Dear Parents and Carers
Hello, Malhaba, Apa kabar? Heh loh, Ciao, Kia ora, Namaste, 你好, Al salaam a’alaykum, Xin Chao
Welcome to this parent bulletin. A very warm welcome to all of our families that are new to ‘Western’ this year. The classrooms are settling well. The children are gently orientating to school and getting to know their classmates and teachers. At this stage the children are being encouraged to show their teachers what they like and are interested in through involvement in a range of different play and fun activities. The staff use the children’s interests as a springboard when introducing new learning and teaching the curriculum. Parents will have the opportunity to hear more about our curriculum and approach to teaching at a Student Support Group (SSG) meeting in the coming weeks. As noted at the parent meetings this and last week, the students’ learning plans are created with parents input.

Autism Teaching Institute Acknowledgment
The Australian Government Department of Education and Training – More Support for students with Disabilities conducted a Case Study from 2012-14. It has been found that in terms of Building Regional Capacity, “Training of teaching teams through the Autism Teaching Institute (ATI) has allowed the development of demonstration sites at a number of schools.” In terms of Impact of training, “The regional Autism teacher coach and school principals also observed that the training through the ATI had a sustained impact. This was especially the case with schools where teachers had completed the full graduate diploma course. All schools involved considered the investment of time and resources for this training to be highly effective and influential in improving their approach.” In regards to Sustainability, “Recruitment of trained staff, ongoing professional training of current staff, support from DET and the development of Autism Support programs in schools are all aimed at sustainability beyond short term funding.” Congratulations to the ATI staff for their great work supporting students with autism across the State of Victoria.

Kind Regards Mary

CSEF Applications
The Camp, Sports and Excursion Fund helps ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, education and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government’s commitment to breaking the link between a student’s background and their outcomes. The annual CSEF Amount is $125 for primary school students and $225 for secondary school students. HOW TO APPLY: Please fill in the CSEF form and present a copy of your (parent/guardian) Centrelink pensioner concession or healthcare card by Friday 26/02.

A message from the ATI
Well, the ATI survives to fight another day, just. That is, we have managed to scrape together enough work to run in 2016. Things were looking pretty dim towards the end of last year when suddenly, out of the darkness appeared a beacon of hope (appropriately) in the form Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM). They came on board with nearly 20 subsidised students for our Post-Grad. course having “tested us against an eminent University’s Masters program” (apparently we won). This was very timely indeed, as it gave us something to do at the beginning of the year. Ok, I am exaggerating a little. We do have other work to do but it would have been sad not to have a course running for the first time in our 11 years of operation. The ATI are working with the school on a number of projects that will be announced in due course and we have a couple of other projects in the pipeline around encouraging inclusive practice in mainstream schools for which we are seeking funding. We have also been retained by the Department to do some intensive work with a regional Specialist school and they are looking to subsidise another Post-Grad. cohort mid-year and our consultancy service is building slowly but surely...so actually we are going to be fairly busy, particularly with our reduced staff numbers. I’d better go and rest up for the year ahead.
Cheers
Steve Ahern
Morning Tea
The Laverton Campus will be hosting a morning tea for new and returning parents on Tuesday 16th of February from 10:30 – 11:15. This is a great opportunity to meet other WAS families and welcome the entry students families into the WAS community. Please come along and feel free to bring a plate of food to share if you would like.

SMS Notifications of Events
Western Autistic School has recently activated SMS notifications to be able to send text messages to families when there are events of interest, bus delays or emergency situations. Please ensure all your mobile contact details are accurate to get information.

Buses
Please remember not to put students on the buses with food that they can access. Some of our children have allergies, and we have a strict no food policy on all school buses. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Sausage Sizzle
Last year WAS staff ran a very successful sausage sizzle at Bunnings and from this, funds were raised to purchase whole school sport equipment. The items that have been purchased include balls, a t-ball and cricket set, soccer goals, tennis bats and balls, skipping ropes and a launcher and these are now in use throughout the schools. These resources will be a great contribution to the sporting life of the school, many thanks to all who stopped by on the day to buy a sausage! We are looking forward to running the sausage sizzle again in November 2016.

Arts Centre – Relaxed Performances
Arts Centre Melbourne is pleased to announce upcoming Relaxed Performances for children who would benefit from a more relaxed environment. This performance includes additional staff, doors of the theatre remaining open, a chill out space, house lights on and modifications to the lights and sounds in the show.

Term Dates 2016
Term 1: 27 January to 24 March
Term 2: 11 April to 24 June
Term 3: 11 July to 16 September
Term 4: 3 October to 20 December

Local Government Resources
Brimbank City Council
Phone: 9249 4000
www.brimbank.vic.gov.au
Hobsons Bay City Council
Phone: 9932 1530
www.hobsons.vic.gov.au
City of Maribyrnong
Phone: 9688 0103
www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au
City of Melbourne
Phone: 9658 9542
www.melbourne.vic.gov.au
Shire of Melton
Phone: 9747 7200
www.melton.vic.gov.au
City of Moonee Valley
Phone: 9243 8806
www.mvcc.vic.gov.au
Wyndham City Council
Phone: 9742 8114
www.wyndham.vic.gov.au

Disability Services & Respite Care
DHS Disability Intake & Response
Phone: 9412 2741 or 1800 783 783

Baptcare Family Services
(East Keilor, Brimbank, Moonee Valley)
Phone: 9373 3800
www.baptcare.org.au

Care Connect Footscray
Phone: 9362 8000 or 9362 8013
www.careconnect.org.au

MacKillop Family Services Footscray
Phone: 9680 8444
www.mackillop.org.au

Annecto After Hours Emergency Response Service
Phone: 1800 727 280 (after hours)
http://annecto.org.au/

Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre
Respite Connections
Phone: 9396 9550 (B.H.)
Phone: 1800 059 059 (A.H.)
www.commcarelink.health.gov.au
www.respitenorthandwest.org.au

Interchange Western
Phone: 1300 300 436 or 9396 1111
http://vic.interchange.org.au