

# GBMS 1:1 Laptop Program

At the start of the 2017-2018 school year the Green Brook Township school district will commence a 1:1 (“one-to-one”) take-home laptop program for all students in grades 6-8.

Each student will be assigned a laptop and charger. Students are expected to charge the devices, bring them to class, and take care of their assigned computer.

There is no fee to the students or parents for the use of this equipment.

## **IMPORTANT: Required Paperwork**

The state of New Jersey’s “Anti-Big Brother Act” (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-39 *P.L.* 2013, *c.* 44) requires parental/guardian acknowledgement of the district’s Anti-Big Brother notification if students are recipients of take-home district-owned technology. The notice and acknowledgement form is available at <https://goo.gl/pQDWfn> and will also be sent home via hard copy the first day of school. Q&A regarding the Anti-Big Brother Act and how it impacts Green Brook students can be found at the end of this document.

***Students must return the signed acknowledgement form to their PGC teacher no later than 9/12.*** Failure to do so will delay their access to the devices.

## Q&A

**Q: Why is the district doing this? This seems risky; we should wait and see how other schools handle.**

A: The district has had a 1:1 ratio of laptops to students for a couple of years now, but logistics of making those laptops available every period were untenable. By assigning a laptop to each student the district overcomes this hurdle and increases (a) availability of existing resources, (b) accountability of the users, and (c) access to online resources.

Watchung Hills Regional High School is starting a 1:1 program for all incoming freshman this year, and other sending district have had a similar 1:1 program in place for middle school students for the past few years. Yet other districts in NJ have had similar programs, going down to as low as 2nd grade. In terms of “pushing the envelope” Green Brook is in the “sweet spot”—neither ahead nor behind the curve.

**Q: What kind of laptops will the students be getting?**

A: Students will be assigned Chromebooks, which are laptops that run the ChromeOS operating system. Unlike traditional Windows and macOS systems, ChromeOS is primarily a web browser and is dependent upon online resources. As a result, Chromebooks are much more affordable,

highly manageable, and all but immune to most viruses and malware. The laptops are also ruggedized against spills and drops, making them ideal for student use. All of the Chromebooks in our inventory have the same internal specs, but there may be model, color, and cosmetic differences between the units that are assigned.

**Q: When will laptops be distributed?**

A: Tuesday, September 12, during PGC class.

**Q: Do we need WiFi or an Internet for these to work?**

A: Ideally, yes. Since the district has been using Google Apps as its productivity suite, along with various online resources and subscriptions, access to the Internet will provide the best experience. That being said, students can download Google files while at school and work with them offline. When they return to the school network their files will resynchronize.

**Q: How can students access their home WiFi on the Chromebooks?**

A: To join your home WiFi network on the Chromebook please [follow these instructions](#).

**Q: What about 5th grade students?**

A: Fifth grade students have 1:1 access to Chromebooks but they will remain in their homerooms, not for take-home (as has been the case the past two years).

**Q: How will students log in?**

A: Students log in to their laptops using their school-issued Google Apps account ([lastname.firstname@gbtps.org](mailto:lastname.firstname@gbtps.org)). Student accounts and passwords are available in the [OnCourse Connect portal](#) under the *Other Student Data* tab.

**Q: Will students be able to use these laptops to access illicit content?**

A: No. These laptops are subject to the same content filtering when they're off-site as they are when on school premises, in accordance with the [Children's Internet Protection Act](#) (CIPA). For more details, see the Anti-Big Brother Act section below.

**Q: How long will students keep their laptops?**

A: Students will be assigned laptops when they enter 6th grade and will keep them through 8th grade. Laptops will be turned in at the end of each school year and/or when students leave the district. Students will be given the same laptop each year for grades 6-8.

**Q: Will students get a case for their laptop? What about a mouse? Can they personalize their laptop?**

A: The district will not be providing cases (the laptops are already ruggedized) nor mice (the laptops have multi-touch trackpads). Students may add a case at their own expense. Personalization is fine but there can be no permanent damage to the devices (e.g. no Sharpie markings or etchings). Any stickers or other adhesives need to be removed before turning in the device.

**Q: How much will this cost us? What if the laptop breaks, do I have to pay? Do I have to pay for insurance?**

A: There is no fee to the students for use of these laptops. Moreover, the district is not requiring the purchase of insurance or extended warranties.

As far as breakage, we recognize accidents happen. If there is an incident with a student laptop, the district technology staff will repair or replace the laptop at no charge.

However, should there be evidence of willful destruction or gross negligence, the district may opt—at its discretion—to decline to replace the laptop. If this happens, students will be permitted to make use of one of the limited Chromebooks in each classroom unless and until parents replace the laptop (roughly \$330).

**Q: What are the expectations for students regarding these laptops?**

A: Students are expected to:

- Keep the device charged
- Bring it to school each day
- Keep the computer secure (e.g. don't leave the device unattended in a public area)
- Keep it in good working order
- Notify their PGC teacher or the technology department ([121@gbtps.org](mailto:121@gbtps.org)) immediately if there's any loss or damage

**Q: What if students forget to bring their laptop to school?**

A: Similar to if a student forgets to bring a textbook or homework to school, they will need to make do with one of the classroom laptops, share, or have their Chromebook brought from home.

**Q: Can students use their own laptops instead?**

A: Students cannot bring in their own devices for use in the classroom. District-owned devices are managed and have various policies and security certificates that allow them to work in a secure environment. If students have access to another computer at home they are free to use that one—at home (typically they just need to log in to their school Google Apps account to access their work).

**Q: How do we get help with questions/concerns?**

A: A dedicated helpdesk email has been setup for questions/issues with the 1:1 program. The address is [121@gbtps.org](mailto:121@gbtps.org). Please send any/all concerns there.

# Anti-Big Brother Act

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hOg5LR6DN1ucW2wDyDoukMTobdpzlu9gPAfxulknD9Q/edit?usp=sharing>

***Students must return the signed acknowledgement form to their PGC teacher no later than 9/12.*** Failure to do so will delay their access to the devices.

Schools must balance the mandate to track and filter student Internet activity and the need to protect and respect student privacy. The advent of take-home technology makes this balancing act all the more difficult, as student privacy expectations at home are considerably different than when they are in the school during the day.

The practice of Green Brook Township Public Schools, with respect to remote control/tracking of take-home technology, is to enforce the same level of content filtering as in the school and to have the ability to track device location (only when needed) -and nothing else. Students and their families can feel safe knowing that their child's school-issued laptop is insulated from illicit websites (whether visited accidentally or on-purpose), and secure in the fact that there is no "Big Brother" looking over their shoulder.

## **Q: What kind of information is being tracked on my student's district-issued computer when they are not in school?**

A: When students are logged into district-owned devices on district-managed accounts, their browsing history is tracked. Some devices also include location tracking.

## **Q: Why? How is this being used?**

A: This information is used for only two purposes: 1) the filtering of illicit content (in accordance with the [CIPA](#)) and 2) the tracking of lost/stolen equipment. The first use is passive and always on. As your student browses the web, the district's filter blocks certain categories (violence, pornography, hate speech and the like). Logs are made but only reviewed if the system generates an alert (if something really bad is accessed, or any indication of threats or self-harm) or a complaint is raised. Location tracking is used for the recovery of lost and/or stolen devices. Location tracking is always on for iPads. For Chromebooks it is off by default, and only activated if a device is reported as lost or stolen.

## **Q: Can school employees see what's happening through the camera on the device? Can they take control of the laptop and/or see what my child is doing?**

A: The short answer is "no." The longer answer is that in school, during the day, staff can see what is on the student's screen, but this function is disabled after hours and off-premises. The district has no software to control cameras. Additionally, the system we use generates an audit

log for admin activities, including location tracking. These audit logs are not able to be changed by staff.

For other questions or concerns please email [121@gbtps.org](mailto:121@gbtps.org).