What's happening...

Welcome to the new school year...a warm welcome to our students, their families and the staff. We trust the New Year has been a smooth one for everyone.

Yesterday, 85 Preps started their first day at Westgarth Primary School. We welcome those new families, both in prep and across the school and look forward to forging positive and rewarding relationships with you and your families.

The Preps settled in very well yesterday - a credit to the parents and staff for making their entry a successful one. This morning Preps were all smiles eagerly making their way across to Clarke St for their first specialist lesson - Art, Music and Physical Education (PE) and learning about crossing the road and walking together in a line - amazing effort Preps.

Our focus at Westgarth is to ensure that all students thrive - they are actively involved in their own learning and empowered to be their best. We aim for students to feel connected to their community and to be curious and creative risk takers in their learning. One of our school mottos - Be Safe, Be Fair, Be Friendly helps us to develop understandings about positive behaviours and inclusiveness. Our values of Being our Best, Working Together, Integrity and Respect help us to develop personal goals and improve our on personal best as well as understanding what it means to work co-operatively in pairs or teams.

This year we have 13 classes on Brooke St and 14 classes on Clarke St making a total of 27 classes, with 4 specialist classes - Art/Spanish, Music, Spanish/Science and PE. With the introduction of Spanish, the Languages Education at Westgarth will integrate Spanish acquisition within the Art program and in the other Spanish session there will be a Science focus, totalling 100 mins of Spanish for each year level across the school.

This Friday 6th February Preps will join Grade 1/2 students for the 9.00am morning assembly. All Prep students may choose to leave their bag either outside their classroom or leave it behind their coloured line up dot on the turf area on Brooke St.

We welcome new and returning staff members to W.P.S - Tara, Winter, Michael, Terri-Anne, Taryn, Hannah, Marta, Esmi, Kylie, Tom and Clare.

A comprehensive staff list for 2015 will be made available shortly on our website.
Buildings and Grounds

The school would like to thank the various members of the community who assisted with contacting the police during the school holidays when the Clarke Street site sustained senseless vandalism. The school was supported by a DET professional clean up team to make the damaged areas safe for students to return for the school year. Clarke Street students are currently operating without a bell or PA due to the damage sustained and are waiting for parts to rectify the system.

The school office area is nearing completion and whilst a challenging beginning to the school year, the office staff, are beginning to unpack and re-establish their routines. Thank you to the parents who have held off on visiting the office in person whilst the area was not functioning. All staff are looking forward to having access to the new staffroom which should be in use by the end of this week.

The two Brooke Street rotundas have undergone an extensive upgrade and will provide additional shade for P-2 students, a diseased tree was removed at the Brooke Street entrance and the Clarke Street structure over the footpath which was rotten and removed due to safety concerns.

Yard Duty

Staff are responsible for the supervision of students whilst at school. Before school supervision is 8:45am to 9.00am and after school supervision is 3.30pm to 3.45pm. Staff will be wearing a high visibility vest if you need to speak to them at any time. Please be aware that student supervision is the responsibility of parents / carers outside of these times.

Classrooms are locked at 3.45pm as staff are attending meetings and preparing for the following day. If students have not been collected by 3.45pm students will be taken to the OSHC program. The school does not have the facility to supervise students in the office foyer area after this time. A reminder that on Clarke Street the Out of School Hours Program operates from 3.30pm – 5.50pm and uses the playground for various activities during these hours.

Medical Costs

Westgarth Primary School would like to remind all parents and guardians that they are responsible for paying the cost of any medical treatment should their child be injured while at school, on camp and also when attending excursions. This also includes any transportation costs associated with the ambulance service.

Please be aware that in any emergency situation, parent/carer permission is not sought prior to ringing an ambulance, as our first priority is the safety and health of your child.

Westgarth Primary School does not provide personal accident insurance for students, however reasonably low cost accident insurance policies are available from commercial insurers.

Renee our school nurse works from 10.30am until 2.30pm. She will be visiting all classrooms during the week to introduce herself to the students. If you have a specific health concern that you wish to discuss that may effect your child’s schooling please ring and speak with Renee. Part of the school nurse’s role is to follow up on annual documentation regarding individual students.

Regards,

Lynne Mackie & Carolyn Shiels,
Assistant Principals
Diary Dates 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 27th Feb</td>
<td>Welcome Picnic 6-8pm. Further information in next weeks newsletter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 27-Fri 29th May</td>
<td>Grade 6 Camp 2015</td>
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<td>Wed 9th Sept-Fri 11th Sept</td>
<td>Grade 4 Camp 2015</td>
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Term Dates 2015

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term 1</td>
<td>29/01/15 - 27/03/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>13/04/15 - 26/06/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td>13/07/15 - 18/09/15</td>
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<td>Term 4</td>
<td>05/10/15 - 18/12/15</td>
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Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation Program 2015

Our wonderful Kitchen Garden specialist Betty has made the decision to resign and focus on other professional endeavours. Betty will finish with us on the 11th of February. As a community, we would like to acknowledge the outstanding program and passion for both the garden and cooking which she has instilled in students since its inception. Betty has been a tireless worker who has built strong community links with both parents and volunteers. Whilst we are sad to see Betty moving on, as with all educators at Westgarth we are delighted that she will be continuing her life-long learning. I know the students and staff over the years have gained much expertise from Betty that they will be able to translate into their daily lives. From the Westgarth community we wish Betty every success in the future.

We are currently in the process of employing staff to ensure the continuity of the program. Grade three students will begin the program at the start of semester two and the year six students will finish their program at the conclusion of semester one.

A volunteer induction and morning tea is planned for Tuesday the 10th February at 9.15am in the Farmhouse. Further information will come home with students in years 3-6.

Music News

Welcome back everyone to another busy year in music at WPS. Once again, I am working 4 days a week this year with Wednesday being my non teaching day. Clare Hopper will be teaching music on Wednesday this year. Clare is an experienced music educator and is familiar with the music program at Westgarth having worked as a regular replacement teacher in the music room for a number of years. It won’t be long before all classes are in full swing and the children will come home humming the songs they have learnt in class. I am looking forward to another year of teaching music to your children.

As was mentioned last year, School Council has approved changes to initiate ‘after school user pays instrumental lessons’ which will enable a greater range of instruments to be offered. We are still finalizing logistics and teaching spaces. Information relating to the availability of suitably trained music teachers for parents to contact and arrange lessons with, will be available shortly with the lessons operating by approximately week 4 or 5 of this term. At this stage, students from Grade 4 up are able to participate in the program.

This year is a “Musical Year” the musical will be held between the 11th and 13th of August at the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre. As the school continues to grow and in line with the new strategic plan, we need to examine and review the way that we run events like the musical and the grade levels involved. I am currently in discussion with the Leadership team and staff to try to find ways to accommodate students and to ensure maximum participation. It’s going to be an exciting time for our students.

John Carr, Team Leader - Specialists
IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING ANAPYLAXIS

Potential allergic reactions to nuts, nut products, seeds & other food products

As you may be aware for some children even a minor exposure to nuts or foods containing nut products or seeds can set off a severe allergy which may cause loss of breathing.

The parents of children who may have a severe reaction would like you to help us make the school environment as safe as possible by exercising caution when packing school snacks and lunches. Whilst students with severe allergies can learn to manage and control what they eat there is no real way of protecting themselves from nut traces that may be present in the environment such as on clothing, furniture, drink taps and of course on other people’s hands.

- Please avoid preparing school lunches with products that contain nuts, nut spreads, sesame products or chocolate that may contain nuts (e.g. Peanut Butter, Nutella and Tahini)
- If sending party food to school please avoid using recipes that require nut products (e.g. almond meal)
- As part of our Policy we do not encourage students to share food. All students will be encouraged to wash hands before and after eating.
- Please avoid packing any whole nuts as part of lunches for children under eight as they may get caught in small children’s airways presenting as a choking hazard

Asthma Management

An asthma action plan allows you and your doctor to create an individual plan for you to manage your asthma. An action plan advises you about what you must do to stay healthy and what to do when your asthma is unstable and you need help.

There is no ‘standard’ asthma action plan, as everyone’s asthma is different. Your plan needs to be written to deal with your individual triggers, signs and symptoms, and medications. Your action plan might be based on symptoms, peak flow readings or both.

An asthma action plan outlines:
- How to care for your day-to-day asthma (it lists your regular medications and how many times each day you should take them)
- Key things that tell you when your asthma is getting worse or an ‘attack’ is developing, and the steps you should take to manage it
- Symptoms that are serious enough to need urgent medical help (with emergency information on what to do if you have an asthma ‘attack’).

Have your action plan reviewed every six months or after a severe asthma attack.

It is just as important for parents to obtain a clear, succinct, written summary of their child’s asthma management (an Asthma Action Plan). This will provide a source of reference to reinforce the advice given by the doctor.

This Asthma Action Plan is also an important tool for anyone caring for your child. It provides up-to-date, detailed information (including your child’s emergency first aid plan) to help manage your child’s asthma. A copy of the asthma action plan is to be sent to your child’s school, kindergarten, childcare centre or to anyone caring for your child.

When the child is old enough to understand, make sure that you explain asthma to them and encourage them to be aware of their symptoms and how to treat them.

Asthma First Aid

An asthma attack can take anything from a few minutes to a few days to develop. It can be a very frightening experience and people having an asthma attack may need help straight away.

This resource satisfies the guidelines and standards approved by the National Asthma Council and Asthma Australia. The materials contained in this publication are distributed for information purposes only. Suitable medical and professional advice should be obtained before acting on any information contained herein.
Sport News
Welcome back everyone. We hope you had a wonderful holiday and spent lots of time outdoors keeping active. We are so excited about the new school year and looking forward to Westgarth students achieving their best in sport. We love to see students keeping healthy and active both at school and at home. Once again the PE program will be asking, at different stages of the year, for parent helpers to support the many extra curriculum activities that are provided by the school throughout the year. These include swimming trials, tennis, cross country, basketball, athletics, triathlon, interschool sport, orienteering for 3 - 6 students, and many different incursions from sporting organisations. Keep reading the newsletter each week for this information.

Please help your child to dress appropriately (sun hat, runners, shorts, and t-shirt) on the day they will have their Physical Education class. Your child’s classroom teacher will be able to tell you when this is.

Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns or questions throughout the year in regards to your child and PE.

Hannah Black (Mondays)
Aimee Murphy (Monday & Tuesday)
Rushe Lynch (Wednesday, Thursday & Friday)
John Carr - Team Leader of Specialists

Extra Curricular Swimming Trials for Northcote District Swimming Competition Grade 3 - 6 students
Come along to the school swimming trials at Northcote Pool on Wednesday 11th February from 4 – 5pm or Thursday 12th February from 4 to 5pm. All strong swimmers are encouraged to try out for individual 50m freestyle, backstroke, butterfly and/or breaststroke. There will also be a 50m freestyle team relay and 50m team medley relay.

This is open to all grade 3-6 social or club swimmers. There is generally only one entrant per school, per event, that swimmer may be you! Students attending time trials must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian while at the pool.

As an alternative to attending the swimming trials parents/guardians or your swim instructor could time your child over 50m. Students who expressed an interest will receive a Westgarth time sheet to fill out and return to me by Monday 9th of February. Copies also available at the office.

Grade 5/6 Interschool Sport
The Interschool Sports Program will begin this Friday with our first official game being on Friday 13th February. Each student will select one of the summer sports (cricket, rounders, bat tennis, softball) as their nominated team.

Each week a team is selected from the Grade 6 squad and these students need to be at school on time on Fridays and in a Westgarth Primary t-shirt or polo top, black shorts/netball skirt/track pants and sports shoes. All Grade 5s will be members of one of the Summer Sports teams and will be involved in training and playing practise games at school on Friday mornings. This will provide a great base for them to be involved in representing Westgarth and playing other schools when they reach Grade 6. The Summer Sports Program runs during Term 1 and continues in Term 4 during morning sessions.

The competition draw will be included under Sport Diary Dates in the newsletter each week. If it is an away game, the bus will cost $10 (this has increased in line with the bus costs) for the students that are playing. Parents are welcome to come and watch or if you are keen on a particular sport, you can see me if you would like to assist with coaching or umpiring. Please ensure you have a Working With Children Card.

Thanks, Go Pies!
Rushe Lynch

Sport Diary Dates - Swimming (selected students only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 24th February</td>
<td>District Swimming 9.30am - 1pm Northcote Aquatic Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 3rd March</td>
<td>Division Swimming 9:30am - 2:30pm Northcote Aquatic Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 11th March</td>
<td>Regional Swimming 9:30am - 2:30pm Northcote Aquatic Centre</td>
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School Council Report

School Council

Welcome to our first report for 2015. School Council is made up of staff and parents and is the governing body of the School. It is established under Victorian legislation. There are 15 people on Council and many more on subcommittees and working parties.

The current School Council members are:
1. Staff members: Graham Stevenson (Acting Executive Officer), Carolyn Shiels (Secretary), Lynne Mackie, Anita Hannaford and Kate Copping;
2. Parent members: Ully Merkel (President), Emma Savage (Vice-President), Annette Williams, Julie Carpenter, Mark Dinning, Bettina De Chateaubourg, Ian MacLean and Andrew Wear; and
3. Co-opted members: Caroline Clow (Kinder rep) and Jessamy Miller (Parents and Friends rep).

Membership will change at the end of March when the two year terms of four parent members and two staff members come to an end. More information about School Council nominations and elections for these positions will be given in coming weeks. Also, we will be running School Council Information Sessions for those wanting to become involved or learn more about Council's role. The dates will be publicised in the next newsletter.

Principal Selection Process

School Council has the important task of working with the Department of Education and Training (DET) to appoint a new Principal for our school. We met last Thursday with David Kilmartin, DET, to discuss the selection process.

The process is prescribed by departmental policy and ministerial orders. The main steps and dates (where known) are:
1. School Council appoints a parent member of School Council to Selection Panel and staff elect a staff member for Selection Panel (this week);
2. School Council provides the School Profile and Community Selection Criterion to DET by 6 February;
3. Position is advertised on 27 February;
4. Position closes on 15 March;
5. Panel training and application distribution on 16 March;
6. Short listing;
7. Interviews;
8. Extraordinary School Council meeting for presentation of, and decision about, the Selection Panel Report of applications received, shortlisted and recommended applicants;
9. School Council recommendation endorsed by Regional Director and sent to Secretary of DET;
10. School Council President contacts successful applicant to make formal offer for provisional appointment; and
11. Appointment takes effect after two week appeal period.

The goal is for the new Principal to start at the beginning of Term 2, but whether this is achievable depends on various factors, including adherence to recruitment timelines and the circumstances of the successful applicant.

The Selection Panel membership is:
1. School Council President – Ully Merkel;
2. School Council Parent Representative – Annette Williams;
3. Westgarth staff member elected by all staff – to be confirmed;
4. A Practising Principal nominated by DET – to be confirmed; and
5. Secretary’s delegate nominated by DET – David Kilmartin.

Cont’ next page...
School Council Report con’t…

There are six selection criteria. The first five are set by DET and are: Technical Leadership; Human Leadership; Educational Leadership; Symbolic Leadership; and Cultural Leadership. The sixth criterion is developed by School Council based on your feedback provided by survey in Term 4 last year. It gives us the opportunity to frame a criterion informed by the specific context and leadership needs of the school.

When, on 27 February, the position is advertised via DET Recruitment Online, we will provide a link for you so you can read the selection criteria and accompanying information.

Priority Review Report

The Priority Review occurred in June 2014 after DET nominated Westgarth to conduct a priority review. Two independently accredited reviewers worked through an extensive process of discussion, observation and analysis of the school with the goal of thoroughly understanding the school’s current strengths, and potential barriers to improvements.

DET will release the Executive Summary upon completion of the school’s new Strategic Plan. Both documents will be made available onto the school website.

Please feel free to email me with any queries about the matters covered in this report or more generally.

Ully Merkel, President (ullmerkel@hotmail.com)

Environment Committee News

The environment committee has been working towards a Masterplan for the school buildings and gardens.

The purposes/goals of the Masterplan are:

♦ Improve student education outcomes
♦ Address school capital planning for the next 7-10 years
♦ Ensure buildings and grounds support the learning/teaching objectives
♦ Maximise school funds for capital works projects

We are currently at the information gathering stage to minimise the cost to the school. After this stage we will be seeking proposals from School and Landscape Master Planners to complete the work. We hope to have the appropriate master planners engaged early next year.

Who can help:

We are currently seeking to get a feature survey of the school grounds for planning purposes, a surveyor that could help with this would be fantastic.

Also parents or friends that have experience in master planning schools that would like to join the subcommittee would be welcomed.

If you wish to help in any way please contact me at dinning.mark@gmail.com and please keep watch for Environment Committee meetings in the newsletter.

Thanks,
Mark Dinning on behalf of the Environment Subcommittee
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