

BlocklyProp FAQ for Schools

These tips are meant to help teachers and school IT administrators set up BlocklyProp for classroom use. For an guided introduction, see the [Getting Started with BlocklyProp tutorial](#). For assistance, email support@parallax.com, or call 888-997-8267 8am to 5 pm PT.

What is BlocklyProp?

BlocklyProp is an online, visual programming tool. It is used to build programs on a personal computer that are then downloaded to Propeller microcontroller hardware, such as the [ActivityBot 360° Robot](#), the [Propeller FLiP Module](#), or the [Scribbler S3 robot](#) via a USB cable. (See our comprehensive list of [BlocklyProp-compatible products](#).)

License cost: none, it's free

BlocklyProp is based on Google's open-source Blockly tools. Consequently, BlocklyProp online is also open-source. There is no individual user fee or site license fee required. However, each user must register for a free account.

Where to get BlocklyProp

Programming is done online at the BlocklyProp website:
<http://blockly.parallax.com/blockly/>.

Do I need to install anything?

Yes. For Windows or Mac, you will need to install the free [BlocklyProp Client software](#). For Chromebooks, you will need to install the free [BlocklyProp Launcher](#) from the Chrome Web Store. The link for this software can always be found in the footer of the BlocklyProp website. This software manages the USB port communication to the Propeller hardware. So, it must be installed on each machine, and cannot be run from a network server.

Account creation requires email verification

To use BlocklyProp, you will need to register and provide an email address. An account activation link will be sent to this email address. If your school routinely blocks email from businesses, please whitelist emails from plxmail.com, or at a minimum blockly_noreply@plxmail.com.

One user per account

Do not attempt to create a single classroom account and have multiple students use it at the same time. This will cause undesired results as multiple students may accidentally modify and save to the same project simultaneously.

Alternative email address

Many schools don't permit student email addresses to receive messages from outside the school domain; however, the BlocklyProp account registration process requires the user to click a link from a received confirmation email. When creating a student BlocklyProp account, select the "Add an alternate email address" option and include the teacher's email as an alternate. This will allow the teacher to complete the verification process to activate the student's account.

COPPA compliance

BlocklyProp is COPPA compliant. When creating an account for students under 13, an alternate teacher or parent email address is required for account verification. Projects created under a COPPA student account cannot be shared and will remain private.

Warning about Chromebook "Guest" browsing

Always log into a Chromebook before going to the BlocklyProp site; do not use the login screen's "guest" browsing option. In guest browsing mode, you can access the BlocklyProp website but won't be able to download code to the Propeller microcontroller. This is because, in guest mode, the browser does not have access to the BlocklyProp Launcher application.

Warning about student accounts

School-managed Chromebooks and student accounts must have permission to install the [BlocklyProp Launcher](#) app. Without this app, the student will not be able to download their BlocklyProp project code to their Propeller microcontroller hardware.

Warning for Promethean Interactive Display users

Computers now, or formerly, attached to [Promethean Interactive Displays](#), may be unable to reliably download BlocklyProp projects to their connected Propeller boards. The Promethean ActivBoard software (which may have been installed with ActivInspire or ClassFlow Desktop software) may intermittently or permanently open virtual serial ports to scan for a digital whiteboard. To prevent this conflict, Promethean suggests uninstalling the ActivBoard driver (if not using any Promethean ActivBoards) or changing the computer's startup options to disable the driver upon start-up, then manually start the driver only when needed.