Twitter is unlike Facebook in that a Tweet is a maximum of 140 characters, and can only include one photo. Xavier High is using Twitter for short updates, and will often use a link back to our website where the full story can be viewed. Our tweets will also transfer to Facebook, so it doesn’t matter if you prefer to Tweet or are a Facebook user, either way you will get our message.

When you sign up with Twitter, you can use the service to post and receive messages to a network of contacts. Instead of sending a dozen e-mails or text messages, you send one message to your Twitter account, and the service distributes it to all your friends. Members use Twitter to organize impromptu gatherings, carry on a group conversation or just send a quick update to let people know what’s going on.

Here is some basic information to get you tweeting in no time.

**Step 1:** Go to www.twitter.com and sign up

**Step 2:** Be sure to add a picture and a bio – this goes a long way to telling others a little about you. You can do both of these steps at any time, so you might want to have a look around on Twitter and see what others are doing to get a bit of an idea first.

**Step 3:** Start looking for people or organisations you admire and follow them! You should start with @xavieralbury

**Step 4:** Remember that you can always ‘unfollow’ someone – if their tweets are dull, irrelevant or offend, don’t hesitate in hitting the ‘unfollow’ button.

**A Few Twitter Basics...**

*What is a tweet?*
A tweet is a short message much like an SMS or a Facebook status update. A tweet is limited to 140 characters. A tweet might be a message entirely unto itself, or it may contain a link to a photo, a video or an internet site.

*What does the @ symbol mean?*
The @ symbol allows you to make reference to a particular person or organisation in your tweet. By putting the @ in front of the Twitter name: eg @xavieralbury you are ‘mentioning’ that person or organisation. The person you have ‘mentioned’ will receive a notification about their mention. You can use this to get a message to someone, or you might want to draw attention to someone.

*Why the #?*
The # creates a search filter for any range of topics. If you want to tweet about a particular topic, you can include a # which will bring your tweet up in a search. For example: you might be tweeting about a football match and might include the hashtag #aflswans

*When I see ‘RT’, what am I looking at?*
‘RT’ means ‘retweet’. You can retweet something that you have seen on Twitter that you think your followers might also be interested in. Retweeting passes information on to wider circles while giving credit to the original author. Having one of your tweets ‘retweeted’ is a compliment to your ideas. If someone retweets you, it is polite to thank them (in a tweet using a @ of course!)

**Don’t forget:** There are privacy settings on Twitter which allow you to control who can and can’t see your tweets. Be sure to check this out when you set up your account.

**Important:** Using Twitter may seem a little foreign at first, people quite often go through the process of signing up and then discontinue the use of their account in the first month. Twitter is a great information sharing tool and is most beneficial if you are following a decent number of people and organisations who are tweeting messages that are of interest to you.

So our advice is get tweeting, and give it a fair go.