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FAST FORWARD

At an old high school in western Sydney the modern concept of emailing work to teachers is regarded by students as “so last century”.

By Kim Cotton.

Over the past 125 years the timber hallways and airy classrooms of Arthur Phillip High School in Parramatta had witnessed gradual changes.

But now using wireless technology or plugging a mobile phone into a teacher’s laptop is the preferred method of filing an assignment. School principal Lynne Goodwin says the venerable old school has been “wirelessed to within an inch of its life” to keep up with the blinding pace of technological advancement.

“The revolution started when we were able to make the whole campus wireless,” she explains on a school website “vodcast” (video webcast).

“It means every classroom is internet-ready. It means any time you need to work on something you just get a laptop and you do it in the class.”

At any time of the school day students are contributing to their online learning blog. They are producing electronic magazines on their favourite destinations for geography class, and creating vodcasts for the school’s Year 7 transition program.

At the beginning of the year, all Year 7 students attend “Boot Camp” – a four-day technology orientation program run by teachers and student leaders in Years 8 to 10.

Subjects include how to navigate the network and how to use the suite of multimedia programs such as iMovie, GarageBand for audio recording and iWeb to create web pages and blogs.

Students acquire information technology skills in four days rather than over a term. They’re then free to work on their laptops wirelessly at the school. The main motivation for the school’s technology focus is to engage the students in learning, Ms Goodwin says. “If you talk to the kids and look at where they’re at, technology is part of their life,” she says.

“The way we teach technology is to really equip them to have sound learning practices that underpin what we do.”

“The world is moving so quickly now and it’s a challenge to keep up with it. What we’re trying to do is have that interactivity in a safe environment – I wonder what will be next?”

Arthur Phillip High School:
www.aphs.nsw.edu.au ■