



## Principal News – August 2023

### Long service Leave

I will be taking a short period of three weeks long service leave from 28 August until the end of term 3. Carolyn Shiels will be acting principal in my absence and Ben Cunningham acting assistant principal. I look forward to seeing everyone at the start of term 4.

### Come and chat

Most Friday mornings I will be standing at the Brooke St gate greeting our students as they arrive. Feel free to come and chat to me. I am happy to answer questions, receive feedback or make a time for a more private conversation. I will start this until I take leave and continue it once I return in term 4.

### School Council Vacancy

We have a parent vacancy on the School Council. If you would like to contribute to the governance of the school and become a member of school council, please call school council president Jacob Spencer on 0419604414. Jacob will be able to answer your questions. Alternately, you can talk to Principal Jo Wheeler at school either in person or by calling 9481 5577.

### Building works update

If you have a child in 3 Liv or Habiba or 4 Glenn, you will already know that we have been preparing for the removal of the 3 double portables in preparation for the commencement of the building works. These three portables will be removed from the yard either in the September school holidays or prior depending on contractors, and any repairs to the asphalt under them will be completed at this time. This is likely to be a temporary repair as it is hoped that a new surface will be completed as part of the building project. This means that the school grounds could be locked over the holidays for safety reasons. We will let the community know once the details are finalised. The anticipated start date for the build is likely to be the week after the fete but this is subject to a favourable tender.

### Working Bee July 23



Thank you to the wonderful families, parents and students as well as staff member Yuki and Working Bee coordinator Kellie Burns for another successful working bee on Sunday 23 July. The school grounds are looking great. While we have maintenance staff and the garden crew working here weekly/fortnightly, we never quite get enough time to get all the jobs done. We are very grateful to have our families supporting the school with these jobs. It is also a wonderful way to make connections and build community.



## Road safety around the school

We have mentioned this in previous Compass posts and newsletters that we are concerned about the safety of everyone at drop off and pick up times. We have had a few incidents and near misses due to people not fully paying attention to their surroundings. Please take your time and focus on safety when opening car doors, alighting from cars, entering a roadway, or riding bikes. Please also remind your children about doing the same. Being late or rushed is far less important or catastrophic than having an accident. Remember that we are moving around a primary school. Children's peripheral vision can take until age 13 before it is fully mature. You cannot assume they see you. Safety is everyone's responsibility.

## Parent Opinion Survey

WE WANT OUR PARENTS / CAREGIVERS / GUARDIANS TO TELL US WHAT THEY THINK!



Our school is conducting a survey to find out what parents / caregivers / guardians think of our school. The Parent / Caregiver / Guardian Opinion Survey is an annual survey offered by the Department of Education that is designed to assist schools in gaining an understanding of families' perceptions of school climate, student behavior, and student engagement. The survey is optional, but we encourage all families to participate. Our school will use the survey results to help inform and direct future school planning and improvement strategies. All families are invited to participate in the survey.

The Parent / Caregiver / Guardian Opinion Survey will be open from **Monday 7 August to Friday 8 September 2023**.

The survey will be conducted **online**, only takes **20 minutes** to complete, and can be accessed at any convenient time within the survey period on desktop computers, laptops, tablets or smartphones. The online survey will be available in English and 10 other languages including Arabic, Greek, Hakha Chin, Hindi, Japanese, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, Somali, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

Please speak to your child's teacher if you would like more information. The survey link will be sent via Compass.

## 'Just don't play with them'!

Navigating the playground is one of the many learning opportunities your child needs to experience at school. It helps them develop the skills and resilience they will require throughout their life. And while it can be a fun place it can also provide challenges that can be hard as their parent to watch their child go through. There are many books, TED talks, podcasts and advice columns to help parents to support their children manage the issues they encounter. But saying 'Just don't play with them' takes away their opportunity for growth and problem solving. Furthermore, it leads to exclusion of others, which is not consistent with our school values. Here are some tips that may help you support your child from the website Momtastic.

<https://www.momtastic.com/parenting/656933-18-ways-help-kids-navigate-social-playground/>

- Help them to identify the problem – children often do not understand why their friendships aren't working.
- Really listen to what they are saying and then paraphrase to identify the problem, "It sounds like you are sad because you weren't included in the game. Is that the problem?"
- Validate their feelings, "It sounds like you are feeling \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_".
- Brainstorm solutions – rather than tell your child what to do, support them to problem solve and come up with possible solutions. Encourage them to select the solution that feels best for them.
- Refrain from asking them how their day was. Asking them to tell you 'three good things' that happened at school will help them to focus on the positives rather than dwelling on what isn't working. It also builds resilience.
- Read picture story books about friendship and discuss what happened and the feelings the characters would have been experiencing.
- Play card or board games to develop their ability to play fairly, share and take turns.

- Be a good role model. Children learn a lot about how to react and socialise from their parents and siblings.
- Talk about what makes a good friend and take opportunities that arise naturally to use as a teachable moment.
- Broaden their friendship networks. It is important that children experience a broad range of friendships such as joining clubs or classes outside of school eg. Scouts or sports teams.
- Don't ban friendships. Sometimes parents are tempted to restrict their child from playing with others. This can encourage them to want to play with them more. Respect your child's choice of friends and encourage them to broaden their networks as well.
- Help your child to develop empathy for others by asking them to consider the feelings of others. This is a developmental process and as children mature so will their ability to put themselves into the shoes of another. For most children the ability to empathise happens at around the age of eight years.
- Talk to your child's teacher when you have concerns about serious or ongoing issues. Together you can develop a plan to help your child.

NB: As a volunteer, working in the school, you agree to the school's Volunteers Policy in relation to Privacy and information sharing. If you are seeing or hearing student behaviours that concern you, please speak to the supervising teacher so the student/s concerned can be supported and learn appropriate ways of conducting themselves. Discussing your observations with other parents are a breach of privacy and can be very detrimental to student, their family, and the school culture.

[https://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded\\_files/media/1668741439volunteers.pdf](https://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/1668741439volunteers.pdf)

### Little Learners Love Literacy Dress-up Day & 100 days of preps

The wildlife came out of the Westgarth woods (or the ocean) on a blustery Friday morning in July, when Milo the Monkey and his friends came to celebrate the Prep students learning 26 of the single sounds of the alphabet. Thank you to Vicki, Tarni, Ellie, Terri and Kenji for your wonderful work with our youngest students, teaching them the foundations to the English written word. Special thanks to the families who supported the event by helping their children to find a costume and/or braving the winter weather to attend the parade.

*Picture here is Max the Fox!*



Our prep students are old hands now, having completed their first 100 days of school. They dressed as 100-year-olds to celebrate on Wednesday 2 August. We are so proud of how they have settled in and how well their learning is progressing. The sun shone over the parade as they hobbled around the Brooke St oval, before heading into class to celebrate all things one hundred!



### Rubix Cubing Club



Rubix cubing club is in full swing every Wednesday in the web at lunch time. Thanks to our organisers Sam and Otto from 5B, it's persisted since we had Riley Dexter pay us a visit and inspire us all.



## Book Week at Westgarth PS

9 – 13 October 2023

Due to the school musical in the same week as the Childrens' Book Week awards, Westgarth will celebrate book week in the second week of term 4, 9- 13 October. There will be a book parade at assembly on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October.

## Trivia Night

Thanks to the team of dedicated parents who organised and ran the Christmas in July Trivia Night on Saturday 29 July. The vibe was fantastic, and it was another wonderful community building event. Thanks to all the families and friends who came along and joined in with the fun. Have a look at the General News attachment to get a better look at the wonderful Christmas themed attire and fun being had.



## School Council Report – July meeting

– Jacob Spencer (School Council President)

The last School Council meeting was held onsite at 7pm on Wednesday 26 July.

**Principal's Report** – Topics discussed: Update on the Capital works project (see above), enrolments for 2024 which are currently lower than previous years, welcomed Hannah Blackburn who has joined our tutor learning team, the DE Mental Health funds and the development of some protocols for the use of WhatsApp groups in the school.

**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 finance subcommittee thanks Idol organisers for the donation to the school, allowing the school to purchase a new PA system.

**Environment** – The environment sub-committee met on July 20. We discussed the capital works project, general maintenance, building security, and the upcoming working bee. The repairs the retaining wall behind the year two portable and Clarke St behind the WEB are complete.

**OSHC** – Welcome back for term 3 – we are excited about the new programs and clubs on offer for students to enjoy. If you need Before or After school care for your family, please get in touch!

**Education** – no meeting

**Fun & Fundraising** - Fun and Fundraising has had another successful event in the Grade 5 /6 disco. Lots of parent volunteers, excellent planning and a professional DJ meant that the night ran smoothly with smiling faces all around. New additions to the disco night were a break for icy poles and a quiet space for chill time. A special thanks to the parent organisers and volunteers who have managed to turn this event around. Any Grade 3 / 4 parents who would like to run the same event are welcome to contact fun and fundraising for event tips and instructions. With the hard yards done and tested, this would be an easy one to organise for your kids. The Trivia night is on 29 July (which we will report on at the next school council meeting). Our next meeting will be 4/9/2023 in the staffroom at 8pm. Any enquiries can be addressed to [funandfundraising@westgarthschoolcouncil.org](mailto:funandfundraising@westgarthschoolcouncil.org)

### **Next meeting dates:**

OSHC	Wednesday 16 August @ 10am WebEx
Finance	Tuesday 22 August @ 10.00am WebEx
Education	Tuesday 8 August @ 7pm WebEx
Environment	Thursday 24 August @ 8.00am Jo's Office
Fun & Fundraising	Monday 4 September @ 8.00pm WebEx
School Council	Wednesday 30 August @ 7.00pm Staffroom or 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