Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians, Namaste, Hola, Sawasdee, Kon’nichiwa, Mahlaba

Welcome to this edition of the bulletin.

We look to have a very busy last term of school but also a special term as we reflect on the students’ achievements. It is exciting how often we hear our teachers comment on how far their students have progressed, each in their own way. As our campus principals, Michelle and Liz have noted we are discussing plans for 2017 and discussing end of year reports for our students. The transition reports for those students leaving us in 2016 will be a bit different this year, as they will include ABLES Readiness Reports. The Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) program is a Department of Education program that all school when supporting the teaching and learning of students with disabilities and additional needs.

Victorian Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder
The Autism Teaching Institute and WAS will attend a hearing of the Family and Community Development Committee enquiry into services for people with ASD later this month.

At the hearing the ATI/WAS will respond specifically to the inquiry into the education for people with ASD. The issues we will speak to will include the accessibility to, quality of the education services provided to people with ASD, how inclusive the school education sector is to people with ASD, and the limitations of the current education services and how these can be addressed.

Our appearance will also provide an opportunity for us to present the unique practice-based model of ASD teacher training offered through the Autism Teaching Institute.


The reporting date for this inquiry is 30 June 2017. Once the final report is tabled in the Parliament, an electronic copy will be available at the link above.

I look forward to seeing families and friends at school events this term.

Kind regards,
Mary Thomson

Dress Up Day Junior School Council
The Junior School Council is planning a fun dress up day for Friday the 28th of October. Students may come to school dressed in their favourite costume for some mid-term fun!

Classroom Readers and Library Books; Laverton
Please return readers or library books which have gone home with your children throughout the course of the year when convenient.

Curriculum Day this term
On Monday the 31st of October staff have a full day of professional development for curriculum day. There will be no school for the children on this day.

Sausage Sizzle
Bunnings Hoppers Crossing on Old Geelong Road is generously hosting a sausage sizzle for Western Autistic School on Monday October 31st. If you are out and about please drop by for a sausage or just to say hello.

Spotlight on Teaching Teams
Room 4.1
Simon, Tom, Johnathan and Deborah
Room 4.1 have had a busy stat to the beginning of term 4. With the majority of students transitioning to new schools in 2017, our focus has been on best preparing the students for their new settings. This has meant that independent communication has been an area we have continued to encourage the students to engage in deeply. As the students will be moving to new schools and interacting with a range of new students, we have also been focusing on encouraging and fostering positive social interactions with peers both within the classroom, and also from other classrooms. This has raised many surprises for us and also some little challenges for the students to deal with different responses from different students. The boys are doing very well in coping with those challenges.
Room 4.2
Miranda, Dorothy, Zeenat and Daniel
Term 3 was a term of change for our class who moved into Green Pod. Term 4 shall again bring the challenge of change as seven of our students will be moving on to a range of school settings so we are supporting each with classroom activities. This term we are running an excursion program that will encompass goals such as appropriate behaviours in the community, generalising communication skills to unfamiliar settings and trying new activities of interest to our students. We have also begun a theme on the seasons which we shall use to incorporate in our cooking, numeracy, literacy, science and art activities.

Lawn Bowls
Students in Red and Green Pod have recently had the opportunity to participate in a Lawn Bowls Program via an initiative of Lawn Bowls Victoria, RMIT University and School Sport Victoria. RMIT students have been running in-school clinics, using modified equipment and fun, engaging activities to involve our students in a great sport that anyone can play. At the completion of the clinics, students will have the chance to represent our school at the State All Abilities Bowls Carnival and so far, we are showing that we have the skills to do very well. Anyone interested in having a go at a growing sport, suitable for all ages and abilities, can contact Bowls Victoria on 9861 7100 for details about your local club.

Room 4.3
Dave and David
Room 4.3 is a small class but with a big personality. Our learning in the classroom focuses on the good old fashioned 3 Rs and through some hard work, everyone has made improvements to their Literacy and Numeracy skills over the past couple of terms.

As well as working hard, we play hard. When we’re not at our desks, we’re often out kicking the footy or throwing a basketball. We’re also pretty switched on with technology. Last term, we combined our love of sport with our interest in digital media, leading up to having our very own Olympic Ceremony. Sport is again at the forefront this term as we’ve been learning to play Lawn Bowls and in a couple of weeks, we will be representing the school at the State Bowls Tournament.

Another job that keeps us busy is looking after the school’s chickens. We do a great job of collecting eggs every morning and feeding them every afternoon. Although, judging by the size of them, we may have been feeding them a bit too much lately!

Parent Activities and Events
Current Research Projects
At one time or another, many families at Western Autistic School have participated in Victorian research projects. A list of research projects which are current and looking for participants can be found on the Amaze website at http://www.amaze.org.au/get-involved/autismresearch/autismresearch-currentprojects.

Current projects include topics such as ‘The effect of pet ownership on the social skills and empathy of people with ASD’ and ‘Are girls less likely to be diagnosed than boys with Autism Spectrum Disorder?’ If you are interested in participating or learning more, please check out the website for opportunities to get involved.

ATI Update
To date there have been 300 graduates from the certificate course and 201 graduates from the diploma. This means that there are over 400 teachers in schools in Victoria with ASD specialist training to support our children, which is an impressive result and for which the ATI staff are to be congratulated.