INSURANCE AGAINST THEFT, FIRE, INTENTIONAL DAMAGE OR LOSS?

No, you should consider specifying the laptop under your household insurance for theft, fire, intentional damage, or loss. Please chat to your insurance company for further advice.

CAN I PURCHASE ANY DEVICE THAT MEETS THE SPECIFICATIONS THROUGH ANY OTHER SUPPLIER?

Yes, but we do recommend the above minimum specifications with adequate support cover. Since the device will be connecting to the Michaelhouse network, we would like to ensure that it is capable and adequate for the boys' day to day needs.

CAN I PURCHASE A NON-WINDOWS DEVICE LIKE AN APPLE MACBOOK?

Michaelhouse has chosen to work on a Microsoft Windows platform, which is still widely considered to be industry standard. We advise the use of a Microsoft Windows compatible device for the following reasons:

- Easily customisable with the freedom to change hardware and software.
- Cheaper than Apple products even with an educational discount offered.
- Full compatibility with our current network.
- Compatible with most software.
- Support and maintenance readily available.

From a teaching perspective, it is easier for teachers and boys to use the same software. Most of the teachers currently use well-supported Microsoft Windows-based devices.

With all of this considered, we would highly recommend a Microsoft Windows device at this stage but will review our choices annually to make sure we keep up to date with the best technology and practices.

WHO IS GLOBAL Z-DATA (GZD)?

GZD are our preferred IT partner and they are managing aspects of our IT environment. GZD have been in the IT industry since 1996 and have been working with Michaelhouse for the last three years to help prepare our environment for blended learning. GZD are a Microsoft and Dell Certified partner and have negotiated preferential education pricing for the cost of the laptops.

HOW CAN I BUY THE LAPTOP?

Placing of orders



If you wish to take advantage of our preferential education pricing of an excellent business-grade Dell laptop that meets the minimum specifications, you may contact GZD via info@gzd.co.za

WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT DEVICES?

If you have any questions around procurement or devices at Michaelhouse, please email info@gzd.co.za