

March 8, 2010

Dear Lakeland Ridge parents and students,

As you know, Lakeland Ridge School offers its students a technology rich learning environment. Our students from Kindergarten to Grade 9 learn many things using technology as a tool, as well as learning how to use the technology itself. In our technology-based world, having the ability to use technology effectively enables our students to access knowledge quickly and easily anytime, anywhere. It will also build valuable 21st century skills they will use now, in the future as students and into adulthood.

We are very pleased and excited to inform you about a new opportunity for all Lakeland Ridge students related to technology. Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) has made it possible for our students to bring their own personal devices into the school with the purpose of enhancing their learning and get access to their school files and the internet through the wireless network. We are fortunate to be the first school in EIPS with this capability.

What kinds of devices can my child bring?

- At this time, students may bring in PC or Mac laptops, or netbooks. A netbook is similar to a laptop, but will be smaller in size, memory, and processing speed. A netbook is a very serviceable device for use in the classroom.
- iPhones and iTouches are not able to access the wireless network at this time, as our network cannot currently support these devices. Further network testing and adjustments will be done in the future to determine if this will eventually be possible.

Why would my child want to bring his/her own device to school?

- For many of our older students and junior high students in particular, using a laptop computer or netbook is an effective way to manage their workload at school.
- It allows students access to information at any moment in the day.
- Many teachers at Lakeland have integrated 'virtual classrooms' for students to access and participate in.
- Laptops allow students to quickly work through the knowledge components of curriculum, so that they may engage in more enrichment type activities.
- It is valuable to help us teach 21st century skills to our students, and incorporate those skills in their learning. Having access to technology is a key component of that learning.
- Students would be able to use this technology as a tool to validate, synthesize, communicate, collaborate, and create information.
- Having a personal computer may eliminate some of the need to transfer documents back and forth between computers at home and school.

Can students in all grades bring in a device? Who might want to do this?

- All students have the opportunity to bring in their own devices; however, at this time it may be most appropriate and beneficial for students in upper elementary or junior high. Elementary students and their parents may want to talk with their teacher to discuss how bringing a laptop or netbook might be beneficial to their learning.
- As a staff, we would encourage all students to bring in their own devices. Any student can benefit from the use of this technology at school.

How will my child access the internet?

- Once in the building, students will have access to an EIPS' secure wireless network from 7:30 – 5:00 pm daily.
- Students can select to join the network by entering a password. To keep the wireless network secure, the password will be changed once a week.
- The school will develop a procedure so that students are aware of the new password each week.

How will my child access their school files?

- Students will receive training on data management (how and where to save, organization of files and folders, naming documents, etc). This means that students will be responsible for their own files. Learning how to properly save and use a flash drive will be part of the data management training.
- Students will only be connecting to a secure wireless network, not the EIPS network used by the hard-wired computers in the building.
- Students will respect the personal information of others and adhere to all agreements regarding the appropriate use of technology in EIPS.

Who is responsible for the device while it is at school?

- The student will be responsible for the transportation, care, proper storage, security, and use of the device throughout the entire day.
- Students will receive training on how to use and maintain the device, as well as storing and overall care of the equipment.
- The school is not responsible for devices damaged, stolen, or lost while at school. Parents/students may want to exercise caution about the personal information stored on devices being brought into the school.

Is there a cost associated with bringing a device to school?

- There is no direct cost for students to bring in their own equipment.

How will the teachers manage the presence and use of personal devices in class?

- This technology is a teaching tool and will be regarded like other tools such as textbooks. There will be times when the use of personal devices will be appropriate and in fact encouraged, and other times when it is not. Students and parents will need to discuss this with each teacher to determine when students might be able to use their device in class and for what purpose.

- Classroom rules and expectations will be clearly laid out for all students using devices and will be monitored and maintained in all classrooms.

What do I need to do to enable my child to bring in a device?

- Parents will need to ensure that their child has a good understanding of the appropriate use of technology in general, and can use the device as independently as possible before bringing it to school. He/she needs to understand the basic operation and troubleshooting of the device, and have confidence when using it independently. School staff will help as much as possible when needed, but will expect the student to have already acquired many of the basic skills.
- Parents of all students bringing a device to school will need to carefully review the attached technology user agreement with the student, initial each box, and sign their agreement with the document. Students will not be allowed access to the wireless network or be allowed to have a device at school until the agreement is signed and in place.
- All devices must have up-to-date virus protection software and the ability to access the internet wirelessly. They will also need productivity software such as Office 2007. Updates of any software are the responsibility of the parent.
- Parents are encouraged to provide their child with a travel case or bag for the device that will adequately protect it from drops, bumps or other damage while it is being transported to, from and within the school.
- Although teachers may be able to help with minor troubleshooting during the day, technical support for personal devices is not available at school. Technical support will be the responsibility of the family.

Will my child continue to have access to school-owned computers if needed?

- Absolutely! If your child needs to use a school-owned computer for any educational reason, they will still be able to do so under the technology user agreement he/she currently has in place.

This is an exciting opportunity for our students to enhance their learning and build their technology skills at school. If you would like your child to bring a personally owned device to school, please carefully read, complete and sign the attached document with your child before sending the device to school. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the school at 780 416-9018.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Karen MacDonald
Principal