



## Principal News – March 2024

### Volunteers – we need you!

I would like to give a big shout out to the wonderful volunteers who attended the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program induction in early February. Our school relies on the volunteers who support our many and varied programs and events. While we understand that not everyone can volunteer on a regular basis, we are always happy to accept the time that you are available. Ways you can volunteer in the school are through curriculum programs such as the Kitchen Garden program, classroom reading program, small group helper in classrooms, library assistance, excursions, sport, working bees, fundraising/events, Spring Fair, Idol, Trivia Nights, student afterhours discos, working parties, guest speakers, committees (Fun & Fundraising, School Council, OSHC, Education, Environment, Finance – *see below for details of these committees*), art shows, musicals etc. Volunteering helps to connect you to the school and form friendships with other community members. Children feel more connected to the school community when their parents are involved, as well as developing a sense of school pride and an understanding of contributing to their world. Please consider getting involved. You can talk to your child's teacher, or the office staff and we can help connect you to the group.



### Privacy Policy

Our school collects and uses student and parent personal information for standard school functions or where permitted by law, as stated in the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Our [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students Policy](#) describes how we collect and use photographs, video and recordings of students. The policy also explains when parent consent is required and how it can be provided and withdrawn. For more information about privacy, refer to: Schools' Privacy Policy – information for parents. This information is also available in ten community languages:

- |            |           |        |               |            |          |
|------------|-----------|--------|---------------|------------|----------|
| * Amharic  | * Arabic  | * Dari | * Gujarati    | * Mandarin | * Somali |
| * Sudanese | * Turkish | * Urdu | * Vietnamese. |            |          |

## Welcome Picnic – 1 March



It was lovely to be able to enjoy the Welcome Picnic in our new location last Friday. The STOMP performances gave a different focus to the event and was a great way to bring our community together in such a positive way.



Thanks to the parents from the Fun & Fundraising committee who organised the drink sales and QR codes for the class WhatsApp groups. If you didn't join your child's class group, they were sent via Compass yesterday. This is a different way for families to connect and support each other. Please remember that by using the WhatsApp groups you are agreeing to abide by the Code of Conduct as outlined in our policy which is located on our website [https://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded\\_files/media/parent\\_chat\\_groups.pdf](https://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/parent_chat_groups.pdf)

## School Council Elections 2024

I would like to thank the parents and staff who have nominated or re-nominated to join school council for 2024; Carolyn Shiels, Mark Langdon, Trina Lin, Jason van Grieken, Darren Boyd, Amber Donnelly, Kate Ferguson and Jane Foley. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the retiring members of the school council and thank them for their contribution, governance, and support as councillors in 2023; Jacob Spencer, Rachel Semmens, and Ben Jones.

School council also runs a number of sub-committees and at times working parties that all members of the school community are welcome to join. Subcommittees assist Council with all the work that needs to be done. They report regularly at School Council meetings, provide advice, and make recommendations to Council, which has the responsibility for making the final decisions. Working parties are established by School Council to oversee the implementation of short-term tasks or carry out responsibilities in accordance with the Strategic Plan or other School Council initiatives. Working parties are given a set of responsibilities and a timeline for completing its work and should operate and report to School Council in the same way as a subcommittee would.

Our school council's sub-committees and working party include:

### Finance subcommittee

- To oversee the school finances
- To oversee fundraising in the school
- To oversee the OSHC budget
- To oversee the Buildings Fund
- To participate in the setting of the program budget; establishing and setting priorities
- Checking the monthly accounts before the School Council meeting.

### Education subcommittee

- To assist the school in developing programs within the school
- Updates curriculum related policies and submits to School Council for approval

### Environment subcommittee

- Oversee that the buildings and grounds are clean, safe and in a sound condition
- Develop plans for improving facilities to meet the needs of the students
- Plan a long-term maintenance and development strategy
- Organise working bees
- Updates environment and facilities related policies and submits to School Council for approval.

### Out-of-School-Hours-Care subcommittee

- To support the operation of the OSHC programs



- To ensure OSHC complies with all applicable policies and legislation
- To recommend the approval of equipment purchase and employment of staff
- Updates policies and submits to School Council for approval
- To oversee the program budget.

**Fun & Fundraising subcommittee** (new this year. This was formerly known as the Parents & Friends Association and was an incorporated committee. This committee was dissolved and now sits as a sub-committee of School Council).

- Build community within the school
- Raise money for important capital works and other projects or school-based programs (either not funded by or not fully funded by government)
- To provide opportunities for parents and families to meet each other

**Working Party** – From time to time, school council forms a working party to work on a short-term project. In the past the working parties have included Governance, Communication and Re-development Working Parties. A term of reference is developed to guide the work. Members of the school community are welcome to join.

*Please refer to newsletter diary dates each month, for future dates for these meetings.*

If you would like to be included on the distribution list of any of these sub-committees or working parties, please email the office so your email details can be forwarded to the convenor. Please note the Education Sub Committee meeting link is distributed to the whole community therefore a distribution list has not been established.

To register your interest in any of the above listed working parties, committees and/or sub committees, email the school at: [westgarth.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:westgarth.ps@education.vic.gov.au).

#### **Other ways to get involved:**

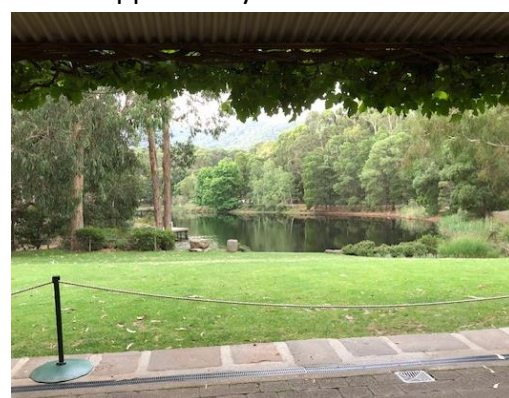
We invite parents and carers to be involved at Westgarth Primary School in a variety of ways such as helping out in the classroom, volunteering in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program, Fun and Fundraising events including the annual Spring Fair.

#### **Labour Day Holiday – No school Monday 11 March**

A reminder that there is no school on the Labour Day public holiday Monday 11 March. As this is a public holiday, there is no childcare available.

#### **Year 6 Camp – February 7 - 9**

The year six camp was well attended and ran beautifully. The students lived our school values and enjoyed all that was on offer, archery, canoeing, hut building, ropes course, mountain bike riding, orienteering, bush walking, etc. I would like to acknowledge the staff who attended: Glenn, Madeline, Habiba, Stacey, Rose, Dallas, Nathan, Finny, and Bel. It is a big commitment for staff to give up their after-hours time to support the camp program, so we are very lucky to have staff willing to attend. We are also lucky to have a regular booking at Cave Hill Creek as it is such a beautiful location and a wonderful opportunity for our students.



Our thoughts are with the Cave Hill Creek camp owners and the communities of Beaufort and Raglan who have been dealing with the recent bushfires in the area. We were relieved to hear that they were all able to evacuate safely as the bushfires approached and were happy to hear that the dorm room, main buildings,

glamping tents and family home were all saved. They did experience the loss of some of their other facilities such as their archery, climbing wall and some other outer buildings. The team are looking at rebuilding these facilities and hope to be operational again next term. It is expected we will be able to keep our usual booking with our 2025, year six cohort.

### Child safe at Westgarth PS

Westgarth Primary is committed to child safety. As a community we want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. There is zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We meet our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Westgarth Primary is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks. We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. As a community we support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. Westgarth Primary has specific policies, procedures and training in places that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

At Westgarth Primary:

- Everyone connected to our school can help children be safe.
- We have zero tolerance for any abuse of children.
- We already have policies and processes in place to protect the care, safety and welfare of children. These are being strengthened to ensure a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.
- There will be clear boundaries about how adults in our school community may interact with the children here set out in our school's Child Safe Code of Conduct.

To read our many [Child Safe Policies and procedures](#) click the link to our website.

### Building Update

How exciting it is that the works have started on the Clarke Street site! We meet with the builders, Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA), project managers and Department of Education staff, fortnightly. During these meetings we provide feedback, seek clarifications, and are briefed on the upcoming fortnight's work schedule. Over the next few weeks, the builder sheds and amenities will be set up and demolition will continue in preparation for ground works. Here is the before photo, I can't wait to send you the after photo!



### School Council Report – February meeting

– Jacob Spencer (School Council President)

The last School Council meeting was held onsite at 7pm on Wednesday 21 February. This was the final meeting of the current council. Nominations for school council closed on Monday 26 February.

**Principal's Report** – Topics discussed: Annual Implementation Plan 2024 ratified, staffing for 2024, including the current Business Manager, Victoria Cannata, having picked up a position close to home, update on the building works, Disabilities and Inclusion program, status of the lease agreement with the Westgarth Kindergarten and some minor building issues.

**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. The 2024 Parent Payment arrangements have now been published on Compass. We thank those families for their contributions to date. If you have not contributed yet, there still is time to do so via your parent Compass portal. Contributions are imperative, enabling quality curriculum resources to be purchased for each students learning.

**Environment** – no meeting

**OSHC** – no meeting

**Education** – no meeting

**Fun & Fundraising** – verbal report on the Welcome Picnic and FaF WhatsApp QR codes

**Next meeting dates:**

OSHC	Thursday 7 March @ 10am WebEx (TBC)
Finance	Wednesday 13 March @ 10.00am WebEx
Education	Wednesday 13 March @ 7.00pm WebEx
Environment	Wednesday 13 March @ 8.00am Jo's Office
Fun & Fundraising	Monday 18 March @ 8.00pm WebEx
School Council	Wednesday 20 March @ 7.00pm Staffroom

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