



Principal News – September 2023

Musical

What a wonderful feeling it is to have produced such a fabulous musical event. Same Town was an wonderful show which had a very important message for us all, i.e. celebrate diversity. It was the culmination of months of hard work and inspiration. Thank you to our families for such lovely feedback—it means a lot to our staff members who all worked so hard to give our students a different learning experience and performance opportunity and to make the show a success. If you were fortunate enough to see the show, I am sure you would like to join with me to congratulate our talented students for their wonderful performances. They sang, danced and acted with confidence and skill. Moreover, they were magnificent both on stage and off. The staff have commented on the happy atmosphere off stage and the positive behaviour of students at each of the shows. When students are happy and cooperative, it helps teachers to find extra energy to put on a show like this.

Huge thanks to our wonderful staff for their support of this event. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the work of John Carr (music teacher) in writing and directing the musical. To Caroline Healy from Miss Caroline Tap Dance for her choreography and dance tutelage

<https://www.misscarolinetapdance.com/>. Rose our fabulous art teacher for making the props. All teachers for helping students rehearse, making props, supervise, costumes, logistics etc. Thanks, also, to Kat

Hansen (Literacy & Numeracy support teacher) for her wonderful work on costuming. This wonderful outcome highlights what a hardworking and talented school community we have. Thanks to the parents for sourcing costumes and to everyone who helped and supported the musical. A Compass notice was sent out for a copy of the recording. They can be purchased for \$10 online via the Compass Events link. Please make sure to order the correct performance night so you can see your child's performance. All orders close **Sunday 10 September**, and you will have some fun holiday viewing.



Musical Review by Elsa Stanaway



On Wednesday and Thursday night, WPS had their school musical, which we haven't had for four years because of COVID-19. There were two casts based on the school houses, Urquart/Rucker and Gerrard/Walker. The musical was called 'Same Town' and it was all about a town that is the same, and one year later they are all different. The songs were written by John, our music teacher. He also wrote our last musical 'The Nugget of Eternal Dreams', which now the grades 4-6 have done. We felt really happy doing the musical. It was so much fun and I felt so relieved at the end of it, but also very sad because we won't get to do another primary school musical. It was nerve-wracking for a lot of people, but we all had a good time in the finales, whether you were in the P-2 or the 3-6 finale. Shout out to John for the music and for organising things, and to Rose for making the backdrops AND to Jo, our principal, for also organising it all!

Well done WPS!!

Bullying – No Way! National Day of Action

On Friday 18 August 2023, we participated in the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (NDA). The NDA is Australia's key bullying prevention initiative for schools and provides an opportunity to connect with students, staff and our school community to implement workable solutions to prevent bullying. The 2023 NDA theme, Growing connections, promotes the importance of school, family and community connections in building safe and supportive learning environments where all students can belong, feel accepted and respected.



Research has shown that strong school connections and positive relationships can help to prevent bullying. When students feel a sense of belonging and connectedness at school, they are more likely to enjoy school, to trust and respect their teachers, and be concerned about and help others (Australian Education Research Organisation 2023).

BULLYING. NO WAY!
bullyingnoway.gov.au

At Westgarth PS we help grow connections by promoting inclusiveness, respect and community belonging for all students.

If you have concerns that your child is being bullied, please contact the classroom teacher in the first instance. You will be referred to the Principal if a satisfactory outcome is not achieved. If you believe the behaviour

constitutes a crime, or is a serious incident of cyberbullying, please refer to the Bullying. No Way! website for information on how to report to other authorities and accessing wellbeing help.

You can read the Westgarth PS bullying prevention policy to learn more about our school's process for preventing and responding to bullying.

https://www.wgps.vic.edu.au/uploaded_files/media/1668737118bullying_prevention.pdf

Occupational Health & Safety Audit

All schools are rostered to have a full Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) audit every few years. Our audit is due to happen in November this year. In the lead up to the audit we are required to work through ten areas of OH&S: planning and leadership, emergency management, culture and capability, buildings and ground, practices, and people, first aid and infection control, incident reporting and actions, supporting injured staff, review and ongoing improvement and communication. One area that is relatively new to the department's OH&S compliance is around mental health and wellbeing in particular psychological safety for all school staff. We have been working with a consultant who is supporting the school in the review of policies, guidelines relating to complaints management processes and rules governing chat group usage. We are developing some clear guidelines to help parents navigate our complaints management processes and develop a code of conduct for the use of the school's social media and messaging platforms e.g. WhatsApp chat groups. This is currently a work in progress, and we will share more information with you soon. In the meantime, our current policies and procedures are available on the school's website if you have concerns you wish to raise.

Building works update

The latest update as of today is that the 3 empty portables will be removed during the term 3 school holidays. We ask that parents do not allow their children to play on the Clarke Street site unsupervised during these holidays, as the exact date for the removal has not been confirmed. Although the company will have spotters on site, we ask for everyone's safety that children are not on site during the removal process. The tender process for the capital works has not yet closed.

School Camp

Tomorrow our very excited year 4 students will head off to CYC Phillip Island for their first camp experience. To enable camps to go ahead there are some staff changes that are required, Glenn will be teaching in 3 Jenny's classroom, Ben J in 3 Habiba and Sue a regular casual replacement will be replacing Stacey in the library. As Kat is attending camp the 3-6 tutor program will not be offered for the remainder of this week. I would like to thank all the staff who have offered to attend camp. Staff at camp will provide regular updates via Compass.

Westgarth Spring Fete

Thank you to the wonderful parents and carers who form the planning team for the 2023 Westgarth Spring Fete. It promises to be a wonderful event and to be bigger and better with lots of additional space due to the portables being removed. We are incredibly grateful for the support thus far. Please keep an eye out for the news on how you can support this event through making, donating, volunteering etc. These events require contributions from many people so please actively seek out ways you can contribute. There will be regular updates via Compass and the newsletter, but please do call into the office if you would like to connect with a specific group and we can put you in touch with the right people.

NAPLAN

We are really proud of our NAPLAN results this year. The results exceed similar school (schools in a similar demographic, size and location) in seven of the ten results and in the others, we are only 1 or 2% lower. Considering that our students in year 3 were preps in the first year of lockdown, these incredibly strong results show that as a team of teachers and parents, we were able to support the learning of our students without negative academic outcomes due to the disruption created by lockdowns and home schooling. I have a video on SeeSaw with a slideshow of our results and an explanation of the changes to NAPLAN so I would encourage you to take the 10 minutes to have a look.

District Athletics

We have the world champion Australian Diamonds, and the Matildas took Australia along with them throughout the FIFA Women's World Cup. Now we need to get our support behind the Westgarth Lorikeets our very own athletics team. 30 of our talented athletes got through to the district level competition. We wish them all the best for their athletics meet on 7th September. Go team Westgarth!



Lost property

As we come to the end of the term, we are accumulating mountains of lost property again. Please make sure you label any removable pieces of clothing with your child's name. Please go through the lost property on both sites and collect any items that belong to your family.

Pupil free days - 3 & 6 November

In case you have missed the communication of these dates in earlier correspondence, we have two pupil free days coming up in term 4. Both are prior to the Melbourne Cup Day public holiday. On Friday 3 November, the staff are having their final curriculum day and will be learning about Responsive Teaching with educator and presenter Bronwyn Rylie Jones. The following Monday 6 November, it is a common Professional Development Day. Curriculum Day care will run on those two days. The school will be closed on Tuesday 7 November for the public holiday.

School Council Report – August meeting

– Jacob Spencer (School Council President)

The last School Council meeting was held onsite at 7pm on Wednesday 30 August.

Principal's Report – Topics discussed: Capital works project update, prep enrolments (offers sent out on 11/8), due to the reduced numbers it is anticipated that the year 3 students will stay on Brooke St for 2024 to ease pressure on the reduced playground during the building program, Department of Education are changing our cleaning contractors so it is hoped we have an improved cleaning service from 2024, Safe Schools and developing a code of conduct for the use of school approved WhatsApp and other social media platforms.

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 Trivia night organisers for the amazing work.

In addition, we have reviewed our parent payment contribution this year and 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 student's learning.

Environment – The environment sub-committee met on August 24. We wanted to officially thank Kellie Burns, Yuki Cameron and all the families who organised and attended the working bee in July. The school buildings and grounds are looking great and we now await the removal of the portables and start of the capital works project.

OSHC – OSHC have had another great term! The Educators were thrilled with all the thoughtful messages from families, children and school staff they received on National OSHC Educator Day. They felt very appreciated and valued for the work they do with the children.

Things are working well in our new spaces in the lead up to the building works, and the new transition arrangements for 3H and 3L are working well.



We're gearing up for the two Curriculum Days scheduled around the Melbourne Cup weekend. Bookings for those days will be open at the start of Term 4.

Education – The Parent Forum/Education sub-committee met on August 8 and discussed the school's Chromebook program for students in years 4 – 6 and NAPLAN 2023. Overall, the students (through a survey) and parents at the forum indicated that the Chromebook program is working well and are happy with the mix of tasks on and off the Chromebooks. Recommendation was to embed a practice of healthy OH&S habits when using the devices. Refer to the video explanation on SeeSaw about the changes to NAPLAN and the 2023 results.

Fun & Fundraising – no meeting

Next meeting dates:

OSHC	Wednesday 18 October @ 11.00am WebEx
Finance	Tuesday 17 October @ 10.00am WebEx
Education	TBC @ 7.00pm WebEx
Environment	Thursday 19 October @ 8.00am Jo's Office
Fun & Fundraising	TBC @ 8.00pm WebEx
School Council	Wednesday 25 October @ 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.

Carolyn Shiels
Acting Principal