Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are looking forward to our first full week with the prep students and the further opportunity to get to know children and families through classroom interactions and meetings.

Last week a number of Laverton Parents attended a coffee morning to hear about the school’s program and philosophy. We look forward to welcoming Niddrie families to a similar event at the Niddrie campus on Friday.

Public Holiday

Just a reminder that this coming Monday, 9th of March is a Public Holiday and all schools are closed.

School Council

On Monday the 2nd of March, at 4:00pm nominations closed for parent vacancies for positions on Western Autistic School Council. There are currently four nominations and two positions. Early next week we will be sending out voting material to all parents. Please look carefully at each candidate’s statement and the ballot paper then select the two candidates you wish to represent the parent community on WAS school council.

English Online

Over the last few weeks while preps have been settling in to school, teachers have been conducting the English Online Interview developed to measure the communication and literacy understandings of preps in Victorian schools. It has been pleasing for teachers to observe the knowledge that many children bring with them to school in relation to understanding language and books. While many of the children are still emerging in their language and engagement with these activities we hope that the information gathered by staff will provide valuable evidence to evaluate priorities for teaching and learning during the year.

News from Students and Groups

A number of groups at the Laverton and Niddrie campuses have been attending the school swimming program.

It has been pleasing to see the children’s confidence, safe water understandings, swimming and dressing skills develop throughout the program and we hope to see even more development before the end of the term.

Students from 3.3 (top photo) and 2A (bottom photo) enjoying their swimming lesson.
Bus Service

As a result of high enrolments and shared transport arrangements in 2015, most of our existing bus runs for the Laverton campus are nearing, or have reached capacity. This means that there are currently limitations on new bus places being offered and requested changes to existing routes. We recognise that this can be very challenging for families who are trying to coordinate work and family commitments around their child’s travel arrangements. We are in consultation with the Student Transport Unit in relation to how we can ease the current situation but it appears unlikely that there will be any significant adjustments made in the immediate future.

In the meanwhile if families need to travel more than 4.8 kms to reach their child’s school or bus stop and are unable to access the bus service they may be eligible for a conveyance allowance to assist with the costs of travel. Please contact the school’s campus office to request a Student Conveyance Allowance Application.

Parent Activities and Events

Parent Coffee Morning

“Overview of the school philosophy and program”

- Niddrie 6th March from 9:30am to 11:00am

We ask that parents return the RSVP if they are coming to the coffee mornings. Thank you. We look forward to seeing you then.

Resource Making Session

The Speech Pathology Team will be presenting a communication resource making session for parents and carers on the 17th of March, at both campuses. We ask that parents return the RSVP if they are coming to this session.

Parent Meetings

Advanced notice of the following parent meetings with Margi Itsines, Social Worker and Jacqueline Nixon

Mental Health & Wellbeing Group will be commencing at Laverton on the 17th March 2015.

The group will meet from 10:30am till 1:00pm and run fortnightly for approximately 8 sessions.

Anger Management 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 10:30am till 1:00pm. There is no charge and childcare is available.

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

Events and Services of possible interest for families

Irabina Autism Services

An 8 week group program that combines meditation with therapy for people who have a child with autism and have experienced depression or chronic unhappiness.

Dates: Monday Evenings April 20 – June 8 inclusive
Time: 6:30pm-8:30pm
Venue: Irabina Officer Branch, 454 Princes Highway, Officer Vic.
Cost: FREE. This program has been kindly supported by Cardinia Local Council Minor Community Support Grants. Participant will need to pay $50.00 for program resources.

Book your place at www.irabina.com

Mobility Allowance

Financial assistance for people aged 16 or over with disability, illness or injury that cannot use public transport without substantial assistance and want to participate in community activities.

To find out if you are eligible and for more information please contact the Department of Human Services on 132 717.

“We Care” Card

Eligible Victorian carers can access discounts and benefits from businesses, local government and community organisations. Cardholders are also entitled to free travel on public transport on Sundays plus two return off-peak travel vouchers each year.

To apply or for more information please email carercard@dhs.vic.gov.au or call 1800 901 958.

The School Website

www.autisticschool.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 9097 2000 to ask for a printed version of the information you seek.