Hello and welcome to Western Autistic School.

Parents may feel some relief now that the uncertainty about where your children would be schooled has been resolved. Naturally there will be a sense of nervousness from parents and children about what to expect of school. We hope that you quickly come to feel comfortable with life at the school. Please always ask if you have queries.

Entry children attendance at school in the month of February, 2015

Children starting in their first year of school in Prep/Entry classes attend school only on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday each week for the month of February. The children stay home on Thursdays and Fridays in February. The prep children begin full time at school Monday to Friday the week beginning the 2nd of March, 2015.

Bus Transport

As you will appreciate the logistics of transporting a large number of children safely to and from school can be complicated. We thank all parents/carers for their patience and understanding as the bus runs and times are sorted out. If parents experience difficulty with the bus schedule or any other issue with bus transport, please contact Michelle Sanders at the Laverton campus or Elizabeth Richardson at Niddrie campus. It does take a little time to iron out the issues with bus times and pick up and drop off points at the start of the year. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Yesterday the Autism Teaching Institute ran a training session attended by all WAS bus drivers and chaperones. The session provided an opportunity for the bus staff to further develop their understanding of how to support children during travel.

School Council

The School Council is the governing body of the school. It makes decisions about the overall strategic direction of the School. There are four parent representatives on Council. Nominations are called for from interested parents and guardians to become members. This is an essential part of our partnership and is an invaluable opportunity to participate in the decision making process of the school on behalf of the whole school community. If you would like to be involved please do not hesitate to contact Mary Thomson on 9097 2003.

Staff at WAS

Staff Induction

WAS provides support and guidance to staff new to the school, and an induction program for new teachers. Induction encompasses orientation to the school community, the school working culture and the teaching environment and conditions particular to WAS. New and beginning teachers have a wide network of colleagues at the school to draw upon for support.

In the bulletins to follow we will introduce the staff at the different campuses and programs in 2015.

News from Students and Groups

Room 2.9at Laverton, have been looking at Numeracy, starting with the number 1. The students completed an art activity titled “There is only 1 sun”.

Leonardo’s artwork
News from Students and Groups continued

Social and Physical Play
Outside play is for running around, and other physical play that provides whole-body exercise and teaches your child gross motor skills. At school the children have regular play sessions for active or passive play. Staff support the children with structured play activities using the play equipment to learn and practice social play with one other child or groups of children. Pictured is the new pirate playground in Yellow Pod.

Anthony and Christian from room 1.3 playing on the new Pirate Ship playground

Parent Activities and Events

Parent Coffee Morning
“Overview of the school philosophy and program”
- Laverton 27th February from 9:30am – 11:00 am in the Tutorial Room.
- Niddrie 6th of March from 9:30 – 11:00am in the Conference Room.

Communication resource making session for parents and carers. Presented by the Speech Pathology Team on Thursday 12th March at:
- Laverton 9:30am – 11:30am.
- Niddrie 1:30pm – 3:00pm.

Mental Health & Wellbeing group will be commencing at Laverton on the 17th March 2015. We will be looking at depression, anxiety and other mental health issues and talking about strategies and approaches for managing or avoiding these often crippling conditions. The group will meet from 10.30 till 1 pm and run fortnightly for approximately 8 sessions. A notice with more information will be available next week. There is no charge and childcare is available.

Anger will be explored in our group being run at Niddrie which will be commencing on the 23rd March 2015. Once again the group will meet from 10.30 till 1pm and there is no charge and childcare is available. A notice with more information will be available next week.

If your require any further information please don’t hesitate to contact Margaret Itoine or Jacqueline Nixon on 9097 2000 or itsines.margaret.e@edumall.vic.gov.au

Events and Services of possible interest for families

MyTime groups are for parents, carers and grandparents caring for children with a disability, developmental delay or chronic medical condition. They are free to attend. MyTime provides the opportunity to mingle, share ideas and experiences with other adults in similar circumstances, who understand the rewards and intensity of the caring role. Each group also has a Play helper in attendance and the Play Helpers minds preschool children, including under school aged siblings.

For more information contact Tweddle:
PH| 03 8387 0638
WEB| www.tweddle.org.au or www.mytime.org.au

The School Website

The school website, www.westernautisticschool.vic.edu.au is our main forum for communication with parents/guardians. If you do not have access to this website then please contact the Laverton office on 90972000 to ask for printed version of the information you seek.

Christian and Jaipreet from 1.3 enjoying the new swings!

Disney’s The Lion King is working closely with Autism Awareness Australia to create a friendly and supportive environment to enjoy this award-winning musical. The specially adapted performance will be suitable for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families, with trained staff on hand and dedicated quiet and activity areas should anyone need to leave their seats. Slight adjustments to the production will include reduction of any jarring sounds or lights focused into the audience. If you would like more information and to book tickets, please follow this link: www.disney.com.au/lionkingautismfriendly/about/