Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome back from what was hopefully a restful and enjoyable holiday period. Six weeks passes quickly and it doesn’t seem long since our school end of year celebrations were in full swing, and we were wishing farewell to our 2015 graduates.

Even over the holidays, however, a school doesn’t stop and during the break our teachers, office staff and maintenance department have been busy planning and preparing to get the classes ready for the new-year.

As usual we start the year without our youngest students, who will begin a staggered entry program from February 8th. In the meantime our entry staff are working throughout the school to give returning students some extra support as they settle into their new classrooms.

Niddrie Playground
The holiday period also saw some cosmetic changes to the school, including this notable addition to a Niddrie playground courtesy of some hard work by the Rico family. The newly decorated house will provide a fantastic environment for some imaginative and social play opportunities for our students.

New Staff
The year also begins, as it often does, with some new appointments to our school team, and this year we have several new staff members starting at the Laverton Campus including our two newest graduate teachers Tess Underwood and Bridget Thompson. We also welcome back some familiar faces returning to new roles, including assistant principal Sam Hindes, who is based at the Laverton Campus.

Warm Weather
Weather this week has been typically unpredictable, but our first term back at school often brings with it some very warm days. Please be aware of the sun, and remember to Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide.

Parent Morning Tea
The Laverton Campus will be hosting a morning tea for new and returning parents on Tuesday the 16th February from 10:30 – 11:15. This will be a chance to meet other WAS families and welcome the entry student families to the WAS community. Please come along and feel free to bring a plate to share if you would like.

The School Website
As always, the main forum for communication with parents/guardians is our school website, www.westernautisticschool.vic.edu.au. The latest copy of the parent bulletin along with information such as term dates and school events can be found here. 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.
New Bus Plan at Laverton
This year we have more buses than ever, and as a result we are changing the way that students get to and from the buses. To avoid students waiting on buses for long periods of time, we are now using two gates to pick up and drop off students. Because of this we are now asking parents and guardians to please make sure that the office staff know if they are picking children up after school. We want to avoid a situation where parents waiting at one gate miss children who exit through another.

Parliamentary Inquiry into Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder
Parents and families are encouraged to make a submission to this inquiry. The inquiry has a broad terms of reference and is investigating the experience of people with autism and their families and carers with such things as
- Accessing services and the quality of services
- Health services
- Integration across governments and services
- Education and housing
- Workforce issues.

For more information on the Terms of Reference of the inquiry and how to make a submission visit The website at www.parliament.vic.gov.au/fcdc, telephone (03)86822843 or send an email to fcdc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Book Launch
Mark Hogan and his wife Leanne are proud to invite WAS parents to the launch of Mark’s latest book "My Point of View"

In this book Mark shares his personal journey growing up with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He provides invaluable insight into what is going on inside the mind of a child with ASD, and how he views the world.

Mark explains reasons for many behaviours your child may have, and talks about strategies that have worked for him.

He reveals personal experiences about parallel play, stimming, bullying, depression, school life, visual learning, parenting and strategies to overcome challenges associated with ASD.

Mark and Leanne talk about strategies they use to make their life easier to maintain a happy relationship.

Leanne and Mark have two children, Ben and Claire. Ben was diagnosed with Autism at the age of two. After completing three years at Western Autistic School, Ben transitioned to a mainstream school.

For more information or to book tickets go to http://www.markandleannehogan.com/

A message from Van
Kính thư quý phụ huynh,
Tối tên là Văn Vũ, nhân viên phục vụ liên hệ nhà trường và phụ huynh thuộc cộng đồng tiếng Việt. Trong năm học 2016 này, tôi hành nghề phục vụ quý vị tại hai chi nhánh Laverton và Niddrie trong các ngày thứ Ba và thứ Tư hàng tuần.
Xin trân trọng cảm ơn và gửi lời chào thân ái.
Văn Vũ

Dear parents and guardians,
My name is Van Vu. I am working as a Vietnamese multi-cultural aide at Western Autistic School. My job is to bring school services to parents and guardians of the Vietnamese community. In this school year 2016, I will be available at Laverton and Niddrie campus for every Tuesday and Wednesday.
Thank you very much,
Van Vu