



Hello 6<sup>th</sup> grade families,

Our names are Susan Geores and Jay Garcia, and your child will have one of us as their TechApps teacher this year. We will investigate many facets of technology, primarily emphasizing digital citizenship, productivity tools, research skills, beginning programming, and basic web design.

We will combine learning productivity tools (like Google Drive) with analyzing digital ethics and citizenship. These are hugely important topics to bring to the forefront of pre-teen minds. Some of the topics we will investigate include safety, security, privacy, our inter-connected social culture, respecting the creative work of others, and building a positive online identity. By seeking out some possible pitfalls and success strategies for our online age, my hope is that our students will be better prepared to be digital leaders in their future online lives.

We will spend time learning the basics of computer science by programming games and interactive stories in Scratch. Scratch is a terrific tool for building the foundations of computational thinking, designed for that purpose by students at MIT.

Then we will move on to learning the fundamentals of web coding in HTML and CSS (JavaScript will be optional). Seeing your plain text code generate a vibrant, purposeful website is quite a thrill!

Later in the year, we will partner with our Community and Global Citizenship department to design and code websites with interactive Scratch features in support of community topics that matter personally to each student.

It's going to be an exciting year!

In terms of general technology at school, Albuquerque Academy uses the Canvas learning management system. Each teacher has a course in Canvas, which allows them to post assignments and support materials to help students stay organized and do homework independently after school hours. Your children will be expected to check both Canvas and their school email account daily for class information.

Students will need to bring wired earbuds/headphones this year (no Bluetooth models are permitted), and some classes may require flash drives. Please label these tiny bits of tech so we can return any lost equipment to its rightful owner.

Students will be issued a Chromebook to use both at school and at home. Each student is responsible for taking care of their assigned device, including remembering to charge it every night and bring it to school every day.

While the Chromebook is at home, you set the rules for its use to reinforce and support your home values. You set the boundaries for where, when, and how the Chromebook may be used. Many parents use some combination of the following:

- Chromebook may only be used in common space in the home, with screen visible
- Chromebook may only be used for schoolwork
- Chromebook may only be used at specific times

You set expectations for appropriate use of technology at home. You also determine consequences for inappropriate online behavior at home. Putting the Chromebook (or any device) in “time out” can be effective, but it is not the only approach. You know what works for your own children best.

If you have any questions about TechApps, Canvas, the Chromebooks, or any general technology at Academy, please don’t hesitate to ask.

We are thrilled to be working with your children this year!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Susan Geores*

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**Important Student Websites:**

**Email:** outlook.office.com

**Canvas:** aa.instructure.com

**Google Drive:** drive.google.com

**OneDrive:** www.office.com

**AA:** www.aa.edu