



13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Technology and the way we interact with technology continues to change at a rapid pace. Our digital strategy and the developments that we are making are designed to resource the teaching and learning to the highest standards, and to equip our students for the world of the future. This includes the installation of a new Wi-Fi last year, parent meetings to communicate our digital strategy, students showing off their programming skills with robots at Digital Ace, updating the work done on digital safety with students and the transition from mobile phones to the Microsoft Surface devices as their learning device that started in September for Remove (Year 7) and will be the expectation over the next two years.

Alongside this we have a number of other developments including Upper Four students taking industry recognised Microsoft Office Specialist qualifications and rolling out Microsoft Teams as our online learning platform e.g. for setting homework assignments. Given the current situation with coronavirus, we have accelerated our roll out of Teams which includes the facility to video conference, share PowerPoints and other resources, and to work on a virtual whiteboard so that we can support students if required.

New technologies provide additional opportunities as well as challenges – I would refer you to the latest episode of “Click” on BBC iPlayer that discusses these in relation to artificial intelligence and to social media <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000g8w5/click-can-ai-help-fight-coronavirus>

At the start of the year, we go through the acceptable use policy and this is signed by students to show they understand and accept these rules that set out how all members of the College community should interact – honestly and respectfully. One of the challenges that we have been dealing with for the last two weeks relates to the use of social media by students that references The Ladies' College or members of the College. I am writing to ask for your support in dealing with this.

### **Specifically students should be aware:**

- “Information you post online may continue to stay on the World Wide Web even after you erase or delete that information from pages.
- Before participating in any online community understand that anything posted online is available to anyone in the world.
- Do not post information, photos or other items online that could reflect negatively on you, your family or The Ladies' College community.
- Be discreet, respectful, gracious and as accurate as you can be in any comments or content you post online.” <https://www.ladiescollege.com/media/51685/ICT-policies-effective->

[160321.pdf](#) p9, and further advice at  
<https://www.ladiescollege.com/information/bring-your-own-device>)

These points have been revisited with Remove to Upper Five students in assembly on Monday and it was made clear that posting comments that **were either unkind or untrue and/or with any reference to The Ladies' College (name, site, teachers or showed students in uniform) were unacceptable** without prior permission. I also highlighted that such comments were a students' digital footprint that can follow them around for long periods of time, e.g. when making job applications.

Students are actively encouraged to communicate, be part of discussions and to influence decisions e.g. through their Tutor, Year Coordinator, other teachers, other adults such as the School Councillor, Deputy Dozen meetings, Action Teams, School Council meetings and through Form captains. We do take parent and student feedback into consideration e.g. introducing GCSE PE as one of the options in Lower Five next year, the new Food Technology classroom on which work will start this weekend and trousers for students. Could we ask you to complement the work we are doing in College and review with your daughter her use of social media, specifically:

- **TicTok** to ensure that there are no images or videos of her in school uniform. While we appreciate that many students do like to post videos of themselves, some of the language in the songs is unacceptable – if it is not something that would be appropriate in a face to face conversation then it shouldn't be posted online
- **Instagram** and especially in relation to meme sites that are related to the College. In my assembly I also explained that we considered that students who follow such groups are considered to be actively supporting the group and request that they remove themselves from such groups, as well as not commenting or setting up these.

I have spoken to some students already and will follow up as required. We firmly believe in educating rather than banning and appreciate that as part of this we will have to revisit our expectations at times, as well as taking action when these are not adhered to. We would rather that students, supported by teachers and parents, are proactive, meet our expectations and understand their responsibility to adhere to socially required norms.

Remove students do not need their phones during the working day and will be required to place their phones in their locker prior to registration in the morning and can collect them at the end of the school day. Should they need to use them during the day they should take them down to Reception and request permission. If you need to contact your daughter, we would ask that you do so via the school office or directly through email. We will look review in due course and would ask for your support with this.

Yours sincerely,

H. Barnes

Mr H Barnes  
**Director of Studies**