



**Glenn** – Coding a game using the website ‘Make code Arcade’ and then transferring that game to a handheld game device for younger years to play.

Looking forward to another wonderful term, Yolanda.

## Illness

As we head into winter, and colds and flu including COVID, become more common, we are seeking your support to keep unwell students at home. We do not have the facilities nor the staffing to look after sick children and viruses spread easily to other students and staff in classroom environments. As you may be aware, Victoria is experiencing a critical teacher shortage, therefore we cannot guarantee if a teacher is absent, that we can get a replacement. In these cases, classes may need to be split or staff redeployed and as a consequence learning programs may be disrupted. Moreover, an unwell student cannot focus on learning. Please help us to keep everyone well by keeping your unwell children at home.

Stay well this winter

[Influenza \(flu\)](#) can be serious, especially for children.

Choose to protect yourself and your loved ones with an [annual flu vaccine](#). The earlier you and your family get vaccinated, the better your protection heading into winter.

Keeping our school community well

We encourage parents and carers and students to:

- wash or sanitise your hands thoroughly and regularly, particularly before and after touching your face
- cough or sneeze into your elbow
- stay home if unwell and consult your GP or [Nurse-on-Call](#) as needed
- stay up to date with your flu vaccinations.

Flu vaccinations

Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone aged 6 months and older.

Some people are more at risk of severe illness from flu, especially babies and toddlers. They can get a [free vaccination](#) as part of the National Immunisation Program.

You can book a flu vaccine through your GP or pharmacy, or [find a flu vaccine near you](#).

RSV vaccinations for mothers and babies

[RSV \(respiratory syncytial virus\)](#) is a common virus that causes colds and ear infections. In babies, it can cause severe illness like [bronchiolitis](#).

The RSV vaccine is available for pregnant women as part of the National Immunisation Program. In Victoria, eligible babies can also get the RSV vaccine until Wednesday 30 September 2026.

You can speak with your GP or midwife about the vaccine.

Find out more

For more information about staying well this winter, refer to:

- your GP, pharmacist or midwife
- the Better Health Channel – [Don't risk the flu](#) campaign, including information about flu and other vaccines. This information is available in different languages
- the Better Health Channel – [RSV vaccine for mothers and infants](#)
- the Raising Children Network – [influenza](#), [COVID-19](#), [bronchiolitis](#) and [helping your child prepare for vaccination](#).

## Social skills and behaviours & managing bullying

Schools are places children come to learn to be literate, numerate and creative. It is also a place they learn to be social. Social skills particularly in the early years of schooling are equally as important as academic learning.

While schools don't test these skills, the other students are constantly assessing their peer's social abilities. Communication is essential to enable students to be socially capable. What is essential for us to understand is that each individual child is on a developmental continuum with their social development.

Some are more advanced than others and it is important that when there is a gap between your child's social development and others in our school, we need to help each child manage these differences. If your child is experiencing social difficulties, they may require your help to develop these skills through modelling, role-

playing, rehearsal, and practice. They may need help with greetings, initiating conversations, understanding the listener, empathising, reading social cues, problem-solving and apologising. They need praise when successfully using a new skill.

If parental support isn't making a difference, it might be time to consider seeking assistance from a professional. They can provide structured and tailored programs to meet your child's individual needs. For parents of students who are more socially able, it is essential that we recognise that not all children develop at the same rate and that we need to be empathetic to other students and their families particularly when you have concerns. A parent's response to an incident can determine their child's response. This can impact on your child's ability to develop resilience and empathy for others. As parents you can support your child by modelling empathy and acceptance of difference which will promote resilience, kindness and problem-solving skills thus making them more socially capable.

One area of social development we would like your help with is the concept of 'dobbing'. Our students have a tendency to criticise each other if they inform a teacher about the behaviour of others. They can be called dobbers, tattlers, or told that 'snitches get stitches'. These unhelpful comments reduce the powers of others to seek help. We are trying to frame the wording to be 'ask the teacher for help', to resolve issues in the playground as well as classrooms. If your child tells you they can't tell the teacher, please remind them that asking the teacher for help is an effective way to make a positive change. The school can't do something if we don't know about it.

We help students to have restorative conversations so that relationships can be repaired and that students can feel safe at school. Where possible, support them to manage the situation as it helps build their skills and resilience, but if it is too difficult or too much for them to manage, please reach out to your child's teacher in the first instance or school wellbeing staff (Ben C, Megan, Carolyn) if it continues.

Last year we reviewed and updated our approach to the management of bullying. Students are explicitly taught what constitutes bullying and how to manage bullying issues. A copy of the school's bullying process is on display in classrooms (see posters below) and forms part of our classroom setting the scene program which remind students about our practices and expectations. For a copy of our Bullying Prevention Policy follow this link to our website [Bullying Prevention Policy](#)



## 2025 Annual Report

Every year, schools are required to complete an annual report for the previous year which outlines the school's results for the year, covering the learning achievements, student, staff and parent survey results and the financial position. To view our school's annual report for 2025 please follow this link. [2025 Annual Report](#). A public meeting will be held prior to our June school council meeting to discuss the report and answer any questions. If you wish to attend it will be held on 17 June at 6.45pm in the Brooke St staffroom.

## Understanding the Role of School Council

In Victorian government schools, the school council is the legally constituted governing body responsible for setting the broad direction of the school. Composed of parents, department employees (including the principal), and community members, the council focuses on governance, strategic planning, finance, and asset management to improve student educational outcomes. Here is some information about school governance and the Education Department's priorities, which I hope you find helpful.

**Department of Education Initiatives - FISO 2.0, VTLM 2.0, Numeracy, Reading**

The education sector, like many vocations, uses many acronyms. The school council self-evaluation indicated that there is the need to explain some to you. I have selected these ones as they are the most relevant as they form the current direction for the department.

**FISO 2.0** is the Department of Education's policy that outlines the **F**ramework for **I**mproving **S**tudent **O**utcomes and refers to the continuous improvement framework for all Victorian government schools.

FISO 2.0 comprises of:

1. the 2 outcomes of **learning** and **wellbeing**
  2. the 5 core elements of **leadership, teaching and learning, assessment, engagement, and support and resources**, underpinned by 10 dimensions that indicate priority areas of practice to improve students' learning and wellbeing.
- By understanding the learning and wellbeing needs of students with reference to the five core elements, schools can better identify what is working and what practices need to change and be improved.
  - Schools use FISO 2.0 to inform development of their School Strategic Plans and Annual Implementation Plans. Our Strategic Plan was developed using FISO 1.0 however our Annual Implementation Plans are aligned with FISO 2.0. [Strategic Plan](#)

**VTLM 2.0** is the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 2.0. It is informed by contemporary evidence about the way students learn and the most effective teaching practices and approaches to achieve strong learning outcomes for students, including priority cohorts. It has explicit teaching at its core. Explicit teaching is designed to manage the cognitive load of students as they learn new content. It involves fully explaining and effectively demonstrating what students need to learn. This does not mean it is fully teacher directed or teacher talk, it is a high participation model. In summary:

- Activate prior knowledge
- State clear learning objectives
- Provide explicit learning objectives (from the curriculum) in manageable chunks
- Use the 'I do', 'we do', 'you do' approach.

**Numeracy Priority** – the department would like all schools to place a focus on developing student's mathematical abilities as they are concerned that there has been a slide in learning outcomes in this area. While our school has strong student outcomes in this area we have been focusing on this as part of our strategic plan and Annual implementation plans to ensure our outcomes do not drop. Our focus has included the development, understanding and implementation of a mathematical instructional model. This model focuses on lesson types: Active teaching, Purposeful games and puzzles, Challenging maths tasks and Maths investigations. Our plans will continue to prioritise this area of learning.

**Reading Priority** – the department policy is that all students from year Prep to 2 will be taught using a systematic synthetic phonics approach as part of a broader reading program which includes a minimum of 25 minutes daily explicit teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness. We have been doing this since 2016 in prep and 2017 in year one as well through the Little Learners Love Literacy program. Aspects of the phonics approach was also picked up in the year 2 program as well. Last year we started to incorporate the Sounds-Write approach into the program, to move through the sounds quicker. This program is also a systematic synthetic phonic program based on the Science of Reading approach and incorporates many aspects of the professional development the staff has had over the past few years. The resources from the LLLL program as well as those from Sounds-Write and the scope and sequence of learning which builds on students' prior knowledge and supports new learning, will strengthen the teaching and learning outcomes for our students. This professional development is written in our 2025 AIP and links to our strategic plan goals.



## **School Council – Developing the strategic direction of the school**

**Strategic Plan** – This is developed with the department of education representatives including the school reviewer, directly following a school review. School reviews happen every four years. The strategic plan sets out the goals and targets that guides the work of the school over the four years of the plan. The school review is managed by a reviewer appointed by the department of education and a panel which includes school council representatives (usually the president), the Senior Educational Instructional Leader (principal's line manager), the principal, two challenge partners (principals from other schools), school staff representatives (usually school leadership members). This happens every four years and the new plan is developed from the data analysed in the process of the review. Parent, student and staff forums provide some of this data, as well as performance data (e.g. NAPLAN, opinion surveys etc). Our next review is in term 1, 2027.

From the strategic plan, which is a broad overview, each year the school develops an **Annual Implementation Plan**, which sets targets and develops actions against the ones outlined in the strategic plan. This is prepared in term 4 of the previous year and presented to school council for input and endorsement before March 1 each year. The **Annual Report to the Community** is prepared in term one each year, reporting on the previous year's outcomes. It is shared on the school's website and through the AGM. I also complete a short video clip with the data in slides and a voice over explaining the results which I share on SeeSaw for families to view. (see the Seesaw message sent last week). The written report can also be located on the school's website [2025 Annual Report](#)

## **School Policy Development**

The department of education have provided schools access to a comprehensive library of departmental policies for schools to help manage the workload in schools. As most of the policies are relevant to all schools, they have provided a template for us to use. Each policy states if it is required by schools, if it requires school council approval or consultation. We present those policies requiring consultation or approval when their review date is coming up.

## **School Council Report – Jason van Grieken (School Council President)**

The next School Council meeting will be held onsite at 7pm tonight - Wednesday 20 May.

**Principal's Report** – Topics discussed: School Uniform contract, the school council self-evaluation – explaining the Department of Education initiatives, Numeracy and Reading Priority, School Council Legislative Framework, Developing the strategic direction of the school, Financial management and reporting and Policy development (see above for explanations).

**Finance** – Westgarth PS Finance subcommittee met on Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup> of May. The committee endorsed the financial reports for March and April.

Expenditure items of interest for the past two months included new musical play equipment, the replacement of a classroom air conditioning unit, new display boards, the purchase of new Chromebooks for Grade 4, along with new toys for the Prep cohort. Expenditure was also approved for additional play equipment and landscaping that will be completed over the next few months. A high proportion this expenditure has been funded by parent voluntary contributions and fundraising, highlighting the importance of the generosity of the Westgarth PS community. The schools financial position remains healthy.

**Environment** – The Environment sub-committee met on 29 April. Building works across the school are progressing steadily as the defects period for the new gym and classrooms comes to an end, with recent holiday work addressing several final items. Completed improvements include new storage, display boards, doors, asphaltting, outdoor xylophones, and updated carpet in the computer lab and corridors, while remaining funds are being directed toward awnings, repairs, signage, and new a ninja course in front of the kinder which will be installed in the next school holidays. Some projects, including landscaping, a music room access ramp, and additional sheds, are still in planning or review due to costs and approvals. Maintenance work continues, including roof cleaning and investigating minor leaks, while solar upgrades, playground improvements, and farmhouse stove replacements are underway. The Meatworks project continues behind the Brooke St yard, albeit slowly, and overall site security remains stable

**OSHC** – Clubs are in full swing for term 2 that means we are running a donation drive for Animalia club! We have partnered with [Maneki Neko Cat Rescue](#) who have rescued and rehomed over 10,00 Cats and kittens. Any cat food or cat litter you can spare goes a long way toward supporting Maneki Neko Cat Rescue. All donations can be delivered to the OSHC office. Curriculum day care bookings are open for the 9/06 if you require care please book via My Family Lounge or contact OSHC Via [Oshc.westgarth.ps@education.vic.gov](mailto:Oshc.westgarth.ps@education.vic.gov).

### **Fun & Fundraising** –

#### **Next meeting dates:**

OSHC	4 June @ 10.30am WebEx
Finance	Thursday 11 June @ 10am WebEx
Environment	Wednesday 3 June 8am Jo's Office
Fun & Fundraising	Wednesday 3 June 7pm online
Hire of Facilities working party	TBC 8am Jo's office
School Council	Wednesday 17 June @ 7pm staffroom (Brooke St)

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