

SPLS Grade 5-8 Chromebook Guide for 2023-2024

Why Chromebooks?

Chromebooks are an inexpensive form of a laptop and work very well for education. They are inexpensive because they are basically a laptop that only runs an internet web browser rather than a full-fledged operating system such as Windows. For this reason, they don't need to be very powerful to run efficiently. They are great for education in that they are easy to monitor and "lock down" since they function almost entirely using the internet. By filtering and monitoring our internet via our school network, we can effectively monitor and limit activities that students are conducting on their Chromebooks while on our campus. Chromebooks also have free word processing, slide making, and spreadsheet designing programs provided through Google with each device. They have free built-in virus protection, so expensive virus prevention software and subscriptions are not necessary.

Why students provide their own device

A common question that many have about the program is why we have students purchase their own personal device rather than having the school provide the Chromebooks. The main reason is that many assignments in the 5-8 grade classrooms are assigned "digitally". Owning the device allows students the ability to bring their Chromebook home to complete any work that they were not able to finish at school. We encourage families to set and keep consistent Chromebook usage rules for home. We also strongly recommend that families filter and monitor their home internet.

Recommended System Specifications

Since Chromebooks are basically a computer that only runs a web browser, they do not need to have impressive machine specifications. Any Chromebook that meets or exceeds the below specifications will work.

- **Ram:** 4 GB will be more than enough for a Chromebook.
- **Screen Size (And Touchscreen capability):** 11.6 inches is fairly standard for cheaper models and will suffice, though larger screens may be preferred by some students. Having a touch screen is nice in certain situations and for certain learning programs we use, but it is not necessary to have.
- **Hard Drive Size:** A 32 GB hard drive is fairly standard in less expensive models.

Typical Device Cost & Models That Have Worked Well

Here are some models that work well and have held up to the wear and tear of a school year.

- [Samsung Chromebook via Amazon](#)
- [Samsung Chromebook via Amazon](#)
- [HP Chromebook via Amazon](#)
- [HP Chromebook via Amazon](#)
- [Acer Chromebook via Amazon](#)
- [HP Chromebook via Best Buy](#)
- [HP Chromebook via Best Buy](#)
- [Samsung Chromebook via Best Buy](#)

Student Responsibility for Chromebooks

Since students own their own devices, students will be responsible for taking care of their Chromebooks. If a device falls into disrepair or is damaged, the student will need to replace or repair the Chromebook at their own expense. It may be wise to purchase a laptop case or sleeve for the Chromebook to protect the device. Typing in the Chromebook Screen Size followed by “Laptop Sleeve” into Amazon will turn up hundreds of laptop cases that can be purchased for \$10 or less. (For example, search Amazon for the keywords “Laptop Sleeve 11.6”)

Setting up a Google Account

Each student is given a SPLS account under our Google Enterprise account. This is the only account that they will be allowed to use during the school day. We recommend parents keep access to their child’s username and password of the Google account and Chromebook.

Home Internet Filtering & Device Monitoring

Parents are urged to remember that Chromebooks are devices that have access to the internet. Students may be asked to use their Chromebook at home to complete school work. It will be helpful for them to access the internet on their device. We can never be too careful with what our kids are able to access via their devices.

1. Keep access to any accounts such as email accounts, Google accounts, Chromebook email app, etc... and regularly check these accounts.
2. Develop a rule system at home that only allows the Chromebook or other internet capable devices such as Smartphones to be used when parental supervision is present. Allowing these types of devices to be used behind closed doors or when parental/teacher supervision isn’t around leaves temptation open about what is viewed on the internet and how social media or email is used.
3. Set up internet filtering for your wireless internet at home.

There are filtering and monitoring options available for parents to track, filter, and monitor internet use of devices used on home internet networks. Here are a few options:

- **Open DNS Internet Filtering (Free!)** There is a free option available online that you can set up to filter your home Wi-Fi network and prevent any devices on your network from accessing harmful content. To access instructions on how to set this up, [click here](#). You can set up a blanket, pre-set filter for harmful content using the OpenDNS Family Shield or have more precise control of exactly what is filtered using the OpenDNS Home service. All filtering is done directly through your wireless router!
- **Circle Internet Filtering Device or Similar Device (Device Cost + Yearly Subscription)** A device, called Circle, can be purchased that hooks up to a home network and does all the filtering work and internet monitoring for you. It can be easily managed via a smartphone app to filter all your internet, set time limits, view internet history of all devices, etc. There is a cost to purchasing the device and a yearly subscription fee after the first year. You can find it and many other similar devices on Amazon at [this link](#):
- **Bark App (\$9/month)** The Bark App is available for smartphones, Chromebooks, and tablets and is an effective way to monitor your child’s online activity. Bark monitors all internet activity, texting, messaging, and website usage. If it detects suspicious or potentially harmful activity, it will email parents a warning to let them know about it.

Saint Peter Lutheran School

Grade 5-8 Chromebook Use Contract



Parents of students in grades 5-8 are asked to provide a Chromebook for their child to use for school work and homework. Chromebooks are used daily for learning in the 5-8 grade classrooms and can be brought home to complete school work. Though Chromebooks will be used on filtered internet networks at school, students are still encouraged to find motivation in the love of their Savior, Jesus, to use their devices with Christian wisdom and in ways that show love and respect for their parents, teachers, and classmates. The overall goal we strive for as both teachers and students is to keep the Chromebooks as a useful educational tool and to avoid allowing them to become a distraction to the learning environment.

1. In order to effectively manage and monitor their use, Chromebooks are to be kept in a designated location in the classroom unless being used for specific learning activities as guided by the teacher. Chromebooks are not to remain at student desks at other times during the school day.
2. The teacher reserves the right to ask a student at any time to show them what they are using their Chromebook for and to view all open and recently closed applications and internet tabs. The teacher also reserves the right to view internet history at any time.
3. Any student who wishes to independently make use of the Chromebook to aid in completion of homework should first ask for the teacher's permission. The teacher will ask what the intended use will be and will expect the student to use the device for the student's stated purpose only.
4. Non-educational games, email, web messaging services, and social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) are not to be played/used while the student is in the school building.
5. Chromebooks may be used in a student's free time once all homework is completed and shown to the teacher. A list of specific educational games, websites, and activities are provided by the teacher for student use in free time. Suggestions for the free time list can be brought to the teacher and may be approved after teacher review.
6. Chromebooks may not be used on the school campus before or after school hours unless permission is given by the teacher. The Chromebook should then only be used in a location under direct teacher supervision. If a student's parent is on campus supervising use, a student may use the Chromebook with that parent's permission and in a location that is under their direct supervision. This permission may be given only by that specific child's parent and to their own child only.
7. Chromebooks are not to be used to email, chat, or communicate in any way with classmates while at school during the school day. This includes using Google documents to chat with other students. Special permission to use commenting on assignment documents may be given by the teacher.

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____