21st Century Learning – What parents and caregivers need to know

“What technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is most important.”

- Bill Gates

WHAT IS DIGITAL LITERACY?

Digital literacy means students have the knowledge and skills to safely access, question, evaluate and create using technology. Digital literacy is one part of being a digital citizen; a person who is responsible for how they use technology to interact with the world.

WHAT IS DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP?

Being a digital citizen means being a responsible user of technology, especially online. For students and their families this involves:

- using sites and devices correctly and being safe online
- managing their ‘digital footprint’, that is how a person’s information is seen online
- questioning the trustworthiness of what they view online
- avoiding and reporting incidences of online bullying

WHY IS 21ST CENTURY LEARNING SO IMPORTANT?

It is often thought that students are digital experts by the time they reach high school, due to having devices from a young age. However, while young people seem to have an endless knowledge of video games and social media, research shows that the skills they need as they start work is ever growing. There is a big difference between understanding how to use apps and social media to knowing the ethical responsibilities that come with technology use.

Along with emailing, word processing and spreadsheets, a 21st century employer could expect employees to have a knowledge of software, website design, managing social media accounts, developing apps, and coding. Therefore, we need to focus on teaching students about the technology that will be important in the workplace in the future.

WHAT CAN WE DO IN THE HOME TO SUPPORT STUDENTS LEARNING?

As parents and carers, you play an important role in the use of technology in the home, both for education and for fun. It is important for families to set guidelines for technology use, such as managing screen time, and monitoring your child’s online use, privacy and searches.

You do not have to be an expert to share your knowledge of technology with your child. Simple skills, such as what you know about formatting documents or searching online can be very useful. A great way to share technology time with your child is to make connections with your child’s interests. For example, ask them to complete creative activities on the computer such as making a slideshow of photos, designing party invitations, and emailing friends and family.

Families and schools need to build upon basic technology skills rather than expect that students know them already. Research shows that the top 3 digital literacy skills universities require of students are working with spreadsheets, online researching and referencing sources of information.
LIST OF REFERENCES & RESOURCES FOR PARENTS / CAREGIVERS:

Here are a number of websites that parents can visit to assist them comprehend the ins and outs of digital technology. Some sites offer a number of guidelines and suggestions for managing devices and technology in the home and ways to safely monitor and keep track of your child’s digital usage. You will also find links to help parents understand a common high school ICT program – Bring Your Own Device.

1. NSW Department of Education BYOD policy and guidelines

2. A digital literacy guide for parents
   www.fundamentallychildren.com/tablet-tips-esafety/what-is-digital-literacy/

3. Cyber and digital literacy resources for the whole community

4. iParent – an interactive guide for parents on using devices

5. A Parent information pack on Bring Your Own Device policies

6. Effective parenting tips for a digital world

7. Australian Parents Council site to support parents and technology
   https://austparents.edu.au/parentech

LIST OF REFERENCES & RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:

Visit these sites to see what other schools are doing to prepare and set up students for BYOD programs. See samples of student agreements and acceptable usage guidelines. Many schools have their own blog or wiki for students and families about technology and devices. You will find some links below

1. Samples of Consent and Acceptable Use Agreement statements

2. Essential information for students, parents and teachers about digital citizenship

3. Jamison High School BYOD site with links to their student agreement statement
   http://jamisonhsbyod.weebly.com/for-parents.html

4. Ulladulla High School BYOD Information with links to their student agreement statement

5. Smiths Hills High School BYOD website for students and parents
   http://smithshill-hschool.wixsite.com/byod

6. Warilla High School’s weebly site on Bring Your Own Device
   http://warillahighbyod.weebly.com/