

Upper School laptop recommendations
Mount Madonna School
June 2026

Here is some additional information for families regarding our student laptop requirement for Upper School students from the Director of Technology, Dr. Nicole Tervalon.

Any devices that meet the below criteria or better will definitely work. With careful consideration you should be able to purchase a laptop that will last through all of MS and HS. That said, my experience is that Chromebooks don't tend to make it that long and their chipsets stop being upgraded after 5 years. So in general, you might want to budget on a machine that will last for 3-4 years, assuming it is well cared for.

Chromebooks generally are a reasonable and economical choice. I wouldn't choose anything with a screen less than 14", but whether it's a touchscreen or not is a personal preference. I tend to avoid touchscreens as they are one more thing that can break or not work correctly.

Windows 11 laptops are also a reasonable choice. Note that all devices that arrive in S mode may have to have S mode turned off if a high school teacher requests specific software that cannot be downloaded from the Microsoft Store.

Apple products are all good choices, although they are often more costly. They have a tendency to last a little longer than some other products, but how carefully your child cares for the device in their backpack, when at school and in transit should play a part in the decision.

Tablets are functional for those that like them, although they can present some challenges when students have to type. Typing on the screen is sometimes not as efficient as using a keyboard. If the tablet comes with a keyboard or you can provide one to use, or the tablet has a reasonably-sized touch screen to work on, they can work well. Tablets can present some challenges if teachers ask students to engage with any kind of software that is not browser-based, though, and often struggle with spreadsheets. And some software doesn't run well on browsers other than Chrome, so as long as the device (and your child) has the ability to install apps including the Chrome browser, you should be okay.

Here are some examples of lower cost devices that will definitely work. Be sure to look for back-to-school and holiday special sales.

From Costco:

[RCA 15.6" FHD Laptop - Intel N150 Processor - 4GB memory - 128GB HD - Windows 11 Home](#)

[Acer Aspire 3 15.6" Touchscreen Laptop - AMD Ryzen 5 7520U - 16GB memory - 1TB HD - Windows 11 Home](#)

From BestBuy:

[HP 2-in-1 14" Touch-Screen Chromebook - Intel N100 2023 - 4GB memory - 64GB HD](#)

[Lenovo - IdeaPad Slim 3i 15.6" Laptop - Intel N150 2024 - 8GB memory - 128GB HD - Windows 11 Home](#)

From Amazon:

[Lenovo IdeaPad 3i Chromebook - Intel Celeron N4500 - 8GB RAM - 64GB HD](#)

[HP 15.6" Intel 4 Core N100 Laptop - 8GB memory - 128GB HD - Windows 11](#)

As a reminder, **all students are expected to have their own set of headphones that they can use with their laptop**, so be sure that your child's headphones will work with their device, not just their phones.