Dear Parents and Carers,

The federally funded Digital Educational Revolution (DER) program, which provided every Year 9 student with a laptop has now ended.

While the ongoing funding is being discontinued, schools have been left with robust infrastructure that will allow us to continue to provide wireless connectivity to students on a range of mobile devices to support their learning.

Access to technology is vital in a future-focused learning environment to move our education system into a 21st century model of teaching and learning. University and TAFE learning is now reliant on digital learning. Galston HS is joining a large number of state schools who are implementing a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) strategy.

Therefore, Galston HS Year 7 to 9 students will be encouraged to bring a suitable mobile device (laptop or selected tablet types) to school each day from 2014.

The DER laptops issued to students will continue to be used in Years 10 to 12 however; if families of students in these year groups choose to purchase a BYOD device, we request that their DER laptop be returned to the school to allow us to create a pool of laptops to support students in the classroom who do not have a BYOD available to them.

We recognise that a device for student use represents a significant investment for families. A good quality device may last from Year 7 to Year 12 and, viewed over six years, the expense is considerably less. Galston High School has integrated the use of technology into many aspects of teaching and learning over the past 5 years. Your investment allows the school to continue to maximise learning outcomes for all students.

We would advise families considering purchasing a device to consider buying a device from the attached list. Please be aware that many older devices do not have the capability to connect to the DEC’s 5 GHz wireless network without considerable additional expense. Similarly, many less expensive devices, sold through stores such as Aldi, do not have the capability to connect to the DEC’s 5 GHz wireless network.

We do not recommend that devices which require a data plan are bought however, this a decision for parents and students to make together.

We have attached a document with suggestions as to which devices will work on the school network. The Galston HS BYOD Policy is also attached.

In 2014, Galston HS will be providing digital copies of textbooks for year 7 and 9 students to use on their device. Therefore the devices require the ability to read an Adobe Acrobat PDF as well as have an internet browser. Many students surveyed already have a device which is capable of meeting these requirements. Students will be able to access the school’s filtered wireless system to provide internet access.

All DEC students will be able to access a Microsoft Office package, which includes One Note, as well as Google Apps, through the DEC Portal early in 2014. Adobe CS6 will also be available to students; however the availability date for this has not yet been confirmed.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Galston High School and the BYOD Policy. If you have any questions in relation to the BYOD Policy, please do not hesitate to contact the school on 9561 2222 and you will be directed to a member of staff who can assist you further.

Jillian Tourlas