



# St. Mary Catholic Middle School

*Grades 6-8*

## **One-to-One Laptop Program Q & A August 2015**

St. Mary Catholic Middle School (SMCMS) has a longstanding tradition of providing an outstanding education. Today's students face challenges and enjoy opportunities that their parents never dreamed of. SMCMS's dedicated administration and faculty strive to foresee and preemptively address the ever-changing educational and technological needs of their students, while remaining committed to a solid academic program.

### **1. Why is St. Mary Catholic Middle School initiating the 1:1 laptop program?**

It is SMCMS's belief that technology must be integrated into all areas of the curriculum in order to enhance learning for our students. The laptop is most powerful tool available to students in the classroom. With it, students can devote more time to collaborative study, in-depth thinking and creative problem solving. With the laptop, traditional classrooms have been turned into student-centered learning labs. Laptop learning accesses the real world, bringing learning to life.

### **2. How does SMCMS integrate the laptops into curriculum?**

The laptops are integrated into SMCMS's strong curriculum to enhance the learning environment for our students. The laptops are used as tools that provide audio, visual and kinesthetic reinforcement, thus addressing all three learning modalities, and providing a variety of instructional options to teach to our students' individual learning styles.

### **3. When will the students get their laptops?**

During their first few computer classes, the students will log in and learn how to use and care for their laptops. The 6<sup>th</sup> graders will only be able to use the laptops during the school day and will not take them home. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will use the laptops during the day and will be able to take their laptops home with them for schoolwork. When all the students have learned how to properly use and care for the devices, the laptop program will be fully implemented.

### **4. How does the school use the Internet?**

Students have access to the Internet, e-books and email, and current SMCMS Internet usage policies are enforced. All Internet content is filtered in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which is a federal regulation requiring schools and libraries to limit minors' access to harmful materials. These filters continue to be effective when students use their laptops outside the SMCMS building.

Internet security is an area of strong concern for parents and school administrators alike. The technology in the new middle school is regulated by a strong filtering program and teacher-controlled monitoring features. Strict expectations are enforced, and teachers have the ability to see, on their own screens, what individual students are viewing, as well as the capability to turn off anything inappropriate. This ability to simply "click out" a student from a site unrelated to the class allows an instructor to carry on without taking the time to reprimand or single anyone out.

Because it is impossible to filter some YouTube content but allow others, access to the site is blocked on all student devices. However, because there is a plethora of excellent educational content on YouTube, the program is available on teacher-monitored computers on campus; parents are asked to regulate its use at home. Popular social media sites such as Facebook are blocked during the day, but the filter is turned off daily at 3:00 p.m. Parents who wish to restrict the use of these sites should be aware that they are available to students during non-school hours. If a parent wishes to restrict his/her child's access to this or any other site, please contact SMCMS Principal, Mike Zuleger.

SMCMS is also able to provide filtered Internet access for our community members to use while visiting our middle school.

#### **5. What is the schedule for teacher training and curriculum integration?**

Putting a laptop in the hands of each student is just one component of a successful one-to-one program. Another essential element is quality, thorough teacher training to ensure that instructors know both how to use the equipment and how to seamlessly incorporate the technology into the curriculum. SMCMS faculty have engaged in an intensive in-service and training program and will continue to receive further instruction throughout this school year and into the future. Their education equips them to integrate the laptops and technology into SMCMS's strong curriculum.

#### **6. What computer skills are taught in association with this program?**

Students learn Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel, and use Storya and Edmodo. They are learning Internet and email skills and being apprised of safety issues within their core curriculum classes. They are also given lessons in file management as well as networking information.

#### **7. What software is being used?**

The latest Microsoft Office or Open Office software including Word, Excel and PowerPoint, are preinstalled on all laptops. Also, our e-mail software and an Internet browser are installed on all machines. Other pre-installed software includes an operating system such as Windows 7, antivirus software and other programs as deemed necessary.

#### **8. What about insurance?**

ThinkPad Protection helps reduce unexpected repair or replacement costs due to unintentional, accidental damage not covered under the standard product warranty, warranty upgrades or other IBM extended service offerings. Theft or loss is not covered under ThinkPad Protection. However, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will have to pay \$100/year for insurance on their laptops. Parents have the option to pay this in full, \$50/semester, or \$25/quarter.

#### **9. What kind of technical support does the school offer?**

Most repairs for school purchased IBM/Lenovo ThinkPads are handled by the SMCS Technology Department. The tech staff repairs laptops; students should not try to fix or take apart their laptop. During repairs, students are issued loaner laptops if they are available.

**10. What provisions are there for printing?**

Networked printers are located in all collaborative learning spaces (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>). Students are only able to print in black and white. If they want something printed in color, they should send it to a teacher to print in the main office. One objective is to reduce paper use by file sharing with their laptops.

**11. How are students expected to charge their laptop batteries?**

All students are required to have their laptop battery fully charged when they come to school each morning as part of their nightly homework assignment. Because 6<sup>th</sup> graders do not take their laptop home, they plug in and store their laptops in their STAR rooms. Students have the opportunity to plug their laptops into power strips located in the classrooms if their batteries run low. Students are also allowed to charge their laptops during lunch and other non-class times at teacher discretion.

**12. Does my child have to take the computer to school each day?**

Yes, all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are expected to bring their laptops to school each day (6<sup>th</sup> grade will leave them at school). Students have lockers for their possessions as well as for the laptops.

**13. How could this laptop program help students who have a learning difference?**

A laptop program significantly addresses all learning style differences in the classroom. It helps with organization...not as many papers flying around! It is a tool that provides audio, visual and kinesthetic reinforcement, thus addressing all three learning modalities. Students are also able to easily collaborate with their classmates. Focus and concentration are enhanced. Finally, a world of enrichment opportunities is at each student's fingertips.

**14. What about handwriting? Won't my child's handwriting suffer from using a keyboard all day long?**

Handwriting has not been totally abandoned. Students still have occasions when handwritten work must be produced. Obviously the volume of handwriting has decreased, but it's not been eliminated. The need for neat, clear handwriting remains. However, with the laptop, emphasis is now being placed on what is written and how well it is written in terms of syntax, style and clarity. Students who are limited to the handwritten copy often view revising and editing as a burden to write things twice. Consequently, revising and editing are done hastily and without great attention and care. By removing the burden of double writing (which is accomplished with the laptop and 100% availability to the word processing programs) students carry the working copy with them for anytime, anywhere - real, intense revising and editing opportunities.

**15. Will my child automatically be able to get online at home with the laptop, the same way they do at school?**

You must have your own internet service provider in order to get online at home.

**16. What about textbooks?**

Teachers use textbooks in conjunction with the laptops to teach the curriculum.