Year 4 iPad 1:1 Program | 2027

The Gap State School • Information for Year 3 families

Thank you to our Year 3 Class Parent Representatives for meeting with Danielle and me this week. I valued the open, constructive conversation and the chance to better understand families' questions. We know there are different views about children and technology, and we share the same goal: excellent teaching, safe and supported children, and the right balance. These FAQs address the questions raised so our teachers can focus on showing you what learning looks like in Year 4 on Monday evening.

At The Gap, reading, writing, mathematics, explicit teaching and student wellbeing remain central. An iPad is one learning tool—not a replacement for books, handwriting or hands-on learning.

Why Year 4? Isn't this too early?

We understand that some families feel Year 4 is earlier than they would prefer for individual device use. However, Year 4 is a natural transition into the middle years of schooling, when students are developing greater independence, responsibility and self-regulated learning skills. This provides an opportunity to explicitly teach safe, purposeful and responsible technology use with clear teacher guidance.

At The Gap, students have been building digital skills through shared iPads since Prep. Moving to 1:1 access in Year 4 builds on these foundations, progressively strengthening independence and ownership of learning before high school.

While neither the Department nor Australian Curriculum V9 mandates 1:1 devices at this age, our approach was established through community consultation several years ago. We remain committed to listening to families and ensuring the program supports student learning and wellbeing.

What does the curriculum require, and how will this help my child?

Australian Curriculum V9 Digital Technologies (Years 3–4) includes creating digital solutions, visual programming, using and representing data, collaborating, using digital systems securely, and recognising online privacy risks. Individual access can help students practise these skills, organise and revisit work, type and edit writing, research, and create content. The benefit comes from purposeful teaching in every classroom every day—not simply owning a device.

Will screens replace handwriting, books or explicit instruction?

No. Handwriting, spelling, physical books, explicit teaching, concrete mathematics materials, discussion and outdoor activities remain important. Students will continue to receive explicit handwriting instruction while also learning keyboarding skills, including typing, editing and composing digital work. This balanced approach reflects AERO evidence about effective writing instruction. Teachers select technology only where it serves a clear learning purpose.

How much screen time will children have?

1:1 means a device is available when appropriate, not that it is used all day. Time varies with the lesson and learning task, dependent on the curriculum and assessment; there is no universal daily minutes target specified by the QLD Education Department. A Year 4 teacher will demonstrate a typical classroom approach on Monday. iPads are not being used as free-time rewards or simply to fill time after assessments; we also limit discretionary use at the beginning and end of each term.

How do we ensure classroom consistency and develop self-regulation?

Teachers explicitly teach routines, keyboarding, responsible online behaviour and when to put a device away. Our Digital Technologies team supports shared expectations, teacher professional learning and review of classroom practice. Children are not expected to self-regulate without guidance; teachers supervise and gradually build responsibility.

What if my child becomes distracted or struggles to manage an iPad?

Children develop attention, independence and self-regulation at different rates. Teachers explicitly model and reinforce routines for when to use devices and when to put them away. Where iPad use affects a student's attention, engagement or learning, teachers will provide additional guidance, clearer boundaries and appropriate adjustments. Our priority is always the child's learning and wellbeing, not the device.

How are children protected at school? What about Safari and AirDrop?

The school uses Department of Education network safeguards and internet filtering alongside active teacher supervision and clear expectations for responsible device use. Microsoft Intune (replacing JAMF) supports BYO connection and

management for school services. All teachers are required to use Apple Classroom whenever students use iPads for learning. This expectation is reinforced at the beginning of each year and during new teacher induction. During supported classroom sessions, Apple Classroom enables teachers to view student screens and direct learning activities; it is not continuous monitoring or an automatic alert for every inappropriate action. Safari, AirDrop and other features may only be used as directed by the teacher. Misuse is addressed through our established consequences and Student Code of Conduct. No technical system prevents every incident; explicit teaching, supervision, family partnership and follow-up remain essential.

What can families control at home?

We respect that families have different expectations about technology at home. School-based digital learning does not mean unrestricted device use outside school hours. Families can set boundaries through Apple Screen Time and Family Sharing, including app limits, downtime, website/content restrictions and purchase controls. School network protections do not apply on home networks. We can support families with parental controls, household routines and device agreements. Moving from JAMF to Intune enables a shared approach between school and home.

Will families receive setup assistance?

Yes. We are planning a support morning, Monday 18th January 2027, to assist with passwords, school connection, device setup and relevant settings. Further practical advice about home controls will also be shared.

What if we choose not to buy an iPad or do not want one at home?

Our 1:1 BYO approach was established following school-community consultation several years ago. Under Queensland Department of Education guidance, students must not be disadvantaged in accessing the curriculum. School-owned equity devices are available at no cost for families experiencing financial hardship. For families choosing not to purchase an iPad for other reasons, we recognise the need for a sustainable alternative. One option is a Student Resource Scheme (SRS), through which families could access a school-owned classroom device for an agreed fee. Any SRS would require consultation with the P&C and school community and the required endorsement; this process could begin early in 2027 if families wish to pursue it. No new SRS has been approved. In the meantime, we will work directly with families to ensure their children can participate in required learning.

Can families contribute to how the program develops?

Yes. Getting this right is an ongoing process. Our Digital Technologies team will keep reviewing classroom practice, and we will explore parent and student representation in 2027. We recognise that earlier communication will help future cohorts plan. The P&C is an important forum for discussing changes to longstanding school-community arrangements. We welcome feedback and will make improvements where needed. Families can also speak directly with their child's teacher about individual learning or device-use concerns.

What is Monday's information evening for?

Mrs Witheyman will explain our curriculum and pedagogical approach; a teacher will show how iPads are used alongside reading, writing and mathematics. To protect time for these presentations, we will not hold an extended open Q&A. Please email any unanswered questions to me before Monday so they can be answered beforehand where possible or addressed during the session.

Further reading and practical help

Queensland DoE — One-to-one student device models

QCAA — Australian Curriculum V9 Digital Technologies

AERO — Writing and Writing Instruction

Apple — Screen Time for your child

Digital Literacies and Digital Technologies

eSafety Commissioner

Thank you again for sharing your perspectives so openly. We know families are working to find the right balance with technology at home, just as we are at school. By working together, we can build children's digital skills while protecting what matters most—their learning, wellbeing and childhood. I look forward to seeing many of you on Monday evening.

Warm regards, Katie