More Frequently Asked Questions

Why the iPad?

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions document that was sent home to all families where you will find a list, drawn up by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, of reasons why the iPad is the device of choice by schools.

http://robmacps.vic.edu.au/app/webroot/uploaded_files/media/rmps_ipad_faqs_oct2013.pdf

Schools need to use a tablet that can be supported within their current infrastructure. Effective integration of ICT within classrooms cannot happen with a variety of tablet devices. RMPS along with a lot of other primary and secondary schools are set up for iPad integration in to the DEECD's secured wireless network. We would create real management issues if we had to manage a range of devices. The school is entitled to a tech one day a week and need to have an ease of management.

Government schools are provided with support by a wide range of professional learning opportunities for their staff focussing on the use of iPads. Almost every week there are professional learning sessions offered, often by DEECD, to teachers to further their understandings and knowledge of how to effectively use the iPad within their planning and teaching. This applies to classroom teachers, teachers of specialist areas such as the arts and teachers in specialist settings. I have seen no evidence of this support for government primary schools in the use of other tablet devices. Strategic professional learning for staff is integral to the success of any technology program within a school, and I have ensured that the staff of RMPS have undertaken appropriate learning at external workshops and conferences and internally through the use of consultants. Experts within our staff have also effectively mentored and coached others.

DEECD also provides resource documents for schools to support them with the implementation of the iPad under 'iPads *for* Learning'. There are no such documents for androids.

The number of schools using iPads, and going down the path of 1:1 programs is rapidly increasing. This creates networks of support as schools visit each other or connect online to ask questions and learn from each other. Our staff have visited or made contact with a number of schools to learn about or see their technology in action.

A very important part of the decision to use the iPad is the considerable financial resources the school has put in to the implementation of the technology in

classrooms. This includes the iPads, the Apple TV's to link to the televisions in each classroom and the money invested in training staff. Our staff are using iPads extensively in their planning, teaching and assessment of learning.

The safety of the iPad while at school

With the introduction of the school's iPad program next year the school has begun looking at processes and procedures that will need to be put in to place. This has been undertaken at a team, leadership and committee level.

As stated in last week's newsletter, the children will be expected to keep their school bags zipped up with all personal property kept within the bag whilst travelling to and from school. When the children arrive at the school they will be expected to keep the iPad in their bag until they are in their classroom where the iPads will be put in to a secure area. The iPads will not be taken outside during recess or lunch times and after school will also not be allowed to be taken out of the children's bags until they are in their parent's care.

We are also looking at the changes that will need to be made to daily procedures. An example of this is that bags will no longer be able to be taken to specialist areas for the last session of the day if they need to be left outside of the specialist teaching area. The children will need to return to their classroom and pick up their bags before leaving school for the day.

I have also been liaising with OSHClub and we are arranging for locked cupboards to be available so that school bags can be stored securely while children are attending the program.

How will parents be trained?

This week we offered a parent workshop to begin the process of supporting parents and families in managing the iPad at home. This workshop also gave participants the opportunity to give feedback about the areas of managing the iPad they would like to learn about. We will continue to offer workshops over the coming months based on this feedback. We will also be putting information on our website to support parents in these areas as well.

When will the teaching happen?

The iPad program is all about learning not the technology. There is actually more work involved for teachers when using technology within the classroom. Technology enables richer teaching and learning to occur. The teachers have to be actively involved and constantly update their own learning. Teachers need to always be thinking about the child's individual needs and plan accordingly. This is certainly a far cry from the days when everyone did exactly the same thing regardless of each individual's ability.

Last week I addressed the question about what the iPad program would look like at RMPS. The program will essentially be an extension of what has been operating within our classrooms over the past two years. Many of you were able to hear about

some of the great ways the iPads are being used by our teachers already. The iPads are one part of providing 21st century learning within our classrooms. The children and staff will continue to have access to notebooks and laptops and Apple TV. In primary classrooms there are a variety of approaches to teaching and learning and tasks that students are given vary from day to day. I understand there is concern about supervision of the children when using technology within the classroom. The children would all be visible to the teacher or supervising adult and all would understand that there will be consequences if any of them transgress our acceptable use agreement which is being revised and will be in place by next year.

Is the school prepared?

The school has been working hard to ensure increased use of ICT within curriculum planning, classroom implementation and teacher professional learning. Over the past five years strategic planning has been undertaken to increase technology to support improved student learning outcomes and student engagement. This has included:

•Dedicated ICT coordinator released from teaching duties one and a half days per week

•Installation of overhead projectors and screens in every classroom

•On-going improvement and upgrading of school technical infrastructure

•Introduction of laptops in to classrooms to replace desktops to allow greater flexibility for computer use within classrooms

•Purchase of 3 iPads for every classroom

•Purchase of digital televisions, Apple TV (to allow iPads to be projected on the screens) and a visualiser that runs through the digital TV for every classroom

•On-going, extensive strategic ICT professional learning for all staff. This has included the attending of external workshops, conferences and visits to other schools. It has also included sessions run within the school by consultants and by our own staff and many opportunities for staff to share new skills and understandings with their peers. A focus for this learning has been in developing greater skills and understandings of the use of technology to engage students in their learning, to improve learning outcomes and facilitate student creativity

•More recently a group of staff with representation from each area of the school have attended workshops and conferences focussing on the introduction of iPads and what constitutes effective pedagogies when using tablet technologies within the primary classroom

•ICT representation and input on the Student Learning and the Student Engagement Strategic Plan Committies within the school

•An iPad implementation committee

•An eSmart committee formed that is driving the implementation of the eSmart initiative to become an eSmart school

More recently the teaching staff have been taking a closer look at the SAMR model of technology integration and design principles for learning design with iPads. The SAMR model is an approach that can be used by teachers to plan for effective use of technologies. When used as a whole school approach it provides a common and consistent language for teachers to use in order to reflect on how they use technologies to support curriculum learning. The SAMR model describes four levels of technology integration that increase with complexity and effect, from simple substitution, to more complex redefinition where technology use can provide opportunities to create what would not be possible without that technology.

To further build on the professional capabilities of our staff one of our Curriculum days at the start of next year is being dedicated to the effective planning for and implementation of the iPad within our classrooms.

If we have iPads, why do we still have an ICT levy?

The introduction of the iPad program will not eliminate the other technologies that we have throughout the school. Each classroom has six notebooks which the school is paying a lease on. In 2014 we will have additional classrooms that we will need to equip with; notebooks, iPads, digital TV's and trolleys, Apple TVs and visualisers. We have other ICT costs including, paying for our website management, internet access, on-going improvement and maintenance of our infrastructure

The issue of student safety

There have been some questions around the issue of student safety with the introduction of the iPad program. There are concerns about the use of wireless within the school. I have included a link to a document put out by the DEECD titled 'Information Guide – Wireless Technology in Schools'. As Principal of the school I need to be guided by DEECD whose spokesperson has said that the school wireless networks meet Australian Communications and Media Authority standards.

The safety of the children travelling to and from school has also been raised. Of course as a school we take the safety of the children very seriously. Part of the school's technology procedures and policies will be that phones, iPads or any other expensive equipment children may bring to school are kept within their school bags at all times if they are walking to and from school. In relation to our children being targeted because we have an iPad program I have to state that this has not been an issue at any of the schools that we have visited or contacted with similar programs.

Are there internet security measures in place to keep my children safe online?

Yes. The Department of Education who provides the school internet through Netspace have a proxy server which blocks and allows certain content and websites. The Netspace proxy server has a block list and an allow list where content is filtered.

The school has an ability to create its own block and allow list through the Department's proxy server to filter content that is relevant to the school environment. This is reviewed and adjusted regularly.

The school is also in the process of becoming an eSmart school, where as a community we are learning how to be responsible users online and what to do if something happens on the internet. The eSmart committee meet regularly to discuss the very important and relevant cybersafety issue.

Why do we need a 1:1 iPad program in the P-2 area?

In some schools 1:1 programs have been introduced at the Year 5/6 or the Years 3-6 areas. More recently schools have begun introducing these programs from the first year of school. RMPS is a multiage school with a strong philosophy of developmental learning and has had a long term practice of learner centred education. Our philosophy and our *'Beliefs and Understandings about Children's Learning'* underpin the approach and the decisions we take to teaching and learning and therefore the reason why the decision was made to introduce the 1:1 iPad program from Years P-6. Our whole school approach to teaching and learning within our classrooms enables a more seamless transition for our students as they move through the school. Because of our aligned approach to inquiry learning, and to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, RMPS must remain true to our core beliefs and take the same approach to incorporating technology within our classrooms. We have a lot of very talented and technologically savvy children in our P-2 area and they and their parents have a right to benefit from our program if they so choose. The expertise and professionalism of the school's leadership group and staff will ensure a successful program.

How does iPad technology improve student learning?

The key to improving student learning is ensuring that students are engaged in their learning. The current generation of children have been born into a highly technological world. They and their families use technology for learning, for entertainment and for communication. The education schools provide needs to reflect this and for this reason the educational landscape is changing. As a school we are very aware that the technologies themselves will not improve learning outcomes. What you must have are appropriate teacher pedagogies and that is why we have been working strategically to improve teacher knowledge and skills in this area. The use of iPads within our classrooms has already transformed the learning in our schools. The children themselves are very good at articulating why they enjoy learning using the technology and you will be able to hear what they have to say when the video clip is available on our website soon.Please visit the link below to read about the **evaluation** of the 2011 DEECD iPad Trial in schools.

http://www.ipadsforeducation.vic.edu.au/ipad-student-trial

Can't the learning still happen without the iPad?

Of course teachers could still teach the children without the iPad. Again it comes down to the engagement the technology brings and the heightened interest children demonstrate when the technology is available to them which in turn improves the learning outcomes of the child. The iPads create new learning opportunities and extend the interaction with local and global communities as was highlighted last week at our Information Night. The integration of the iPad technology empowers and engages teachers as well. Our staff are loving the teaching opportunities that the technology is currently bringing and will to a far greater extent with a 1:1 program bring to the teaching practice.

Do we ask other professionals to not use the latest equipment available to do their work? Do you expect that your doctor or dentist will treat you the same way and with the same methods that they did 5 or 10 years ago? Education is the same, it is changing as it must, to meet the needs of the current generation of children.

What will the 1:1 iPad program look like at RMPS?

We cannot be prescriptive about what the iPad program will look like at RMPS because primary classroom teaching is not static, it must be fluid to meet the needs of the children. What we do know is that the iPads will be used in a variety of ways in any given classroom on any given day. Some activities will be pre-planned whereas at other times the use of the iPad will be spontaneous arising from an aspect of a child's learning just as the use of technology at home or work can be spontaneous in order to answer a question or solve a problem. Sometimes the children will be using the iPads to work collaboratively, sometimes on their own just as they do now during different classroom activities. Sometimes they will be creating, learning maths, learning words, reading or recording and at other times they will presenting the work they have been creating or leaning through the Apple TV to the rest of the class. There is not really any area of classroom teaching that cannot be supported by the use of the iPad. Sometimes the technology will not be used at all. Our teaching staff will be working together to ensure that curriculum planning and classroom programs are balanced to meet the needs of the students and to meet the need of the particular teaching focus.

What are the local secondary schools using for their ICT programs?

The local secondary schools who have iPad programs that we are aware of are:
Mount Waverley Secondary College
Box Hill High School
PLC
Kingswood College
Sienna College
Our Lady of Sion
Forest Hill College – has a digital learning program that now includes the Apple iPad 2 as the school is aware that so many primary schools now have 1:1 iPad programs
Koonung Secondary College has BYO Notebooks

Camberwell High School has a Notebook program

How will the school measure the success of the program?

The school undertakes constant reviews of its curriculum programs through committees that all staff are a part of. Every term staff also meet within our three Strategic Plan Committees to evaluate and reflect on what we are achieving and what we need to continue to work on in order to achieve our goals and targets. ICT falls within two of those Strategic Plan Committee, Student Learning and Student Engagement and Well-Being ensuring that the iPad program (which will be an extension of what is already happening in our classrooms) will be reviewed and discussed. The Education Committee of School Council also reviews and discusses where the school is in relation to what it set out to achieve within its four year Strategic Plan.

MS Office suite is the world's most used suite of computer programs. This suite is unavailable for an iPad. How do you propose to teach my child how to use these programs if they are unavailable to them?

If you walk in to any of our classrooms you will see that every classroom is equipped with six notebooks. Our children will still be accessing this technology for many areas of the curriculum. Indeed many of the assessments that teachers undertake require the notebooks be used.