



BYOD Overview & Policies

Program Overview

All YMCA Academy students need access to an electronic device that has the specifications and ability to support their needs throughout their academic careers. For this reason, the Academy provides access to school-owned laptops and tablets.

However, we also recognize that many Academy students prefer to use their own device, instead of one owned by the school. This is permitted, with certain specifications, under our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy. If your student wishes to use their own device(s) at school, please read the information below.

Benefits of BYOD

- Students are able to use a device that's familiar to them
- No need to sign in and out to different devices throughout the day
- Devices can be highly customizable based on student need
- Sense of ownership and responsibility, and opportunity to practice digital citizenship

Eligible Devices

In order to take advantage of our BYOD policy, a student must have access to a primary device with the specifications and ability to support all software applications needed throughout their academic career at the Academy.

For technical specifications and details about eligible devices, see the ***BYOD Technical Specifications*** document. Please note that this "tech specs" document will be updated as requirements change.

Student Responsibilities

Students who take advantage of our BYOD program are expected to self-manage their devices and use them responsibly. This includes ensuring their devices are in working order, adhering to school policies concerning content, and following teacher directions regarding device use.

A dead battery on a personal device will not be considered as a valid reason for being unable to work productively in class! Personal devices should be brought to school fully charged, and be accompanied by a working charger cable. Students are welcome to use any available electrical outlets to charge their devices, so long as that outlet is not already in use, and their charger does not present a safety hazard when plugged in.

Personal devices need to be able to access the Internet, and must be able to display and interact with Google Drive, Google Classroom, and any browser extensions a student requires as part of their IEP (e.g. Read & Write Pro). Operating systems and operational software must be kept up-to-date.

Students using personal devices are expected to be on-task during class time, and must follow teacher directions to turn off devices when they're not needed for the activity at hand. Academy teachers and staff reserve the right to view a student's device at any time. Personal devices are subject to the same policies regarding responsible digital citizenship and objectionable and offensive content as school-owned devices. See the Academy's Rights & Responsibilities document for details.

The BYOD program at the Academy is a privilege. Students who are unable to meet the required commitments associated with this program will be temporarily or permanently removed from it, at the discretion of the Head of School. Students removed from the BYOD program will be required to use school-owned devices while at the Academy.

Onboarding Procedure

How to enroll your device:

1. Declare your intention to bring a BYOD device by filling out the BYOD Enrolment Form or by contacting the Academy's IT Infrastructure Manager: anagy@ymcaacademy.org
2. Present the device, and all required access credentials, to the IT Infrastructure Manager upon arrival at the Academy for a compatibility inspection. The purpose of this inspection is to ensure that the device meets all requirements laid out in the Technical Specifications document, and to connect it to the Academy's wireless network.

Service Agreement

While Academy staff and teachers will make every effort to support students having issues with their personal devices, we cannot guarantee technical support and will not be able to provide repair or maintenance services as part of the BYOD program.

BYOD participants whose devices become inoperable will be required to use school-owned devices instead.

For network security reasons, the YMCA Academy's IT Infrastructure Manager reserves the right to inspect installed applications and/or active processes on any BYOD-enrolled device at any time.

The YMCA Academy reserves the right to update, change, or revoke the BYOD policy at any time.

The YMCA Academy and YMCA of Greater Toronto is not responsible for any personal devices that are lost or damaged while in use as part of the BYOD program.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the school implementing a BYOD policy?

At the Academy, providing access to technology — including and especially assistive technology — has always been a critical component of how our school operates. In the past, we accomplished this by providing school-owned laptops, a computer lab, and (more recently) tablets for student use, which were signed out by teachers and staff and distributed to students as needed.

Providing school-issued technology is important to us for many reasons, from equity and security to ensuring that students have access to the resources they need and are listed on their IEPs. For this reason, it was a longstanding policy that Academy students were not to use personal devices during class. However, we also recognize that the landscape of assistive technology and device compatibility has changed dramatically, and that, in many cases, our students would be more successful using their own devices instead of the ones that we provide. It is with this in mind that the BYOD policy has been implemented.

How will BYOD-enrolled devices be monitored by teachers and staff?

Academy teachers and staff will use their professional judgement and classroom management training to monitor device use, and reserve the right to view a student's device at any time. No special software will be installed on personal devices to monitor what content is being accessed.

Students using personal devices as part of the BYOD program are still required to adhere to our Rights & Responsibilities document, and are reminded that enrollment in the program is a privilege that is subject to revocation at the discretion of the Head of School.

What's happening to the school's laptops?

Our fleet of school-owned devices, including laptops, tablets, and the Computer Lab, will continue to be maintained and offered for student use to anyone not participating in the BYOD program, and/or as a backup for BYOD-enrolled students whose devices become unavailable for any reason.

What if my student's personal device needs to be repaired?

BYOD participants whose devices become inoperable will be required to use school-owned devices instead.

What if my student forgets to bring their personal device?

BYOD participants who do not bring their personal device will be required to use school-owned devices instead. Repeated incidences of forgetting a personal device may result in removal from the BYOD program, at the discretion of the Head of School.

Migrating to an Apple Ecosystem

We have recently begun the process of migrating the Academy from a Windows ecosystem, to an Apple ecosystem. This migration will start with staff moving to Apple devices for the 2021/2022 academic year, with the goal of replacing the entire student laptop fleet with MacBooks in the coming year or so. This will eventually impact the BYOD program and eligible devices. Once the migration is complete, course content and software used in classes will be more closely tied to the Apple ecosystem.

While we will continue to support Windows operating systems until the migration is complete, if you are currently in the market for a new device for your student, choosing an Apple device would future proof the eligibility for the BYOD program in the coming year(s).