



Dear Parent/Carer

14 June 2016

We would like to let you know that the Computing Department at The Castle School will shortly be using the BBC micro:bit and micro:bit website with all Year 7 students. The BBC micro:bit is a pocket-sized, codeable computer that allows children to get creative with technology. In the BBC's most ambitious education initiative for 30 years, up to 1 million devices will be given to every 11 or 12 year old child in Year 7 or equivalent across the UK, for free. It is as a one-off project that forms part of the BBC's Make It Digital campaign, and it will not be repeated. The UK currently faces a critical skills shortage in the technology sector, and the BBC and partners aim to help change that through the project.

Your child will receive their own micro:bit computer along with a USB cable and a battery pack and it will be theirs to own, keep and use. The Computing team will help to kick things off by spending the next month or so working with the micro:bits in lessons and learning how to create code and make effective use of them. They will be stored and kept at school during this time.

Before the end of the school year the micro:bits will be sent home, allowing your child the chance to continue to experiment and develop code over the summer break and into the new year if they wish. Doing so is not compulsory or homework, and I would urge you and your child to consider carefully whether they intend to continue to use it after their introductory lessons have been completed. If the answer will be no then we would request that you leave your micro:bit at school instead so that it can be used by other interested students, such as the Digital Leaders, our Computer Club for Girls, other year groups or the Design Technology department. Micro:bits are due to be available for the general public to buy from July, most likely priced at £15. Reselling your free one is therefore unlikely to achieve a high value. There would be more value in allowing others within the school community to use them rather than have them being ignored or unused if this was to be the case.

For more information on the micro:bit please visit www.microbit.co.uk. The 'Teachers and Parents' section has some good resources and videos, including some on getting parents started. The website allows people to create code using four different programming languages without needing to login, and it includes emulators so you don't even need to have the device available.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

We would like to direct you towards the website terms of use and the house rules – available at www.microbit.co.uk/terms-of-use and <https://www.microbit.co.uk/house-rules>. By allowing your child to use the BBC micro:bit service, you will be allowing your child's contribution to be freely used, shared,

copied, redistributed , adapted, remixed or transformed. As a parent or carer, you are responsible for their activity outside of the classroom. We will let the children know that they shouldn't include any personally identifiable information within their own scripts but we would ask that you encourage this too. More about what to do if you are concerned can be found on the website.

We hope that your child has an enjoyable experience and is inspired to explore and learn from the coding activities on the site and through the device itself. We wish your child many hours of challenging fun learning to code and programming their BBC micro:bit. If you would like any further information on what we will do in the introductory lessons, please do contact me at the school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Smith', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Stuart Smith
Head of Computing