



BEING DIGITAL CITIZENS AT THOMAS HASSALL

In this digital age, while mobile phones have become an integral part of our lives, it is crucial to understand the potential consequences they can have on our teenagers' well-being and academic performance. Recent research has highlighted that excessive phone use can have several negative effects on teenagers. Here are some key points to consider:

- 1. Distraction:** Phones can be a major distraction during College hours, affecting students' ability to focus and engage in their studies. It is important for students to prioritise their education and limit phone use during this time.
- 2. Social Interaction:** Over-reliance on phones can hinder face-to-face social interactions. It is essential for teenagers to develop strong interpersonal skills and maintain healthy relationships with their peers.
- 3. Mental Health:** Excessive phone use has been linked to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and poor sleep quality among teenagers. Encouraging healthy phone habits can contribute to better mental well-being.
- 4. Academic Performance:** Spending excessive time on phones can lead to decreased productivity and hinder academic performance. It is crucial for students to find a balance between phone use and their studies.

Students were reminded this week of the importance of using their phone pouches or having their phones turned off and out of sight during College hours. It is important for students to adhere to these guidelines and understand the consequences of not doing so. This is in line with the NSW Government phone policy implemented late last year for high schools that aimed to increase

focus and learning in classrooms, remove distractions, and promote positive social interactions. We have also been providing resources and information on the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between phone use and other activities e.g. setting designated phone-free times, encouraging alternative forms of entertainment and relaxation, and using the phone pouch to cut down on distractions or notifications during study.

As a College community, we can work together on this to promote responsible phone use among our students. We want to empower students to use technology effectively and responsibly. Using their phone pouch is a temporary tool to help students build the necessary skills and habits for successful engagement with powerful tools like smart phones. Our hope is that we can help our students use their devices in ways that enhance, rather than hinder, their learning and well-being, developing the self-regulation and critical thinking essential for becoming responsible digital citizens. Please support your child by discussing the policy with them and reminding them of their responsibility to follow it.

If you have any questions or want more information regarding the wellbeing program for this term feel free to contact your child's year advisor.

Dr Anna Nalla

Director of Student Wellbeing - Senior School
