BYODD spells success for engagement of students

All Saints’ College has recently received an audit report on its IT infrastructure and strategies conducted by the Association of Independent Schools of NSW in conjunction with Combined Management Consultants. As a result of the report’s recommendations, All Saints’ has decided to modify its information technology platform operating in the Senior School to enrich the classroom experience for all students in Years 7-12 from 2017.

The platform involves a departure from the iPad programme towards a Bring Your Own Designated Device (BYODD) programme and further utilisation of the Edumate School Management System. Under the BYODD programme, students in Years 7-12 will be required to bring their own laptop for use in all classes as an aid to their learning. In time, students will be able to access class resources, assignments, discussions, marks and teacher feedback for each of their subjects via their laptops and Edumate. This decision is integral to the College’s philosophy of maximising the teaching and learning experience by taking advantage of relevant technology.

The changes will take effect for all Year 7 students in 2017. Existing Senior School students will be able to continue to use their iPads in 2017 should they wish. However, we expect that all Senior School students from Year 7 through to Year 12 will have made the change to the new BYODD platform before the commencement of the 2018 school year.

Studies on BYODD programmes have shown that students are more engaged and motivated to complete tasks using technology. We anticipate the programme will not only provide students with access to expanded global resources and content, but allow students to take ownership of their learning by providing them with a range of options to suit their learning style.

It has been shown the benefits of a BYODD programme include:

- Increased digital literacy
- Greater student engagement
- Improved problem solving and critical thinking skills
- Increased comprehension of new technologies and applications

The report from the AIS also affirmed our belief that the use of laptops in the Senior School will lead to increased productivity, efficiency and organisation for students.

Students’ use of IT devices has become normalised to the extent that many already have, and are extremely comfortable using, multiple devices available to them at home and on the move. The expansion of the College’s information technology offering to encompass BYODD will build on the natural affinity today’s students enjoy with technology. Additionally, the College environment should replicate the post-secondary experience with technology and lead to a smoother transition to further study or the workplace.

The designated device recommended by the College is a laptop with a screen size of at least 13 inches (33cm). The laptop should be Wi-Fi enabled, so that students can connect to the school network, and have a substantial battery life to last the full school day without re-charging. We strongly recommend you purchase Accidental Damage Insurance and install some level of anti-virus software on your child’s device.

Should you have any further questions please contact the College via it@saints.nsw.edu.au or visit the College website for more information.

Steven J O’Connor, Head of College