

FAQs for schools – Digital Futures

Laptop allocation

How do I apply for laptops?

Please fill in the Digital Futures application form which can be found [here](#). On the form we ask about your need for devices for your children.

Is my school eligible to apply?

All state primary, secondary and special schools in the borough of Westminster are eligible to apply.

How many devices are available?

We will have 750 devices available to share between all 60 Westminster schools: 600 Windows devices and 150 Chromebooks. The Chromebooks are available to be distributed now and the Windows devices will be distributed in January 2021.

What is the deadline for applying?

If your school operates on a Windows environment please submit your application **by Wednesday 9th December**. If your school operates on a Chrome environment please submit your application **by 11am on Wednesday 2nd December or, if that is not possible, please contact Nora at Young Westminster Foundation on nora@youngwestminster.com**.

Who will own the devices that are given to our school?

The devices will be owned by the school and schools are responsible to loan them to their students. Devices should be returned to the school when they are no longer needed so that they can be re-loaned to another student.

Will the devices be ready to use when they arrive at the school?

Schools are responsible for incorporating the laptops into their domain management systems, drawing down school policies and software and putting safeguarding controls in place prior to loaning them to students. Schools are also responsible for cleaning and wiping of data prior to re-loaning to another child. Devices will be equipped with a locked Admin account accessible only by school IT teams and an open Student Account which will launch automatically when the device is turned on. Students will not be able to install any applications other than those already approved by Microsoft and free in the Microsoft Store.

Are they new devices or reconditioned?

These are new devices.

Can I apply for as many devices as I want?

No. The devices are for families who do not have a laptop and/or broadband connectivity at home and who therefore can't engage in their school work, which is especially urgent for schools which find themselves in a local / class / bubble lockdown situation.

We want to ensure that devices are shared fairly between all Westminster schools. We also envisage that laptops will mainly be needed by children who experience economic disadvantage. We used the most recent available confirmed Free School Meal data to work out how many devices a school might receive (within the limitations of a current supply of 750). We recognise that some children may be in need who are not eligible for FSM and some schools may have made arrangements to provide laptops to FSM children already, so we can only distribute the devices fairly if you give us information on what your current actual need is.

How do you work out who gets what?

An initial allocation was estimated using FSM data and use of DfE scheme data. A decision making panel will consider all applications at a panel meeting using the initial data *and* data provided by the schools on the application forms. A decision on final allocation of devices we have available and broadband will be made by the panel in December 2020.

What if I don't receive as many devices as I need?

Due to a lack of devices available at the moment it is unlikely that schools will be provided with enough laptops to meet the needs of all FSM children. We will continue to fundraise and hope to make more devices available soon. We would also encourage you to continue your own efforts to increase your student's digital inclusion. Some local schools have been successful in raising funding for laptops themselves.

When will I receive my devices?

If successful in applying we will provide you with the Chromebooks in December 2020 and with the Windows devices in January 2021.

My school / a class or year group is in a local lockdown now. How do I get devices quickly?

If your schools or year group is **currently closed and your school has a Chromebook environment** please fill in the application form and contact Nora on nora@youngwestminster.com immediately. We are able to distribute a limited number of Chromebooks now so please do get in touch.

You may also qualify for the national [DfE scheme](#) which aims to get laptops out to schools whose students are self-isolating within 2 days.

What information will the school need to provide to the Digital Futures project once devices have been allocated?

We ask schools to complete a Digital Futures monitoring form to keep a record of which students benefited from the use of a device. This will help inform a more detailed understanding of digital exclusion as it affects children who attend local schools and their families. This in turn will inform longer term targeted fundraising opportunities as they arise.

We also ask families to provide WCC with the names and addresses of students who may need broadband connectivity.

Broadband allocation

How many broadband connections can I apply for?

WCC will make available broadband connections to around 25% of the students who will receive a laptop through this scheme. This is based on an estimate which was calculated through the DfE scheme by which 25% of students had insufficient or no bandwidth to effectively use their device.

How will the setup of broadband connections be managed?

This will be managed through the Council's existing arrangements with suppliers of full fibre or through mobile Mi-Fi Units.

Some of our families have a laptop but no broadband connectivity. Can we apply for them?

Yes. In the application form we will ask you how many children need a laptop, how many need broadband, and how many need both. We expect to be able to provide broadband connectivity for a proportion of families that need this.

Broadband connectivity will be provided for free for one year. What happens afterwards?

Broadband connectivity will have to be paid for after the initial free period of one year but providers are able to offer this at a discounted rate.

For the first year, the connectivity solution will be prioritised as follows with both options having unlimited data:

1. Full Fibre – If the applicant is in an area with full fibre this will be the chosen solution to provide bandwidth to the resident.
2. Mobile Mi-Fi Unit – If the applicant is not in an area with full fibre the chosen solution will be a mobile mi-fi unit that uses 4G connectivity to provide a solution, this is similar to the solution that the DFE use for their scheme.