BYOD – Frequently asked questions

Why does the BYOD requirement specify an active pen?

An active pen provides a number of functions. It operates as a mouse would and can be used to navigate, select and access context sensitive menus. However its main use is to be able to write directly onto the surface of the screen. As a tablet device, this allows students to interact directly with information on the screen, without needing to use pen and paper.

Students are able to edit documents, make notes, correct and mark work, complete forms on the device that are electronic but not easily able to be typed onto. In particular students are able to use the active pen for mathematics, where the script and notation is not easily accessible on a keyboard.

Examples
What if my device does not have an active pen?
If your device does not have an active pen, you will need a mouse or touch screen to navigate. You will not be able to complete all of your work on the device and will need to supplement your equipment with paper and pen alternatives. This will be accommodated in class and you will not be disadvantaged in any way.

Is a stylus the same as an active pen?
A stylus is normally used to navigate a touch screen only and can replace a mouse. Some devices may be able to use a stylus as a writing tool, however it is recommended that you check this with the supplier to determine the quality and functionality.

Will my child be disadvantaged if I cannot afford to purchase a device?
Schools have always operated in a way that will not disadvantage students. Teachers will make adjustments to their lessons and have alternatives for those students operating without a device.

What subjects will be using the device?
Teachers intend making use of the device in all subjects, however some subjects, for example Physical Education, may use them less than others. Having an active pen, will allow the student to take notes and write on the device and so can be used even in mathematics. The intention is to reduce the amount of paper, files and text books that need to be carried to and from school.

How will teachers alter their teaching to incorporate the devices?
Teachers will spend time helping students familiarise themselves with working in an online environment. This will include using a core set of resources such as Connect, OneNote, Word, PowerPoint and other learning applications.

What is Connect?
Connect is a Department of Education online learning management tool. It is set up in class groupings and provides access to class discussions, notices, online resources, assignments and allows work to be submitted online. Connect is available through a portal on the Internet and therefore can be accessed when and wherever Internet access is available. It can be accessed from any device or computer with Internet access.
What is OneNote?
OneNote is a Microsoft program that allows you to organise your documents and notes into one easy location. You can create categories for different topics and type, write or draw directly onto the OneNote pages.

Why is the school using a Windows 8 and Microsoft office platform?
After much research about the benefits of and issues with various platforms, the school has decided to specify a Windows 8 or above platform. This ensures that the devices will be able to be connected to the wireless network and operate within the current school infrastructure. Windows 8 will also allow students to operate with the Microsoft range of office software. This is software familiar to students and is standard in most career environments.

Will there be a reduction in the use of other resources?
With students using a BYOD, it is intended that they will not need to carry files, paper and heavy textbooks to and from school in their bags. The stationary requirements have been reduced and do not include files or paper. A small number of display books are listed to allow students to keep any documents they do need to carry to and from home protected. Pens are still required for completing work in some classes where suitable workbooks have not been able to be sourced in electronic format.

How will students be catered for if they forget their device or do not have one?
A small number of older netbooks will be available on loan from the school library each day. These may be used as a short term backup, however they may not be taken home and do not have all the features of the BYOD specifications.

Students who have purchased a device through Stott and Hoare that has been sent away for repairs may have access to a loan device. This arrangement is offered by the company and parents will deal directly with them.

Students without a BYOD will use paper and pen alternatives to complete work in class and, wherever possible, rostered access to a computer will be available to complete work that can only be done online.