



## Principal News – May 2023

### Musical 24 & 25 August

As mentioned in the March Principal News, we have a new staffing arrangement in our music program which has impacted the way we can run the school musical. We have looked at many alternative arrangements and are pleased to inform families that we will be able to run our school musical at Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre on 23 and 24 August. It is in the same vein as previous Westgarth musicals but organised a little differently. This possibly won't be evident to the adoring audience but will be more manageable for the school. The year six students will be working with me to write the speaking parts based on the storyline developed by John Carr. Like previous years, there will be a split cast so half of the school will perform in one performance and the second the other. Students will be grouped according to house teams as this provides us with even cast numbers and ensures children from the same family perform in the same cast. There will be more information shared later in the term and early next term but in the meantime, keep those dates free. If, for some reason, you know your child will not be here on those dates, please let the office know.

### Westgarth Idol – Saturday May 27 6.30 – 11.30pm



The countdown is on to the one and only Westgarth Idol. All the acts and the Idol band are busy rehearsing and ironing their costumes! Westgarth Idol is a fun night for parents and staff to entertain and be entertained. It is strictly an adult event. Idol has been running for many years now, with a hiatus due to Covid, so we pleased to have it back on our calendars again. For those new to the school or who have never attended Idol, the way it works is a house band (parents and staff)

play songs selected by groups of Westgarth parents and staff and these groups sing and dance on stage at the Thornbury Theatre. The audience vote for their favourite acts, with the token that come with their tickets, and you can buy extra tokens to spice up the voting. All profits are donated to the school. Tickets are already on sale so have a look at Compass and order without delay, as they usually sell out quickly. It is a wonderful community night so make sure you grab your ticket.



### Bullying

We have a zero tolerance of bullying. The Department of Education defines bullying as “repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear”. Some specific types of bullying behaviour are:

- Verbal and/or written abuse (including targeted name calling)
- Violence
- Sexual harassment (e.g., conduct of a sexual nature which causes offence and humiliation)
- Homophobia (words and/or hostile behaviour towards students relating to their sexuality)
- Discrimination (including racial discrimination)
- Cyberbullying – either online or via mobile phone or device.

There are some behaviours, which, although unpleasant or distressing, are not bullying:

- Mutual conflict

- Single-episode acts of nastiness or physical aggression (or aggression directed towards many people)
- Social rejection/dislike (unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress or exclusion).

Please refer to our Bullying Prevention Policy to find out how we manage bullying if/when it occurs.  
[https://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded\\_files/media/1668737118bullying\\_prevention.pdf](https://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/1668737118bullying_prevention.pdf)

### **Social skills and behaviours**

Schools are places children come to learn to be literate and numerate. 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 those 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 them 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 doblers, 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. We 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.

### **Education sub-committee TONIGHT - May 2, 7pm WebEx**

The education sub-committee of school council meets at least once per term to discuss education topics and get feedback from parents. The recent forum, as part of the school review, provided us with feedback about the opportunities for parents to provide constructive feedback and a voice. We have decided to trial a new way of running the education sub-committee in term two and if it meets the needs of the community, we will keep it going. Our intention is to choose a topic that we would like some parent voice and constructive feedback about and open the meetings to the parent body to provide that feedback.

Our first meeting on May 2 at 7pm via WebEx, will be on the topic of Bullying. We invite parents/carers to share their hopes/suggestions/concerns/positive feedback on bullying at Westgarth PS. Discussion will be focused about what is working well, what we need to do more of, what we need to do less of. Here is a Meeting link:

<https://eduvic.webex.com/eduvic/j.php?MTID=mbbda42dabe3420f4f14a53d1e45c3033>

Meeting number:

2652 156 5283

Meeting password:

EKpdGyse396

Join from a video or application

Dial 26521565283@eduvic.webex.com

You can also dial 210.4.202.4 and enter your meeting number.

Join by phone

+61-3-8593-9167 Australia Toll (Melbourne)

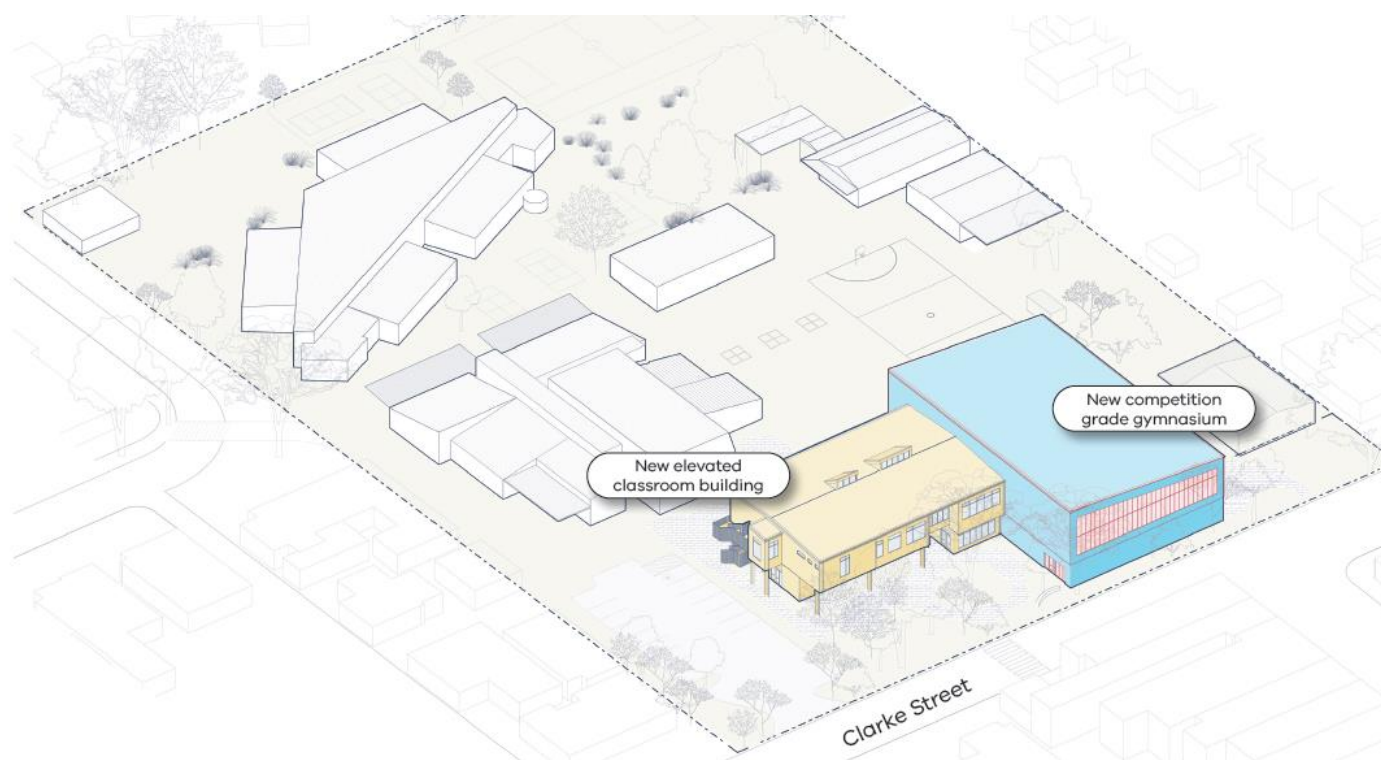
Access code: 26521565283

Global call-in numbers

<https://eduvic.webex.com/eduvic/globalcallin.php?MTID=m111c0ed8f2f6bb548d3d1ca94fe7fe4a>

### Building Project Update

On Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April, I shared an update on the \$12.97 million Capital Works Project for Clarke St on Compass. This project is going to provide the school with a full competition sized gym, four new classrooms, an undercroft and removal of the three front portables. Our school site has many limitations so locating the buildings presented many challenges and considering that with the current costs of building we are very happy with the design. We have been working closely with the Victorian Schools Building Authority and architects from LAW Architects to maximise the outcome. The works are scheduled to begin in August, starting with the removal of portables and site set up. Therefore, we will start the process of decanting and relocating throughout this term. The classes and programs run in these classrooms will be moving. We will keep you updated as further information becomes available.



### School Council Report

The last School Council meeting was held on March 29 and has been reported on in the April newsletter.

#### 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	24 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