

Topic:	Prescribed Assistive Technology Use in Schools
Effective:	January 2014
Cross-Reference:	Special Education Plan Acceptable Use Procedure for Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
Review/Revision Date:	January 2018
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education – Student Services

INTENDED PURPOSE:

This document outlines the process and use of prescribed assistive technology for students in schools.

Definition

Assistive technology refers to any technology, electronic or otherwise, that assists an individual in maximizing their physical or cognitive abilities by ameliorating an area of disability. Assistive technology does not remediate, but provides an alternative means of access or expression.

For the purposes of this document, assistive technology (AT) will be used to refer to computer-based technology, including but not limited to computers, tablets, and handheld devices, as well as interactive white boards and a range of augmentative or alternative communication devices (AAC).

PROCEDURES**Who Qualifies for Prescribed Assistive Technology:**

A diagnosis of need for AT by one or more medical professionals is required for a student to receive personal technology through the Special Equipment Amount - Per Pupil Amount grant. AT may be prescribed for a student without a formal identification as an exceptional student, or without a diagnosis, if, in the opinion of the medical professional(s), the technology is required for the student to access the curriculum or to express their understanding of the curriculum.

Not all students with an exceptionality benefit from AT, and not all students who may benefit from AT are developmentally or psychologically ready to access it when it is first considered as a tool for learning. Schools are encouraged to introduce students to AT, with the assistance of the appropriate itinerant teacher if required, prior to consideration of a prescription.

While there are currently about 3000 personally prescribed computers in the Halton District School Board, it is not fiscally feasible to provide every student in the Halton District School Board who might benefit from AT with a personally-assigned computer. For that reason, laptop AT programs (Premier, Smart Ideas, WordQ) are part of the standard student image and are available on all student computers with an operating system that can run the programs. In addition, Premier and WordQ are available for home installation. Many iPad apps with an assistive technology function are free (Dragon Naturally Speaking, Paperport Notes) and Chrome apps and extensions are available through student sign-in to their Halton Cloud account.

Shared and Home Use

In keeping with the spirit of the Ministry of Education guidelines on the use of AT purchased through the SEA-PPA grant, shared use of equipment is encouraged. Students for whom the equipment was prescribed have first rights to use the AT, but if not needed, it may be used at school by other students. Home use is limited to the student for whom the equipment was prescribed.

The Halton District School Board wishes to support the home use of Special Equipment Amount (SEA) purchased computer equipment and software by outlining the relative responsibilities of parents and students for this equipment.

Parents and/or students over 18 must sign a Home Use form (also found in Appendix A):

http://www.myhdsb.ca/Departments/StudentServices/AssistiveTechnologyandSpecialEquipmentAmount/SEA_Documents/Assistive_Technology_Home_Use_Procedures.doc

Students must abide by the Admin Procedure: Acceptable Use Procedure for Information and Communication Technology (ICT): http://www.hdsb.ca/Policy/Acceptable_Use_2012_ICT.pdf

Home use may be rescinded if the equipment is used for purposes that contravene the Home Use and Acceptable Use directives. Home use may entail financial responsibility for repair or replacement if damage to the computer result from purposeful activity or through downloads. Families are not required to insure equipment. Most repairs will be the responsibility of the HDSB. Repairs may be done only by HDSB personnel or by a licensed warrantee provider contacted by the HDSB. Maintenance and repair will take place only at a school or board site unless the computer or peripheral repair requires it to be sent back to the manufacturer or provider.

Return Procedures

Assistive technology remains with a student until graduation (if required). When a student graduates, or, leaves the school board in which it was purchased for another, the equipment is returned to Student Services. Equipment will be sent to another publicly-funded board in Ontario on request of that school board. Equipment that remains in the HDSB as a result of students graduating, moving outside of the public system or the province, or, because the new school board does not request the equipment, will be reassigned providing it is still a supported device.

Upgrading and Exchanging Technology

Laptops assigned through the SEA process are expected to have the same supported life as the same model of laptop throughout the board, as determined by the Information Technology guidelines. If, in the opinion of the school resource team (SRT) a student requires a replacement laptop at the end of the supported life of their current laptop, a request is made to Student Services for a new laptop. At this point a switch in technology to a Chromebook or an iPad can also occur. Laptops not designated for upgrade by IT will be replaced with another laptop only at the recommendation of an IT technician.

A change in devices can occur when the SRT determines that the current device does not meet the needs of the student. A trial of the new device and data to support the change is required. A device change cannot occur until a student has been trained in the use of their initial device and has had the device for at least six months of school.

Audio Visual Recording Use with Prescribed Assistive Technology

Students who have prescribed equipment capable of audio/video recording do not require permission to record classroom instruction. They must follow acceptable use guidelines and respect the privacy of other students in the classroom.

School Procedures and Responsibilities

For a student to receive assistive technology provided by the board the following procedure applies.

1. A prescription for technology from a qualified prescriber is presented at School Resource Team (SRT). Discussion may include the most appropriate device for the student and with agreement at SRT a school may choose to request a computing device different from the one described in the prescription (e.g., a tablet computer (iPad) vs. a laptop computer).

2. The prescription, PHIPA form must be signed by parent/guardian or adult student, and the request for technology form (found on myhdsb) is sent to the Coordinator of Special Education with responsible for SEA assistive technology at New Street Education Centre.
3. The prescription is reviewed to ensure the requirements of the Ministry of Education for eligibility are met. At this point conversation may occur between the school, Student Services, family and the prescribing professional about details of the prescription. Equipment is assigned in order of the date of prescription submission unless there is extraordinary need (usually medical) or equipment is needed for a Learning Centre or a Self-Contained Class placement by a specific date.
4. Equipment is delivered to the school.
5. Schools may contact the appropriate itinerant teacher for assistance with technology instruction for students and staff, if required.
6. Schools are responsible for the following:
 - Developing a sign-out process for assistive technology
 - Request appropriate cases and carrying cases to support home use
 - Provide instructions on the correct procedures for computer set up, battery recharging, breakdown, storage, and transport
 - Contact the Coordinator of Special Education responsible for SEA equipment if there is damage to or loss of the technology, software, or peripherals



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SEA Laptop/iPad/ChromeBook Home Use Procedures

SEA laptops, iPads, ChromeBooks and portable peripherals may be taken home during the school year for use with homework and assignments, and/or, over the summer for use in a summer educational program.

The AT equipment may be taken home under the following conditions:

1. All students must follow the acceptable use guidelines of the Halton District School Board with regard to downloads, internet use, and social media. Failure to do so will result in loss of home use privileges. Acceptable use guidelines can be found at:
<http://www.hdsb.ca/Policy/Acceptable Use 2012 ICT.pdf>
2. Students must follow school guidelines with regard to signing equipment in and out.
3. Any malfunction or damage to equipment must be reported to the teacher immediately.
4. During the school year, laptops, iPads, ChromeBooks and peripherals must come to school each day. Leaving them at home will impact the student's ability to comprehend and complete assigned work at school.
5. Laptops, iPads, ChromeBooks and peripherals taken home for summer educational use should be returned to the school immediately school begins.
6. Parents/guardians must sign below, accepting responsibility for repairs to the laptop, ipad, or chromebook, or replacement of peripherals due to negligent damage or loss.

I have read the above requirement for SEA laptop home use, and I agree to the conditions. I understand that in the case of negligent damage or loss of equipment while in the possession of my child, I may be responsible for the cost of replacement or repair of hardware and peripherals.

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____