

The Right Laptop for You

Choosing a laptop for your child can be a minefield. In previous years we have worked with a few different partners to help us provide laptops, but we often find this can lead to some dissatisfaction due to quality or price. Therefore, this year we would like to try something different, and present a series of FAQs to help with the decision.

What applications do they need?

We utilised the Microsoft office suite which can be used free of charge once the student has received their login details. Microsoft office is available on all major platforms, as either a downloadable offline application, or online via a browser (chrome, safari etc).

Will an older laptop work?

If your laptop was made after 2018 we would expect it to function with the technology and applications here at Worksop College. However, a new laptop will tend to support faster Wi-Fi standards and have a much longer battery life, which is important as there may not be a charging opportunity during the day.

Is an iPad suitable?

We have a number of students already using iPads, but we do recommend keyboard cases, as extended typing on a touchscreen is not comfortable for most. Due to a few technical difficulties, we would not suggest that iPads are the best option, but we do recognise that sometimes the best option is the only option available.

What is the right laptop to buy?

This answer can cause a lot of headaches, but hopefully, this will help you make more informed choices.

Operation system (the software which runs the laptop)

There are three main choices - Microsoft Windows, Apple macOS and Google Chrome. Some students will already have a preference based on what they use at home or school. However, sometimes a more important factor is cost.

- Chrome is often the most competitive of the three, aiming to provide as simple an experience as possible to get online.
- Windows is built to be flexible in its hardware and software, meaning its price range can be quite extensive. It also has the largest market share, which means most people will have had some experience with the software. This is what we opt for across both campuses.
- macOS sits between Chrome and Windows in its flexibility, but is best known for its long-term robust nature. This system is the most expensive of the three options, but its price is certainly reflective of the service.

Budget

Where you buy your equipment can often greatly vary the price. Always shop around online to ensure you are getting the best value for your money – offers may be available at one store and not another. Refurbished laptops could also be considered, as you can often find near new laptop at half its price.

How much storage should a laptop have?

This depends on the operating system you choose. Chrome has a lot of offerings with only 64GB of storage and this for the most part is fine as 99% of documents will be stored online and the operating system itself doesn't take up too much space. For Windows and macOS we recommend a minimum of 128GB.

Storage will often be denoted with the terms eMMC, SSD, NVMe

How much memory should a laptop have?

A minimum of 8GB is what we would recommend to ensure smooth day to day function. When using Chrome and macOS, 4GB is useable, but this will affect the number of simultaneous things the laptop will be able to do.

Memory is often denoted with the terms DDR3/DDR4, SODIMM, SDRAM.

What processor should a laptop have?

This is where a good portion of the cost of the laptop is generated and will require a bit of homework on your part to ensure you are getting the best deal.

When looking at the processor, it is accompanied by a lot of specs, but we only need the model number. For instance, in the example below we just need the N4020 part,

- **Intel® Celeron® N4020 (1.1 GHz base frequency, up to 2.8 GHz burst frequency, 4 MB L2 cache, 2 cores)**

Once you have the model number, paste it into google with the word 'benchmark' after e.g.

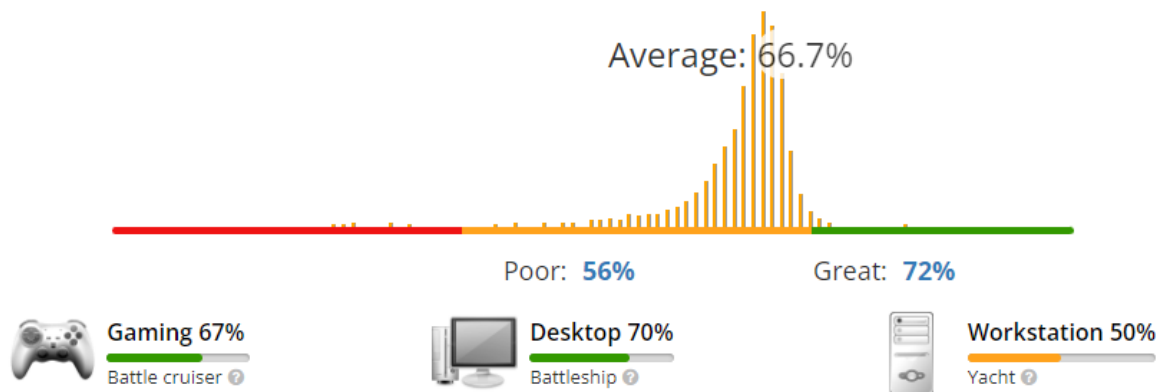


Look at the results for cpu.userbenchmark.com e.g.

<https://cpu.userbenchmark.com> > SpeedTest > IntelR-Ce...

Intel Celeron N4020 - CPU UserBenchmarks

You will then have an objective view of how well you can expect that processor to perform – the better the performance the faster the machine will work. We have all experienced the frustration when a machine locks up and won't respond. For example, our current student desktop machines score around 66.7%



That is a lot of information to go through. But I want to empower each family to make the best cost-effective decision.

Is Warranty & Insurance required?

Yes, components do fail over time and laptops are dropped or lost – we see it in about 10% of our users. Most warranty failures actually occur within the first year. Check any insurance you already have covers damage away from the home as it will not be covered by the college's insurance should an accident occur.

What do you recommend?

Our current recommendation is the **Dell Latitude 3310**.

It is priced slightly higher than similar laptops for this specification, but this is due to it being built with students in mind. This mostly means the keyboards are built to avoid keys being removed and the edges have a rubber guard built in to mitigate some damage.

In Summary

We will always strive to make our systems as inclusive as possible because we understand one size doesn't always fit all. Should you need any help you can contact our helpdesk at support@wsnl.co.uk where a member of the IT team would be happy to help you.