



## Principal News – April 2023

### School start time

The school provides staff supervision for students from 8.45am each morning and until 3.45pm each afternoon. Students who arrive at **school prior to 8.45am are required to be in Before School Care (OSHC)** or supervised by a parent. Students who require supervision after 3.45pm must be booked into After School Care (OSHC). Please help us to keep your child safe by adhering to this. If there are issues specific to your family that you need school support with, please contact assistant principal, Carolyn Shiels. Students are not to be dropped off at school unless supervised by a parent, prior to 8.45am.

### Working Bee

The sun was shining on us on Sunday and at the working bee we saw lots of bunny ears hopping around in the garden and art room. Thanks so much to all the parents, students and staff who came along to support the working bee. So much was achieved, and we are very grateful to all who contributed. Thanks to organiser Kellie Burns for organising and coordinating the working bee and for the generous donation of all the plants. Thanks also to Trav's Trees for removing the annoying stump that was in the planter box.



### Did you know?

**Outside bins** – the outside bins were removed from the yard on Clarke St, as they were being filled with rubbish from the neighbourhood. Our maintenance staff were spending 20% of their maintenance time each Saturday emptying the bins. This was costing the school in time and money (as the school gets charged for excess weight). After hearing about a trial at Melbourne Girls College where they removed their bin from the yard, we decided to give that a go. Students can discard waste in the classroom bins or bins in the centre of the WEB. While it hasn't stopped some waste being discarded in the yard, anecdotally the yard is a bit cleaner than it used to be and we also do not have the bins filling up with the neighbours' waste.

**Cubbies on Clarke St** – children love building and playing in cubbies and periodically they become very popular. After the long weekend we discovered a very elaborate cubby built at the rear of the bike shed which contained many items that were from homes rather than from the school. The cubby obviously provided a great play opportunity however it needed to be removed as the roofing structure posed an occupation health and safety risk. If your children would like to play at the school after hours or if they are asking to bring things for cubbies, please do not let them bring items from home as they often need to be thrown out and ownership of the item can become the cause of disagreements and arguments.

**Lost property** – There is so much lost property that makes its way into the tubs around the school. Sometimes students in P – 2 lose property when they go to specialist classes or OSHC on Clarke St, likewise the years 3 – 6 students often lose theirs when being playground buddies or come to the library of computer lab. Please write their name on the items they remove during the school day, as well as lunchboxes and water bottles. If they bring a soft toy to school that has a tag, even their initials are handy. Please check, that they have everything they brought with them, when picking them up. Lost property takes staff time to manage and creates waste management issues. Your assistance with this is really appreciated.

### Homework

We pay for our students to have access for the use of Mathletics (2 – 6) and ABC Mathseeds (P-1) as a homework option. While we do not set homework for students, these programs are an excellent way to get students into a routine of practicing their maths learning at home. These programs can be set to the child's level, so they practice and get awards as they progress. You can find the links to Mathletics and ABC

Mathseeds on our school website via the link to our homework page below. If you do not know your child's login details, please talk to your child's teacher for details.

The other homework that we strongly recommend is reading practice. Students in prep will start bringing home their reading folders in term two and we recommend that they read their book at least three times before returning it and getting a new title. At the back of the Little Learners books, you will find comprehension questions to help them understand the storyline. This is as essential as being able to read (decode) and comprehend the individual words. I would also encourage parents of students in year Prep – 2 to watch the video on how to assist your child with home reading, also on our website. <https://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/page/332/Home-Reading> Students from years 1 – 6, should be reading a minimum of 10 minutes which as they become more independent up to 30 minutes per day. And although your child might be reading independently, I also recommend that you still have them read aloud to you every now and again and that you ask them questions about the story to gauge if they are comprehending what they are reading. Reading is about making meaning, so therefore if they are not understanding what they are reading, they may need to be reading something more appropriate for their needs at the time. We do have some optional homework available at different levels which get changed periodically and are also available on our website. <https://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/page/254/Optional-homework-tasks>

### Staff change



We have good news and sad news on our staffing front. We are thrilled to welcome back Archie Bacheta (pictured right). Archie has been enjoying long service leave this term, and will be here for the rest of the year as a year 6 teacher. On a sad note, we farewell long term staff member and teacher Cameron Lobb who after 18 years at Westgarth PS has decided to try his hand in the private sector. We would like to thank him for his numerous contributions to the school



and his wonderful work over the past 18 years and wish him the very best for the future. We look forward to catching up with him as a member of the Idol band.

### S.T.E.A.M in term one

### - Yolanda Stephenson STEAM specialist

The first term of S.T.E.A.M is almost complete. Students have worked well and have successfully finished off their term 1 projects (chariots to be finished early T2). Below a list of what all the year levels worked on.

**Year 3** – Coding with OSMO and then using iMovie to film Reader's theatre.

**Year 4** - Had a big project term 1, after using the SPHERO and working out what it could do, students needed to design an obstacle course and then program their SPHERO to run through it successfully.

**Year 5** - After learning about bridges, the year 5's needed to design and construct a bridge for their SPHERO to run over and back. Students learnt that the triangle is the strongest shape, and so lots of students incorporated this into their design.

**Year 6 Cam** - Students had time to code using the program Scratch and OSMO. Groups then moved on to having a turn at Swift Playground which gets students to code a character through mazes collecting gems. This program uses text to code and students worked really well in teams even though it can be quite challenging.

**Year 6 Erin** - Started the term off using the OSMO kits to block code. Their term 1 project is to make a chariot strong enough to move with various weights added to it. This will be completed early in term 2 when we race the chariots around the gym.

**Year 6 Hannah** – Lego robotics was this groups Term 1 project. Students built different designs and then used the iPads to code them to move/light up/make sounds.



Yr 3



Yr 4



Yr 5



Yr 6C



Yr 6H

Looking forward to next term and lots more learning. I hope everyone has a safe and happy break.

## School Review

The school review panel met to finalise the findings of the review and set the direction for the new strategic plan on March 24. The school review is a robust process which takes a deep look into our data, outcomes and listens to students, parents, and staff about the many facets of the school. While a review is always challenging as it interrogates the data and pushes us to explore, justify and question the status quo, it helps to focus our attention on what we are doing well and areas for improvement. The next phase is the development of the new four-year strategic plan. Thanks to all who contributed to the review process by attending forums and for the contributions all families make by completing the parent opinion survey each year. Thanks also to school council for supporting the process and to Jacob Spencer, School Council President for representing the parent body and attending the review validation and panel days. We will share the new goals and review outcomes once the final report is completed and approved in early term two.

## Sleep Health

On 17 March it was World Sleep Day to raise awareness to the importance of good sleep habits. We know that poor sleep patterns significantly impact a student's ability to concentrate and learn at school. The Department of Education sent schools a tip sheet (attached) from the Sleep Health Foundation which outline ten strategies to help parents. Please visit [www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au](http://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au) for more information.

## Safety around the school

There have been two incidents of concern recently outside of the school grounds at drop off and pick up times. The first involved a student being knocked off their bike by someone opening a car door in Brooke St. This is not the first incident involving a car door and a student traveling to school. The other involved a child being 'doored' while riding a skateboard. Please check mirrors before opening car doors.

The other more recent safety incident was a dog bite, sustained by a student, and while the dog was on a lead and held by an adult, it shows how easily a situation can occur and someone unnecessarily injured. I would like to remind everyone that at these busy times of the day, it is essential that we remain vigilant in supervision of both children and dogs to ensure everyone's safety. A dog on a lead does not mean it is controlled.

If you need to walk your dog to school, please keep it on a short lead and arrange a meeting place away from the busy gateways to collect your child. Dogs can become distressed in crowds and respond to perceived threats in an instance. This is also why we have asked not to tether dogs nor allow children to be the ones in charge of a dog. It is also essential that there is plenty of room to move around people waiting on footpaths so that children (and adults) do not need to come close to a dog, nor walk onto the road to manoeuvre around. We would hate there to be another incident or for a member of the community to become involved with the authorities.

Please remind children not to approach dogs that are not their own, as it is difficult to know how the dog will respond. Even the most placid dogs can bite.

## School Council Report – March meeting

– Jacob Spencer (School Council President)

The last School Council meeting was held onsite at 7pm on Wednesday 29 March. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) preceded the school council meeting, where we looked at the Annual Report for 2022. The school had some excellent achievements in 2022 with very strong student outcome and parent, staff and student opinion data. A video explanation of the Annual Report is available on SeeSaw. The written copy will be available on the school website shortly.

**Architect presentation:** The architects from LAW Architects, who have been designing the new gym and classroom buildings attended the school council meeting to share the updated plans and designs and answer questions. Some communication about the project will be released after the holidays.

**Principal's Report** – Topics discussed: school review, the development of the new strategic plan, staffing changes, the playground and other works around the school, decanting of buildings in preparation for the capital works program, whole school events and competing demands.

**Finance** – The Finance Committee meet monthly to discuss the previous month's financials. Detailed financial reports are provided to committee members for review and discussion. The committee is happy to

report that our positive cash flow allows us to meet our financial budget commitments for both revenue and expenditure.

**Environment** – Environment committee discussed the design development phase of the capital works project and fundraising to ensure we get all that is needed but not funded under the project, communication with the Meatworks builders about planned works onsite, and the Brooke St fence which will be completed once the new gates have been installed.

**OSHC** – It's has been a great start to the year in the OSHC community. Students have thoroughly enjoyed the engaging and diverse education program presented by the Term 1 clubs (Gardening, Animalia, Messy and Basketball), trialling some new foods, and making use of our brand new water fountains! From a governance perspective, we would welcome any feedback on our annual Quality Improvement Plan which helps orient the priorities for student education and care, plus staff development, in OSHC programs.

If you need Before or After school care for your students, please get in touch!

**Fun & Fundraising** - Fun and Fundraising subcommittee had another successful meeting on March 20th. It great to see some more new faces join us and jump straight in. We're also building our group of class reps, just a few classes to go. The class rep group will be used as a communication avenue between FaF and class groups - not too onerous. We've got a good idea of events to fill the year, with a spread of social, educational, and fundraising - something for everyone! Some of the events will be asking for volunteers, so keep an eye on your socials, Compass and class groups. The next FaF meeting will be on Monday 8 May at 8pm in the staffroom. It's open to everyone, as always, so feel free to come and hear what it's about.

**Next meeting dates:**

OSHC	10 May @ 11am WebEx
Finance	9 May @ 10.00am WebEx
Education	2 May @ 7pm WebEx
Environment	11 May @ 8.00am Jo's Office
Fun & Fundraising	8 May @ 8.00pm staff room Brooke St
School Council	17 May @ 7.00pm Library

If you would like to join a sub-committee, please contact the office so we can pass on your details to the convenors of the sub-committees so you can receive the correspondence and meeting invites.

Jo Wheeler  
Principal