



Principal News – August 2020

Westgarth Trivia Night In! THIS SATURDAY

This Saturday, 15 August at 8pm, is the Westgarth Trivia Night In. It is a rare chance for the WPS community to get together for a virtual night of fun questions with prizes to be won. All funds raised will go to the school. You can purchase your tickets here <https://compastix.com/event/ee23d953-64bf-4217-b9e8-d41e2ae82956>. A zoom link will be emailed to everyone participating on Friday 14 August. For more information on how the night will be organised please see the Compass news post that came out on Friday 31 July. We hope a good night is had by all.

What a year!

I get a sense that some people are feeling that 2020 is a lost year of learning for their children. I am taking a more optimistic view than this. The learning this year has certainly been impacted but effective learning has been happening. One of many of the positive outcomes of this unique situation has been the growth in student's metacognition. They are experiencing a real life lesson in developing their personal capabilities, managing themselves and their learning, resilience and persistence. These lessons could not have been as effective in a normal classroom. Obviously, I am not denying or downplaying the stress families are experiencing however, there are many positives that have come out of these challenging times, including learning outcomes for our students.

I have heard that some parents are considering requesting their child repeating next year. Research suggests that the benefits of keeping children with their peer group are far greater than what is gained from repeating a year of schooling. All students across the world are equally impacted by the changes to schooling this year so it continues to be an even playing field. That does not mean we will not consider individual cases, but I would caution parents not to consider this option lightly.

We have made the half way mark of this term and I understand that many of our wonderful parents are feeling the strains of juggling their own work and supporting their children's home learning. As you will know for this new round of learning from home, we organised daily WebEx check-ins with class teachers to provide students with live access to teachers to help work through issues, misunderstandings, seek clarification or simply say 'hi' to a friendly face. The idea of these sessions is for students to have help from their teacher to take pressure off the adults in the household. Not all students are making use of this opportunity so we would encourage you to use this resource. If your child comes to you for help and you are unable to help them in the moment, you can remind them to take it to their teacher in the next WebEx session. It does not matter if they leave that task until after they have spoken to the teacher, even if that is the following day. I know this waiting for assistance is not easy but could be seen as a lesson in itself.

In line with the restrictions, we are limiting the number of adults on the school site so the front doors will be locked. Work packages and home reading sets are available for collection from under the eaves of the year one classrooms. If you need to talk to someone, please call the office (9481 5577) rather than come in.

Wellbeing resources for Parents and Carers

Remote and flexible learning can be challenging for both students and parents. A number of resources have been developed for parents and carers to help them support their child's mental health and wellbeing. Topics include:

- Looking after your child's wellbeing including fun and easy activities and conversation starters that help parents to develop cultivate positive coping, problem solving, stress management and help seeking skills in their child
- Looking after your child's mental health including information on when and where to get support

- Keeping your child active and healthy eating
- Being safe online.

These resources can be accessed here: [Managing screen time, health and wellbeing](#)

Parent/Teacher interviews survey

This year the COVID situation forced Parent/Teacher interviews to go online. I have had some positive feedback from families and staff about this platform so I have compiled a quick survey to gauge general feedback about how we run the interviews in the future. Please complete the survey to have your say. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P-T_interviews_feedback

2021 Prep Enrolments

If you have a child who is starting school next year, enrolment packs are now available in person at the office, on the school website or email Nella for copy to be mailed to you. Unfortunately, the Compass enrolment process does not link to the DET enrolment system at primary school level so we are still required to have a paper enrolment form. Nella can be contacted either by phone 94815577 or email Nella.Bordin@education.vic.gov.au. With the delays to starting the 2021 enrolment process we ask parents to action this quickly so we have an idea of our enrolment numbers for planning purposes.

Darebin Young Writers Award Congratulations

Congratulations to two of our year 6 students Travis Le Packham and Tom Lenne who each received 3rd Place (Highly Commended) in the Darebin Young Writers competition - Primary category and former student Eva Gadsby who won 1st Place in the Secondary category. We are incredibly proud of you all. You can find out more about the awards and hear Eva read her winning entry via this link <https://www.darebinarts.com.au/special-projects/darebin-mayors-writing-awards-for-young-people/>

What impresses me about this as much if not more than the recognition of great penmanship, is that these students were self-motivated and entered this competition because they wanted to not because it was a requirement. Well done Travis, Tom and Eva, let us hope this is the start of good things to come!

Occupational Health and Safety and trees

We are responsible for maintaining the school's trees to ensure the safety of students, staff, parents and visitors. As part of our regular inspections for Occupational Health and Safety requirements, it has been identified that there are a number of trees that require pruning and in some cases removal due to structural concerns. We are also responsible for ensuring the buildings and grounds are maintained. One tree requires removal due to damage to the building and underground pipes. We are excited to be replanting the area at the front of Clarke St where a number of wattles have recently died and one tree was felled due to damage sustained in a storm. We are also developing a tree pallet and plans for the front of the Brooke St site with former parent and playground architect Bruce Grillmeier.

What is new?

Many parents and carers have not had the opportunity to see our new STEM/OSHC space so I have a few photos to show you. I would like to extend our thanks to our parent body, past and present, for helping to fund these works through donation and fundraising.





Adorning the wall near the front door of the Brooke St site is our beautiful mosaic completed by Rose and a team of wonderful helpers. Marta started this work with students last year and highlights the ceramic works the students produced using the new kiln. The purchase and installation of the kiln was made possible from the funds raised from the Colour-a-thon fundraiser in 2018. We are so proud of this lovely vibrant work. The photograph does not do it justice. Congratulations to our students, in particular our Art/Spanish teacher Rose Gordon, who completed hundreds of hours of construction/grouting/designing, Marta Munoz, Rebecca Roberts, Diana Gordon and all the staff and community

members who contributed to its completion. Thanks also to the team who installed it, which was no easy feat.



Important Dates

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| Westgarth Trivia Night In | Saturday 15 August |
| Education Sub –Committee Meeting | Monday 17 August |
| School Council Meeting | Wednesday 19 August |
| Curriculum Date | Friday 28 August |

Remember we are all in this together and together we can do it.
Keep well and keep positive,

Jo Wheeler
Principal