THE WAY

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Term 3 has been full and productive. It has also been a time of ongoing reflection as schools, families and society more broadly respond to the rapid growth of artificial intelligence and digital technologies. It is certainly a challenge.

A learning highlight for me last week was reading with a small group of Year 3 students who have been exploring imaginative and persuasive writing. They visited to share their stories, and I was impressed by the neatness of their handwriting and the breadth of their vocabulary. Their writing included words such as “agony” and “mysterious”, thoughtful similes, and a variety of adjectives that brought greater interest and detail to their work. There was no AI involved at all - just young writers thinking carefully, choosing words well and taking pride in their learning.

I also thoroughly enjoyed the Year 5 Passion Projects. Again, there was creativity and ingenuity evident in the work they had engaged in through their research. Some projects were completely handmade and others involved complex coding and computer skills.

Year 10 Commerce students held their annual Market Day which combined digital skills for advertising and promoting products with front facing customer service. It was wonderful to witness the enthusiasm and energy as they ‘sold’ to their wider community.

The depth and variety in these learning moments have given me a reason to pause and reflect. Recent media reports have challenged the amount of time young people spend on screens. Yet the learning I have observed incorporates individual human thinking with the added refinement that digital technologies can provide. Education uses IT for research, textbook curation and

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collaboration in learning. This is more than simply scrolling or messaging friends. Leisure time can be spent using technology for games, entertainment and connection. We all need to take responsibility for time that is being spent online and ask whether it is always helpful.

Our students will need to live, learn and work in a world where digital tools are part of everyday life. The challenge is to help them become responsible digital citizens without losing the ability to think deeply and engage well with the people around them.

One example is our participation as the pilot senior school for CurricuLLM, the safe and purpose-built student platform we wrote to families about earlier this term. We know many students are already familiar with freely available AI platforms such as ChatGPT, yet these tools are not always designed with student learning, privacy or age-appropriate safeguards in mind.

This same commitment has shaped recent changes to the way we share photos and news from College life. We understand this may limit some of the sharing families have been used to, but it reflects our desire to take a safer and more thoughtful approach to technology and the protection of children.

The Parent Café has also morphed into a no-tech space for children as they enjoy breakfast with their families and one another. Thank you to the parents and carers who have supported this change. Small decisions like this help children strengthen social skills and share experiences that build connection and belonging.

Our hope is to help students develop the digital skills they will need for life beyond school, while nurturing habits of learning that cannot be automated. It is a challenging time and I know we will be having more conversations about the right balance.

Finally, I want to commend our Year 12 students. They have studied hard and completed the practical components of their major works. I am excited to share that we have received four nominations for OnSTAGE for HSC Drama performances. This is a huge achievement. We are extremely proud of their efforts and will be praying for them as they approach their examinations next term.

I do trust that you will have a safe and restful term break.

> *Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*
> ***- Psalm 90:12***

Mrs Karen Easton
Principal

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