

October 28, 2009

## **NOTEBOOK COMPUTERS FOR STUDENTS PROGRAM**

**2010-2012**

Dear parents, guardians and students,

Over the past two weeks we have been encouraged by the level of interest shown in the Notebook Computers for Students Program planned for implementation in 2010. The introduction of a 1:1 computer program allowing students to have computer access 24 hours per day, seven days per week has been well received by parents and guardians. At the information evenings held last week and during discussions in recent days with parents, guardians and students much feedback has been received and many issues have been raised.

Some aspects of the program require clarification and even modification and we have endeavoured to do this by providing the following information:

### **1. VCE FUNDING**

The comment has been made by several parents and guardians that the funding model proposed for VCE students disadvantaged those who wished to be involved in the program but did not want to take up the offer of purchasing the computer at the completion of the agreement; after two years for a Year 11 student, or one year for a Year 12 student. After consideration of the points raised we agree and in light of this the following variation to the original payment plan is now in place:

- For Year 11 students- Either a one-off upfront payment OR two annual payments of 33% of the total payment each plus a 33% bond redeemable at the end of the agreement in whole or part depending on the condition of the computer, considering factors such as: \*
- ✓ Scratches and cracks to cases
- ✓ Cracked or not fully functional LCD screens
- ✓ Screens or cases which are misaligned
- ✓ Keyboards – are keys missing, broken or falling off?
- ✓ Are rubber stoppers in the bottom of ACER cases all in place? These have a substantial cost for replacement.

The notebooks may exhibit normal signs of wear and tear, but for full repayment of deposit we expect that they will be in an appropriate condition relative to their age.

- For Year 12 students- Either a one-off upfront payment or one payment of 33% of the total plus a 33% bond redeemable at the end of the agreement in whole or part depending on the condition of the computer as above.

Year 11	*One – Off Upfront Payment	OR	2 x Annual Payments plus bond		Minimum Total * (following return of notebook)
			Year 1	Year 2	
<b>Option 1</b> Acer Aspire One Pro Netbook	\$660	<b>OR</b>	\$230 plus \$230 bond	\$230	\$460
<b>Option 2</b> Acer Aspire Timeline 1410T Netbook	\$880	<b>OR</b>	\$305 plus \$305 bond	\$305	\$610
<b>Option 3</b> Apple MacBook	\$1410	<b>OR</b>	\$480 plus \$480 bond	\$480	\$960

Year 12	*One – Off Upfront Payment	OR	1 x Annual Payment plus bond		Minimum Total * (following return of notebook)
<b>Option 1</b> Acer Aspire One Pro Netbook	\$660	<b>OR</b>	\$230 plus \$230 bond		\$230
<b>Option 2</b> Acer Aspire Timeline 1410T Netbook	\$880	<b>OR</b>	\$305 plus \$305 bond		\$305
<b>Option 3</b> Apple MacBook	\$1410	<b>OR</b>	\$480 plus \$480 bond		\$480

## 2. DEADLINE FOR COMMITMENT AND AUTHORISATION FORM

Many parents and guardians have commented about the tightness of the timeline leading to the first payment, due on the 30<sup>th</sup> October. We agree with these concerns and we were working to a timeline imposed upon us by suppliers. In consideration of this we have renegotiated with the suppliers, *Learning with Technologies* and *Nextbyte* and we have been able to achieve a slight extension. We are now able to place orders for 2010 by the start of the second week in November and are therefore able to extend the deadline for receipt of your commitment and authorisation form, and first payment until Friday November 6. Should you choose to avail yourself of the deposit option, then the balance of the first payment will become due on Monday December 7, 2009.

### 3. NOMINAL PAYOUT FIGURE

Although the value of the computers at the end of a three year agreement is dependent on many factors, not least of which are market forces at the time, we are aware that parents and guardians would appreciate a level of certainty about future financial commitment. In order to address this concern we have consistently stated that we are committed to maintaining the nominal payout figure at the end of this first agreement to \$50.

### 4. USE OF PRIVATELY OWNED COMPUTERS

The ideal circumstance for the school would be that all computers used at school are owned by the school, as this would allow for consistency of servicing, imaging and subject delivery. We do, however, fully accept that some parents and guardians have already made computer purchases and would prefer that their children are able to use those computers at school. In consideration of this our answer to the question of whether privately owned computers are able to be used at school has been, and will continue to be -yes, privately owned computers can be used but that this will cause some difficulty for both the school and the home; and additional costs for the home.

- School owned computers have a three year warranty, many computers purchased privately do not. You may wish to consider the additional expense of an extended warranty
- Certain school and DEECD software is not able to be downloaded onto non-school owned computers. The cost of this software is \$100.70 for a school version of Microsoft Office
- Certain software is *freeware*. Individuals will be able to download this software but it will be entirely the responsibility of the individual student, and their parent/guardian that this is done
- School service charges for provision, maintenance and technical support for the infrastructure that provides connectivity to our networks, both hard wired and wireless have been incorporated into the package price for those becoming involved in the NCSP. These charges will be payable separately by parents/guardians who request that their children use a privately owned computer at school. For 2010 this cost is \$80 and that charge will be payable for each year by those not in the program. Thus the cost over three years would be \$240 and no charge is payable by those who elect to be involved in the Notebook Computers for Students Program
- Parents need to be aware that the school's service responsibility to privately owned computers is limited to issues related to connectivity to the network and ensuring virus protection. Other maintenance and service matters remain the responsibility of the owner
- Anti virus protection must be in place and be approved by the school
- The weight and size of any privately owned computer must be appropriate for daily transport to and from school, and around school. We are confident that the computers we offer are light weight, portable and suitable for transport by 12-18 year olds
- Should you choose to provide a privately owned computer for your child you are committing to ensuring that the computer is brought to school daily by your child
- Parents and guardians should also be aware that wireless connectivity and speed vary from computer model to computer model and that our system is entirely compatible with the three computers we offer in the Notebook Computers for Students Program. Privately owned computers must be equipped with wireless "N" connectivity
- All parents and guardians, whether using school owned or privately owned computers will still be liable for a computer consumables charge. This charge, \$40 in 2010 will be within the annual fees structure, to cover printing and internet costs, including provision of printers and toner.

## **5. FURTHER INFORMATION SESSION**

The two information evenings held last week were well received by those who attended, and attendance levels were pleasing, especially to the session held on Tuesday October 20. Many parents and guardians have commented that they were unable to attend on either night and would appreciate a further session. In response to this concern we are offering a further information session to be held on Wednesday November 4<sup>th</sup>, commencing at 7.00pm in the Core Building at Healesville High School. We encourage anyone who was unable to attend the earlier sessions to come along next Wednesday. The opportunity to ask questions and to hear the questions of others was valuable and the interaction was very useful, not only for families, but for the school also.

## **6. USE OF COMPUTERS AT VCE LEVEL**

We see immense benefit to our students from this program at each year level. We are committed to ensuring that Healesville High School students are not disadvantaged relative to students state-wide, nation-wide and world-wide by providing access to computers on an 'anywhere-anytime' basis. The NCSP will provide our students with this access and ensure they are able to compete locally and with students world-wide, giving them access to contemporary educational practice. This is equally as true at Year 12 as it is at Year 7 and we urge parents and guardians of students at each year level to seriously consider allowing their child this opportunity. At VCE level we see significant benefits to our students in the 'anywhere- anytime' model and the exciting developments in 'ebooks' means that students will be exposed to hugely expanded interactive learning experiences compared to old style 'text book' learning.

## **7. FINANCIAL DISADVANTAGE**

Throughout the introductory phase of this program our offer to all families has been that we urge anyone who is experiencing financial difficulty in relation to the program to contact either Allan Rennick or George Perini to discuss the matter. We have already arranged payment plans with a number of parents and guardians to ensure that their children are able to be involved in the program, and to ease the immediate financial burden on their families. Many solutions to financial issues are available. If financial concerns are an issue PLEASE contact us to confidentially discuss your situation. We want to make it possible for every student to be involved in the program.

We thank all parents, guardians and students for the feedback received; we believe our response to valid concerns has been appropriate and we trust the information provided in this document assists with your understanding of the Notebook Computers for Students Program. We encourage everyone to become involved in this vital and exciting initiative in schooling and educational opportunity at Healesville High School.

Kind regards

George Perini  
Principal

Allan Rennick  
Assistant Principal