FAQs on the Personal Learning Device (PLD)

1. How does the PLD Initiative impact Teaching and Learning (T&L)?

The PLD Initiative will enhance T&L by:
a) Supporting greater customisation and differentiation in learning.
b) Empowering students to engage in self-directed learning anytime and anywhere.
c) Enhancing the development of 21st Century Competencies and Digital Literacy.
d) Empowering teachers with deeper data-driven insights into student learning.

Supporting the pervasive use of the Singapore Student Learning Space (SLS) in schools and allowing students to have seamless access to online learning in and out of class.

2. Are there any guidelines for the usage of PLDs in a typical school day? How pervasive should schools use the PLDs for learning programmes?

MOE HQ does not prescribe the percentage of lessons utilising PLDs, nor the pervasiveness of device use. Schools should consider how the PLD Initiative can contribute to achieving learning outcomes for students and to support deepening of digital literacy in schools through the "Find, Think, Apply, Create" framework.

Schools should ensure that the students' use of PLDs is balanced in relation to other activities and modes of learning.

Regular meaningful use of the PLDs for T&L in all subjects would contribute to the development of digital literacy and promote active, participatory, and deep learning. As the process of enculturating the use of technology to enhance T&L will take time, schools can pace their implementation based on the school's and each department's readiness.

3. Do all students in a school have to use the same device? What about students who opt out of using the school-selected device and wish to use their own?

For a smooth learning experience, students are strongly encouraged to use a device with the same Operating System (OS) and similar technical specifications as the model prescribed by the school. Students who do not wish to purchase the school-prescribed device and would like to use their own devices will have to seek approval from the school before they can pursue this option. The school will ascertain whether the students' devices run on the same OS and have similar technical specifications that allows the Device Management Application (DMA) to be installed.

4. Will the PLDs and SLS resources replace textbooks?

The PLDs and SLS resources will not replace textbooks, as textbooks are currently designed as curriculum-aligned reference for students. However, students can use the devices to complement learning from textbooks.

5. How will students without internet access at home be supported?

Students from eligible low-income households may apply for the DigitalAccess@Home scheme by the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), which provides subsidised broadband access.

6. Why does the price of the devices under the MOE Device Bulk Tender appear higher than the same models sold in the retail market?

The devices in the MOE Device Bulk Tender are price competitive. The enhanced device bundle parents/guardians purchase through the school includes a 3-year insurance and 3-year warranty, which allows for two repairs or one replacement. This would not be included in the retail price of similar models sold in the retail market.

7. Can students share one device with their siblings?

For a smooth learning experience, each student should have his/her own device as prescribed by the school. This is because different schools may tap on different devices for T&L. In addition, as students will be required to use the devices in school daily and for their learning after school, it might not be practical to share the device with their siblings.

8. Can students opt not to purchase the device?

Every student is required to have a device for learning purposes. They are encouraged to purchase one through the school via the MOE Device Bulk Tender. Students who already own a device running on the same OS and do not wish to purchase another device will have to seek approval from the school before they can pursue this option.

9. What is the expected shelf life of the device? What happens to the device after the student graduates?

The devices have an average shelf life of 3-4 years, which sufficiently covers the time a student is in secondary school. The school will uninstall the DMA from the devices upon students' graduation, and graduated students will have full control over their devices.

10. Will students be allowed to store the devices in school overnight? Where will students store their devices when they go for recess or PE lessons?

Students are expected to secure their devices in the common storage cupboards/their own lockers/bags and lock the classroom doors when they are away from their classrooms. Students should bring the devices home at the end of the school day so that they can utilise them for learning at home.

11. Can the devices be insured/have a warranty period of 4 years as a standard?

Extended warranty beyond 3 years for the computing devices is not available in the open market currently. As such, it would be very costly to incorporate such a requirement and it might be more practical to replace the device should it be in a state beyond repair after 3 years.

12. Does the device purchased include insurance? If so, what is covered under the insurance?

Devices come with the enhanced 3-year insurance and warranty bundle (which allows for two repairs or one replacement).

The insurance coverage is only applicable to situations of damages and loss not due to negligence, where the student has taken precautions to safeguard the device.

13. Does the insurance cover the accessories (e.g., styluses, keyboard cases)?

Insurance coverage is for the main device only and does not cover accessories.

14. Does the insurance cover damages or losses that occurred while overseas?

Yes. When making such a claim, the vendor will require a written declaration from the student/parent/guardian that no other insurance policies are being claimed for the device to ensure that in a case where the student/parent/guardian has purchased travel insurance that included coverage for the device, they are not making duplicate claims for the same device.

For stolen/lost device covered under insurance, a local police report in the country that the loss/theft was committed must be made.

15. Can the student still send their device for servicing to their respective centres after the warranty lapses, and how will the charges be imposed?

After the device warranty lapses, students can still send their device to the Service Centre for repair. The charges will be provided by the Service Centre and students/parents/guardians will have to assess the reasonableness of the charges and decide whether to take up the repair. EPF cannot be used for the costs of servicing/repairing the PLD. Alternatively, students can consider going to other shops to perform the repairs after the warranty is over.

16. Is the DMA installation compulsory for all students?

Student devices – including devices that were not procured under the MOE Device Bulk Tender – on the PLD Initiative are to be installed with DMA. Parents/guardians who wish to use existing devices as PLDs will also have to consent to the installation of DMA, which will be done without charge. These devices will have to be on the same OS, and have similar technical specifications, as the school's PLD. This ensures that the device can be used securely in the school with the DMA installed. The school will also uninstall the DMA from the students' devices upon graduation.

17. Why is there a need for DMAs in PLDs?

DMA allows teachers to have appropriate controls in place to manage students' device usage in classrooms. In addition, the DMA addresses parents'/guardians' concerns regarding access to undesirable content online (e.g. pornography, gambling etc) and excessive screen time arising from PLD usage.

18. Why does the school have to download the DMA into students' PLDs to restrict their use if the PLD is purchased and paid for by the students' Edusave and/or parents/guardians?

The PLDs will be used more pervasively in schools as part of a more blended learning experience. Hence, while the PLD is purchased and paid for by parents/guardians, MOE needs to ensure that students have a safer and more conducive digital learning environment when using the PLDs for learning. This is especially important for younger students who are still learning to be discerning and self-regulated in their engagement with digital content and use of devices.

Furthermore, as the PLD is intended primarily as a T&L device, these DMA features complement existing efforts by teachers to help students use technology safely and effectively for learning. The DMA would restrict students' ability to freely download their own apps and programmes into the PLD, which may become a source of distraction during their learning. In addition, the default DMA settings also disable the use of PLDs from 11pm to 6am to help ensure that students get sufficient rest.

While the PLDs would have DMA default settings at the start, MOE provides options for parents/guardians to manage their child's/ward's PLD settings after school hours if they prefer to have a greater say over how their child/ward uses their device at home. The DMA will be uninstalled from the PLDs when the student graduates from secondary school.

19. Would the benefits of installing DMA in the PLDs be overridden given that students still have unlimited access to their mobile phones and/or other existing devices?

The PLD is intended to be a device primarily for T&L. The DMA restrictions create a safe and conducive digital learning environment, with fewer distractions such as social media and games, that might detract students from learning. This is distinct from students' other personal devices, including mobile phones, which are more typically used for recreational purposes.

20. How will parents/guardians be able to exercise more control of DMA settings after school?

As a default, the DMA settings in students' PLDs will be configured by the school both for in-school and afterschool hours. Parents/guardians will be informed of the Default DMA setting. Should they wish to opt for parental control after school hours, they can indicate their preference to the school to either:
- (i) be given rights to customise the DMA settings for their child/ward after school hours [Option A];
  or
- (ii) have the school disable the DMA after school hours [Option B].

For (ii), parents/guardians will not be able to disable the DMA on their own. This disabling will be done centrally by the school. Schools will pre-set a specific time for the DMA to switch over to parent control settings as well as a time for the school's DMA settings to be re-enabled for use during school hours.

For parents/guardians who choose to have control of DMA settings after school, they can customise settings such as restricting the type of applications and websites accessible by their child/wards as well as vary the screen time limit.

21. Can parents/guardians change their minds on the after-school DMA options?

Parents/guardians can switch to another After-School DMA Parent Option should they change their minds subsequently.

22. Is DMA meant to track students' online activities?

The DMA is not intended to track students' online activities. The DMA is meant to protect students from undesirable content on the internet such as pornography, gambling sites, etc. Without DMA features such as filtering of content and websites, students may inadvertently be exposed to these undesirable contents without proper adult supervision and knowledge.

The DMA will not capture students' information such as passwords, addresses, identification number, or content created/stored in their device storage when they are using the device. Students' online activities such web searches will be monitored so that only permissible content is accessed. Parents/guardians can monitor their child's/ward's device use based on their chosen options, to ensure their child's/ward's safety online.

23. What happens to the DMA when a student leaves secondary school?

When students leave their secondary school, the DMA will be uninstalled from the students' PLD and the PLDs de-enrolled from the MOE-managed DMA system. Students will then have full control over their PLDs, with no restrictions.

For students in the graduating Sec 4 Normal (Technical), Sec 4 Express, and Sec 5 Normal (Academic) cohorts, the DMA uninstallation and de-enrolment exercise will only commence after the end of the national examinations. This will ensure the students can access their revision material in their PLDs during the examination period.

For graduating students in the Sec 4 Normal (Academic) cohort, this uninstallation and de-enrolment exercise will only take place after the release of the O-Level results the following year, or when the student has secured a place in a tertiary educational institution. The DMA will not be de-enrolled and uninstalled from the devices of students continuing to Sec 5 Normal (Academic) the following year.