

Alexandra Primary School

1:1 iPad Program

2015

“Our purpose is to build a learning community that challenges and supports young minds to develop as independent and lifelong learners, continually striving for excellence in the 21st Century.”

We believe the iPad 1:1 program will support students to achieve our schools purpose.

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What is Alexandra Primary School's 1:1 iPad Program?

1:1 refers to each student having access to his or her own personalised digital device. Our 1:1 iPad program aims to ensure that each student in Fountain, Grades One and Two will be able to access his or her own iPad, to use at home and at school. The school will provide the infrastructure to support student's access to the wireless network. For a child to have access at home and school, parents will need to provide their child with an iPad. The iPads will give students access to literally thousands of tools to assist their learning, guided by the teacher. Parents are requested to privately purchase/provide their child with an Apple iPad that the student brings from home.

Rationale for 1:1 iPad Program ("why can't they just teach 'the basics'!?")

Our children are growing up in a vastly more complex world than we did. There is now so much information that is freely available on any topic at any time. Communication can happen in an instant with people in any part of the world. Because of this, the 'basics' of education have changed. Yes, literacy and numeracy are still the core of our school's focus. However, school is no longer just about learning content, it incorporates learning how to learn and habits of mind that will allow a student to be a successful life long learner. Skills like information literacy, collaboration, creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, and of course ICT (Information and Communication Technology) literacies all form a part of what is a child's education.

As a result, what happens in our classrooms has changed quite dramatically from even a few years ago. Students are now involved in real world challenges that require researching a wide variety of resources and communication with experts and relevant members of our community and the wider world. They are not only learning about the topic at hand, but about the power they can have to affect change in our world, and what it means to be a global citizen in an increasingly interconnected world.

In this environment, ICT tools are essential. It is no longer good enough to have a scheduled 'computer time' on shared devices. On the other extreme, it is also not appropriate to have students 'staring at a screen' all day. The tools our students use as part of their inquiry need to be there, in the background, available when they need them as a small part of a bigger task.

They may need to check a fact, look up where a town is on a map, jot down a key bit of information. Having a tool on hand progresses their learning immediately.

It also allows them to document their learning in a way they never could before. Being able to take a photo or video of an experiment and save it to their blog along with their reflections; recording a video diary of their learning's at each stage of a process; sending photos or sections of a piece of writing to their teacher via email or a shared

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document to get real time feedback. These things, which were all fantastic futuristic visions, only a few years ago, are now being made a reality for Alexandra Primary students.

And of course, in the key areas of explicit numeracy and literacy teaching, our students will have 1:1 access to hundreds of thousands of resources and apps (carefully critic and recommended by the teacher) that can support them in their learning. Every imaginable resource is on hand for them, from a virtual calculator, to interactive tables games, to spelling and grammar resources – there are so many possible learning avenues that the iPad makes possible, with every different learning style now being far more easily catered for. These digital resources also allow our teachers to differentiate their curriculum to meet each child's specific needs in a way that simply wasn't possible before. The students can access interactive videos explaining specific Maths or English concepts at any time in any place. It's no longer a case of 'if you didn't understand the teacher when they explained it then you've missed the boat'.

Alexandra Primary School is extremely excited by the possibilities our 1:1 iPad program could represent for our students next year. We hope you are too!

Why are we moving in this direction? How can iPads improve learning?

Today's students think, connect and communicate differently from those who were at school even only a few years ago. DEECD iPad Trial research showed that students with 1:1 access are:

- *More motivated and engaged in learning*
- *Better organised which improves literacy and numeracy outcomes*
- *Better able to collaborate and think analytically*
- *It is providing students with the necessary tools and awareness tools and awareness to learn and work in a society that is becoming more technology rich.*
- *It is giving students more and new avenues to present their work and learn.*
- *We know that students have different learning styles and by using the iPad we can provide students with an amazing learning tool that supports these various styles.*

1:1 iPads promote better learning in and out of school by encouraging:

- *Anywhere, anytime access to learning*
- *Independent, self-initiated learning, eg promotion of problem solving skills, ability to 'Google' questions they have*
- *More family involvement in education through accessing their iPad*
- *Collaboration between students in different schools, states and even countries*

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- *Ability to teach students how to communicate appropriately and safely in social websites*
- *Ability to access homework and school information online and offline*
- *More time for teachers to teach students to use the internet appropriately as a tool to learn*
- *Greater access to real-time information, digital learning resources and educational software*
- *Working in online spaces such as a Edmodo where students can access varied content to support their level of understanding in a subject area*
- *Ability to digitally capture any learning, such as videos or photographs to create things such as digital stories*
- *Immediate feedback on their learning, as students have the means to reflect instantly and not wait for their work to be corrected by the teacher.*
- *Opportunities to discuss cyber bullying as a real issue and discuss impacts of this as a class*

How much will the iPads be used in class? What about the issue of too much 'screen time'?

Because the iPad is simply another tool that supports student learning (granted, a very powerful and multi-faceted tool), it is impossible to say exactly how much it will be used as this will change depending on the learning tasks at hand.

The concept of a 1:1 program is that the device can be there when needed to allow for 'just-in-time' learning. That is, where students can access key pieces of information where and when they need them to assist them in completing learning tasks. We view 1:1 program as an opportunity to put I.T. equipment into the background of our students learning, rather than being the focus. It is no longer appropriate for students to have scheduled 'computer time' on shared devices, where they stare at a screen for extended periods and then have no access to them after that. A true 21st Century curriculum demands more regular access, but this access will often be in far shorter time spans. Students may need to check a fact, look up the location of a town on a map, use the calculator app to help solve a more complex equation, or watch a 5-minute instructional video. In other words, the devices may be needed in a variety of ways but only as a tool in support of achieving a broader learning task.

What about handwriting?

Students will continue to write with paper and pencil and work to improve their handwriting as well as developing their keyboarding skills. Much of the time, pen and paper remain the best tool for the job. We will assist students to choose the correct tool for their learning tasks.

What about spelling?

There is a common myth that spelling is negatively affected by technology. This has not been supported by research. In fact, research is being done to find out if the opposite is in fact true. Spell checkers on electronic devices allow students to have immediate feedback on which words they have spelt incorrectly. This then allows students to pursue the correct spelling of the word within the context they are using it. Accurate and timely feedback has consistently been shown to be the single most powerful influence on student learning.

We believe that for spelling to be properly learnt it needs to be explicitly taught, regardless of the amount of access to technology our students have. We have a whole school explicit spelling program running at Alexandra Primary School and this will continue in 2015.

What if I choose not to participate?

If for whatever reason you choose not to participate in the program, your child will still have access to our school ICT resources as usual. This program is not designed to replace school provided devices, but rather to supplement them.

Where can I go for further information?

There is lots of information about iPads on the web. Try Googling 'iPads in education'.

Visit the Alexandra Primary School 1:1 iPad Program website at www.alexandraprimaryschool.com or download our school app for free.

Here there is lots of background information about why the school is on the journey towards a 1:1 program. You can find links to evidence supporting the implementation of 1:1 iPad programs, articles and videos, and links to other interesting iPad sites, including the Victorian Government schools iPad trial site.

If you have any further questions, please contact Marissa Ayoubi or Debbie Hibbert. We would like to make every effort to ensure all our families are as informed as possible about this exciting initiative for the students of Alexandra Primary School.