



## **Digital Distraction – How Best to Support the Development of Resilience**

### **Preamble**

Towards the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, there was discussion in the Secondary School about the impact of digital devices on the welfare of students. As the 2017-2018 year progressed, these concerns were also being articulated by members of the community with a request that the School consider how best to support students.

A working group of parents, VIS staff and student representation was convened, following a large launch meeting attended by over 80 parents. There is no doubt or disagreement about the benefits to learning in having access to appropriate digital devices. The School has implemented a programme that ensures that every student has either a tablet or laptop to support this important 21<sup>st</sup> Century literacy.

The working group meet twice in the period between March and May 2018 and agreed the following set of expectations.

### **Mobile Phones**

There is a compelling body of evidence to support a belief that young people need to be supported to address the addictive potential of mobile phone use, or other devices that are capable of receiving mobile telecommunications signals like iWatches. The School is keen to work in partnership with students and parents to help build required resilience. All members of the working group were very aware of the potential for these expectations to be met with resistance - not only by the students - but are absolutely committed to long-term benefits that are to be gained by being resolute.

Note: If a family feels a need to provide their child with a mobile phone, it does not need to be a smartphone. The decision to buy a high-end device is a parental choice.

It is the intention of the working group that the following guidelines will be presented as supportive strategies in developing resilience rather than simply a set of rules.

### **Phone-Free Zones**

The School has created three phone-free zones: The Cafeteria, the Theatre and both Libraries. Phone use in these areas is not allowed. Phones must also not be used while moving around the building. This applies equally to students, parents, visitors and staff.

### **Grade Level Expectations for Mobile Phone Use**

- **Students in Grades ELC to Grade 8** must not use their: mobile phones must not be used during the school day and should be kept in school bags or lockers. If used, there is a - consequence of confiscation.
- **Students in Grades 3 to 8** will be allowed to use their phone to contact their parents and guardians at the end of the school day. If used for other reasons, there is a - consequence of confiscation.
- **Students in Grades 9 and 10** are only allowed to use their phones outside of lesson time (but not in the Phone-Free Zones).. During lessons, phones must not be on the desk or visible. If used otherwise, there is a - consequence of confiscation.
- **Students in Grade 11 and 12** should limit their phone use to essential needs.

Exceptions to the phone use expectations that are linked to learning are allowed when approved by a teacher.

### **Use of Computers/Tablets**

Computers and tablets are tools to support learning in the learning environment.

1. Computers and tablets should only be used while sitting at a desk/table.
2. Digital devices are not compatible with eating and drinking and must be put away when food and drink are present.
3. Break and lunch times are 'play' times. Digital devices are used at school for work, and so should not be used at these times.
4. The Library is a place for quiet study and homework. This should happen safely and without distraction. Therefore, computers and tablets must only be used for educational purposes.
5. Films may only be watched in school when they form part of a lesson guided by a teacher.
6. There is no place for computer games at school.

### **Consequences**

The use of any digital device for purposes that do not support learning, including but not limited to those above, will result in the device being confiscated. The consequences are defined in three levels (to be applied within a school year).

**Level 1 (First incident):** The device is confiscated, the student may collect it at the end of the school day (14.55 Primary or 15.15 Secondary), and the incident is recorded on ManageBac.

**Level 2 (Second incident):** The device is confiscated, the student may collect it at the end of the next school day and the incident is recorded on ManageBac.

**Level 3 (Third incident):** The device is confiscated. The parents/guardians are required to come and collect the device from the Deputy Principal. The incident is recorded on ManageBac.