Dear Parents/Guardians

Through the College Newsletter I have communicated information regarding the College’s move to Anytime Anywhere Learning. The requirement is that for the start of the 2014 academic year all students in Year 7 to Year 11 have an iPad as an essential learning tool. This letter is to provide you with further details as to the requirement and to ensure parents that this decision has resulted from a lot of research and careful planning on the part of the College. Students entering Year 12 in 2014 have the option of purchasing an iPad but it is not essential for studies as it is understood the iPad would be utilised for three terms only. If Year 12 students do choose to purchase an iPad, they will be required to purchase the specified models noted later in this letter.

At present, all students have ready access to Information Technology through the use of laptops provided by the College. These laptops, together with the five fully equipped computer labs, provide in excess of 1:1 on campus. Also, more than 300 girls have been utilising their own mobile devices which has resulted in technology being embedded in all learning. At Mercedes College, we have never put technology at the heart of the learning. Rather, good classroom teaching and learning, or pedagogy as we call it, is at the heart and technology is just one tool to enhance that learning and provide further opportunity for student engagement. Anytime Anywhere Learning will give our students immediate access, not only to the internet when they need it in class, but also to a range of applications that will engage them more deeply in their learning. The laptops provided by the school will still be available. The iPad won’t be able to do everything.

To facilitate the space required for students to create and save documents, the College has specified a minimum spec of:

- iPad Air 32GB (WiFi ONLY)
- iPad Mini 2 32GB (WiFi ONLY)

Students who currently have either iPad Mini, iPad 2 or 3 or the iPad Retina (4th generation) may continue using them; however, each year Apple provides major updates to the iOS. This can sometimes mean that older devices that are either not compatible with all of the new features, or simply do not have the processing power to make use of the update. This could present difficulties with using apps and other documents. In addition students with a 16GB device may need to be diligent with what is being stored on the device and archive unused data. The College will provide a significant amount of "College server storage space" into which students can move data.
The minimum requirement of 32GB will also ensure that the students have sufficient memory on their device for all the digital texts and apps that will be required. There will be significant savings for parents in the purchasing of digital texts. All learning areas in the College have moved to digital texts where such texts are available. Most of these texts will be available through the iBooks app already loaded onto the iPad and purchases can be made using an iTunes account or iTunes vouchers. Be aware that some digital text licences will only be available through OfficeMax who supply our text books.

On the booklist there will also be a link to the College website where a list will be provided for each Year level of all required apps available through the App Store. That link will not go live until 1 December. Digital texts may be either purchased or downloaded free from the iBook store. These will all be required to be downloaded onto the iPad ready for the start of the 2014 academic year. During the year the students may be required to purchase other apps. It is suggested that parents simply provide their daughter with a $20 iTunes card to cover the cost of these if needed. Please be assured that any App will be thoroughly investigated by the Head of Learning Area and the teachers concerned prior to any recommendation for students to purchase or download free Apps.

As we are moving to the iPad, students will no longer be able to use any other mobile device. The College’s IT Support team are currently working on the procedure for all iPads to be logged. Please be aware that the responsibility for care and charging of the iPad will rest entirely with the student. It is expected that each day the iPad will be brought to school fully charged. In addition, the iPads will not be used during recess or lunch, unless the student is doing work or study in the library. Also, parents please ensure that you and your daughter are familiar with the College’s Policy on Acceptable Use of ICT. The current Policy is being updated to accommodate the Anytime Anywhere Learning.

To facilitate the use of the iPads and to ensure that our teaching and learning is providing the skills our girls will need well into the twenty-first century, Mr Paul Reid has been appointed as the Director of Learning Technology. Paul has had extensive experience in the area of IT both Australia wide and internationally. First and foremost, Paul is a teacher and his focus remains grounded in good classroom practice and in providing the very best support for both staff and students. In addition, Paul will be conducting a parent evening on **Tuesday 4 February** so please put this date in your diary. More information will follow.
Thank you for your ongoing support of the College and the initiatives that we put in place to ensure that Mercedes College maintains its level of academic excellence and provides the very best learning environment for our young women as they move into a future that relies on the latest technological knowledge and digital information. If you need any further clarification please contact Mrs Liana Strutt, Deputy Principal Academic Services, at the College.

Kind regards

Sheena Barber
Principal