THE WAY

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

We recently held a Parent Café Chat session focused on artificial intelligence and the ways some platforms can enhance learning. We recognise that the digital world is changing rapidly, and that families and schools are rightly asking how we can help keep young people safe online. As a College, we want to celebrate what our students can do, support them as learners and prepare them well for life beyond school. We also want them to grow as responsible and safe users of technology. At times, these priorities can feel difficult to balance. In our College communications, photographs help us capture stories and provide families with treasured memories of important moments across the year. Yet we also want to be thoughtful and careful about how images of young people are posted, shared and used.

Advances in artificial intelligence and image manipulation mean that photographs shared publicly online can be copied or used in ways that were never intended. Once an image is placed on a public platform, we do not always have control over where it may appear or how it may be used.

For this reason, we have made the decision to use fewer clearly identifiable photographs of students appearing on the College's public social media channels. This has been a deliberate and considered decision as we review how best to protect students while continuing to honour and celebrate College life.

The eSafety Commissioner has recently encouraged schools to review how photographs of students and staff are collected, approved and shared, and to adopt a more risk-based approach to public imagery. This is particularly important as school images can be harvested from websites

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or social media and misused through artificial intelligence tools.

Australia's social media minimum age laws now require age-restricted platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent children under 16 from having accounts. These changes seek to give young people more time to develop emotional, social and digital skills before engaging with the pressures and risks of social media.

As a College, we want to have a similar approach: to help students grow up in a safe and supportive environment where they are protected, known and free to learn, recognising that each child is precious and entrusted to our care. We will continue to recognise student achievements, showcase learning and celebrate special events; however, we will be more discerning about the images placed on public platforms and make a clearer distinction between public content and photographs shared privately with College families.

As part of this approach, you will notice our newsletter, The Way, is now password protected and we are exploring secure technology that will allow families to access photographs featuring their own children. These steps are designed to preserve the joy and connection that photographs bring, while providing stronger protection for students in an increasingly complex digital environment.

This change is not about taking valued memories away. Rather, it is about finding safer ways to preserve and share them, while using technology wisely to look after the wellbeing of our students.

Our hope is that students will continue to flourish in an environment where they are protected, encouraged and free to learn.

> *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*
> *Proverbs 4:23*

Mrs Karen Easton
Principal

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