

# Spotswood Primary School

## Newsletter



Term 1 Week 4 • Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024

"Where everybody is somebody"



Dear families,

### School Leaders

Over the past few weeks our Year 6 students have had the opportunity to consider their leadership role here at Spotswood and a number of them have nominated for our School Captain and House Captain positions. Along with the Year 5/6 teachers, Mrs Vasilevski and I were so proud to watch students confidently step up in front of their peers and talk about why being a leader was important to them and how they would represent the student community.

The themes of inclusion, diversity and our school values featured strongly in all their speeches and it was a strong illustration of our motto 'where everybody is somebody' through our students' eyes. We are proud to congratulate our new Year 6 leaders.

<b>School Captains</b>	Orla Lynch & Angus Ward
<b>School Vice Captains</b>	Jack Spiteri & Halle Hitch
<b>BLUE House Captains</b>	Sophie Clark & Finlay Scholtes
<b>GOLD House Captains</b>	Sonny Burdeu & Esme Suckling
<b>GREEN House Captains</b>	Ava Holder & Zoe Smith
<b>RED House Captains</b>	Seth Miller & Frankie Hogan

### Inter School Sport

Today our Year 5/6 students participated in the first round of Summer School sport. Our teams competing are Hot Shot Tennis, Tee-ball, Volleyball and Basketball. The Summer Sport competition will be played over 5 weeks this term on Friday mornings. We hosted Altona North Primary School here at Spotswood today.

The schools we play against are local government and catholic schools with a similar size Year 5/6 population as us which enables us to provide all of our students with an opportunity to participate and to field all the teams.

It is lovely to head out around the school on Friday mornings to see our students cheering each other on!

### School Review

Every 4 years schools undergo an independent process to review the goals in our previous Strategic Plan (2019 – 2023) and develop our focus and goals for the next four years. This is a very thorough process facilitated by an independent reviewer and includes a panel of our staff, Department of Education regional staff, two other primary school principals and School Council representation.

Families may recall that we sought community feedback into our self-evaluation phase of this process in Term 4, and students also have the opportunity to contribute their voice to the process.

Next Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February we have a 'fieldwork day' as part of this process and would like to include a focus group of 6-8 parents from 9:00am for approximately 45 minutes. If you would be available to come along, please let us know by Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February via the school email [spotswood.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:spotswood.ps@education.vic.gov.au).

If we receive more emails from parents than 6-8, we will draw names randomly to form the focus group.

We will confirm the attendees by 4pm on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>.

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The review spans three days across this term and we look forward to sharing our new Strategic Plan 2024-2028 with our community next term.

## Lunch Orders

We have had two weeks of lunch orders now with our new lunch order provider and I would like to share a couple of helpful tips for families to ensure that your order is placed correctly.

- As the app enables you to order for future dates, please check the date you are selecting to make sure your order is for the correct week. We have had a few instances where children have not had a lunch delivered, only to find that the order was incorrectly placed for a future date. Please be assured that in these instances we will contact you to see if you can bring something up to the school or we will provide a sandwich.
- Check the confirmation email you will receive to make sure your lunch order is correct.

## Personal Accident Insurance and Ambulance Cover

Parents are reminded that the Education Department does not provide personal accident insurance for students. Parents and guardians are responsible for paying the cost of medical treatment for injured students, including any transport costs. Student accident insurance policies are available from some commercial insurers. These cover a range of medical expenses not covered by Medicare or private health insurance.

## Slow Food Market

Families may be aware of the monthly Slow Food Market that has been operating every 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month from the RSL in Spotswood.

We are excited to host the Slow Food Market here at Spotswood Primary School for the next 6 months whilst some renovations are underway at the RSL.

The first market will be held here on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March and we will have more information about the launch of this event in the coming weeks.

You may be interested to learn more about the market at their website <https://www.slowfoodmelbourne.com.au/>



## Working Bee – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 3:30pm – 6:00pm

We are so lucky to have such extensive grounds here at Spotswood, the only downside is that it is such a large area to maintain! We do have a regular gardener who keeps on top of the mowing and some general yard work, however we invite families to stay back on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March after school for a twilight working bee.

One of our parents, Brooke Caddell who has been a wonderful contributor to our kitchen garden over the years, has offered to hold a summer fruit tree pruning workshop in the garden to share some knowledge for those who may be interested.

We will also plan to undertake some weeding, mowing, edging, sweeping and rock relocating around the school.

We will provide some snacks and cold drink refreshments.

Please let us know if you will be attending by emailing us at [spotswood.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:spotswood.ps@education.vic.gov.au) so we can plan for both the catering and the tasks list. Include how many adults and children are attending in your email and whether you can bring equipment with you, ie. rakes, brooms etc.

## School Council

Below is the 2024 Notice of Election and call for nominations for School Council. School Council elections are held at this time each year. A position on School Council is for a two-year term, and 'retiring' members are eligible to re-stand for School Council.

School Council meetings are held twice per term from 6.15pm to 8.15pm.

We have included a fact sheet about School Council in this newsletter, however I encourage you to come and see me if you have any queries.

Jackie Green  
Principal

## Notice of election and call for nominations

<b>An election is to be conducted for members of the school council of</b>
Spotswood Primary School
<b>Nomination forms may be obtained from the school and must be lodged by 4.00pm on</b>
Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2024
<b>The ballot will close at 4.00pm on</b>
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2024


Following the closing of nominations, a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school.

The terms of office, membership categories and number of positions in each membership category open for election are as follows:

<b>Membership category</b>	
Parent member	
<b>Term of office</b>	<b>Year</b>
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in	2024
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in	2026
<b>Number of positions:</b>	7

<b>Membership category</b>	
School employee member	
<b>Term of office</b>	<b>Year</b>
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in	2024
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in	2026
<b>Number of positions:</b>	3

If the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies, a notice to that effect and calling for further nominations will be posted in a prominent position at the school.

<b>Principal signature</b>


## District Swimming Championship

Last week 19 of our students represented Spotswood Primary at the Altona District Swimming Championship. All of our students swam brilliantly and cheered hard for all of our team throughout the day. We had some amazing results with many of the students picking up a ribbon along the way, or going very close to getting one.

A number of our students, including 3 of our relay teams, will be heading to the Hobsons Bay Division Swimming Championship on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March, we wish them the best of luck!



Chris Lamb  
PE Teacher

## Curriculum Update – Term 1 Week 4

<b>Prep</b>	
Reading	WALT : understand the difference between a letter and a word look at the first letter
Writing	Special Prep Book Handwriting SMART Spelling Introduce Recount
Spelling	It is in the big tin. t, i and n as in tin
Maths	100 Days of School Number & Algebra Whole Number
SWPB / Respectful Relationships	Emotional Literacy: What do emotions look like? SWPBS - Learning Spaces
<b>Grade 1 / 2</b>	
Reading	Building Reading Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decoding Strategies</li> <li>• Using our Reading Journals</li> <li>• Buddy reading guidelines</li> </ul>

Writing	<p>Memoir</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing in first person</li> <li>• Following the Writing cycle and publishing a piece of writing.</li> <li>• Writing in past tense</li> </ul>
Spelling	o as in frog
Maths	Addition & Subtraction
SWPB / Respectful Relationships	SWPB Playground
<b>Grade 3 / 4</b>	
Reading	<p>Mentor text: What can a Citizen do</p> <p>Reading skill: Comprehension Strategies</p> <p>Two Inquiry topic related Texts through digital technologies - Epic</p>
Writing	<p>. Genre focus: Narrative</p> <p>- Working through the writing process during the week</p> <p>Generating Ideas</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Drafting</p> <p>Edit and revise</p>
Spelling	ge as in cage
Maths	<p>Topic: Data Interpretation and Representation</p> <p>Select and trial methods for data collection, including survey questions and recording sheets</p>
SWPB / Respectful Relationships	<p>Topic:</p> <p>Rules in different community settings</p> <p>Behaviours and Consequences</p>
<b>Grade 5 / 6</b>	
Reading	<p>Class novel-The Happiest Refugee</p> <p>QAR</p> <p>The question-answer relationship (QAR) comprehension strategy</p> <p>- how to ask key questions about the reading</p> <p>- how to find the answers to their questions — locating a specific fact, drawing an inference, or connecting the reading to their own experience.</p>
Writing	<p>Naplan Preparation</p> <p>-Use a picture prompt to inspire writing</p> <p>-type the response and edit</p>
Spelling	'ou' as in young
Maths	<p>Number and Algebra: Addition</p> <p>-Solving Addition word problems involving whole numbers.</p> <p>-Selecting and applying appropriate mental and written strategies</p> <p>-Explaining how an answer was obtained for an addition problem and justifying</p>
SWPB / Respectful Relationships	<p>Respectful Relationships:</p> <p>Stress Management</p> <p>-Stressors</p> <p>Activity 1</p> <p>Students identify the various contexts and situations in people's lives that can cause stress</p> <p>Students recognise that stress is often felt when we feel challenged</p>

## Curriculum Update – Term 1 Week 5

<b>Prep</b>	
Reading	<p>WALT :</p> <p>understand the difference between a letter and a word</p> <p>look at the first letter</p>
Writing	<p>Special Prep Book</p> <p>Handwriting</p> <p>SMART Spelling</p> <p>Introduce Recount</p>

Spelling	This tap is on and that tap is off. t, a and p as in tap
Maths	100 Days of School Measurement & Geometry Shape & Space 2D Shapes
SWPB / Respectful Relationships	Emotional Literacy: What do emotions look like? SWPBS - Learning Spaces
Grade 1 / 2	
Reading	Mentor Text: Backyard Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making Predictions</li> <li>• Making Connections</li> <li>• Using our Reading Journals</li> </ul>
Writing	Memoir <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing in first person</li> <li>• Following the Writing cycle and publishing a piece of writing.</li> <li>• Writing in past tense adding 'ed' to the end of words</li> </ul>
Spelling	o as in frog
Maths	Addition & Subtraction Represent and solve simple addition and subtraction problems using a range of strategies including counting on, partitioning and rearranging parts Explore the connection between addition and subtraction Solve simple addition and subtraction problems using a range of efficient mental and written strategies
SWPB / Respectful Relationships	SWPB Playground
Grade 3 / 4	
Reading	Reading skill: Comprehension Strategies
Writing	Genre focus: Persuasive - Working through the writing process during the week Generating Ideas Planning Drafting Edit and revise
Spelling	or as in worm
Maths	Topic: Addition and Subtraction  Apply place value to partition, rearrange and regroup numbers to at least tens of thousands to assist calculations and solve problems ( <a href="#">VCMNA153</a> )  Recognise and explain the connection between addition and subtraction ( <a href="#">VCMNA132</a> )
SWPB / Respectful Relationships	n/a
Grade 5 / 6	
Reading	Class Novel- The Happiest Refugee NAPLAN preparation - 'Author and Me' and 'Think and Search' questions. Behind The News -listening and note taking We are learning to view current events in visual texts. Literature Circles- rotation 3
Writing	Persuasive texts -Peer conferencing techniques and strategies
Spelling	Language Conventions NAPLAN practice test

Maths	Number and Algebra: Subtraction -Solving Subtraction word problems involving whole numbers. -Selecting and applying appropriate mental and written strategies -Explaining how an answer was obtained for a subtraction problem and justifying
SWPB / Respectful Relationships	Respectful Relationships: Stress Management -Lifting the Mood  Activity 2 Students use collaborative play to lift the mood and build a sense of social support



Emma Vasilevski  
Assistant Principal

## What's Happening In Our Classrooms

### Prep – Picnic Lunch with Buddies (Week 3)

On Friday the Preps had their first picnic lunch with their buddies. It was the perfect weather to sit with our buddies and chat about all the fun things we have done this week. The Grade 5/6 buddies have done a wonderful job supporting our Preps in feeling safe and confident in playing in the yard. We are looking forward to meeting up with our buddies next week for our first activity session.



Bridget Sherrin  
Prep S Classroom Teacher

## Prep – Spelling (Week 4)

Our SMART Spelling focus this week is the word “Tin” and on Tuesday the Preps participated in an investigation where they were required to guess what was in a tin with no label. We had a great time brainstorming the possibilities (old socks was a suggestion!) and then drawing what our predictions were (various forms of canned fish was a very popular speculation). Once the prediction activity was complete, we then opened the tin and tasted its contents (it was pineapple, not seafood, for anyone worried at home), which was a fun and satisfying way to conclude such an engaging activity.



Aaron Turner  
Prep T Classroom Teacher

## Year 1/2 – Hands-on Maths (Week 3)

Our Years 1s and 2s have spent the past fortnight exploring the concepts of Whole Number and Place Value. One of our key tools in this process has been MAB blocks, which help provide students with a physical and visual representation of otherwise abstract concepts. Of particular focus have been the ideas that “10 of these make one of those”, and that each numeral within a number represents a different place value. These foundational concepts are vital to students’ further development in other areas of Number & Algebra, such as addition, subtraction and fractions.





Zoe



Mala



Angus

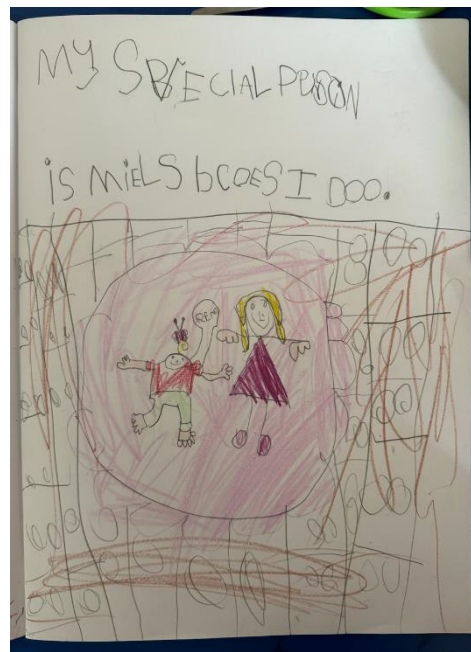
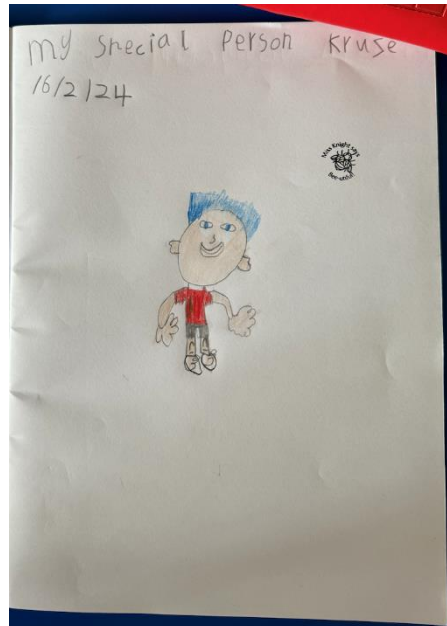
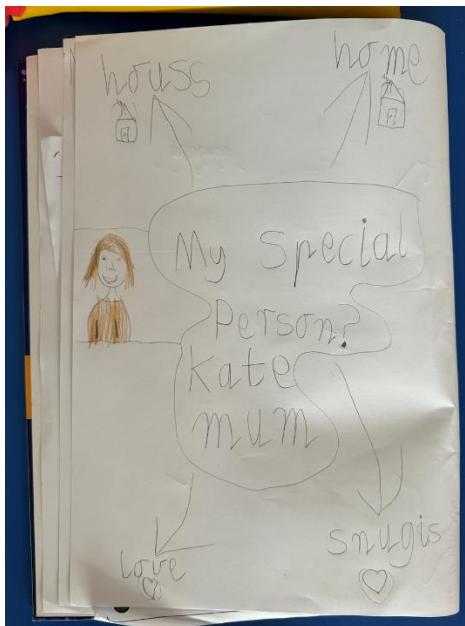


Hendrix

Simon Pollard  
1/2P Classroom Teacher

## Year 1/2 – Memoir Writing (Week 4)

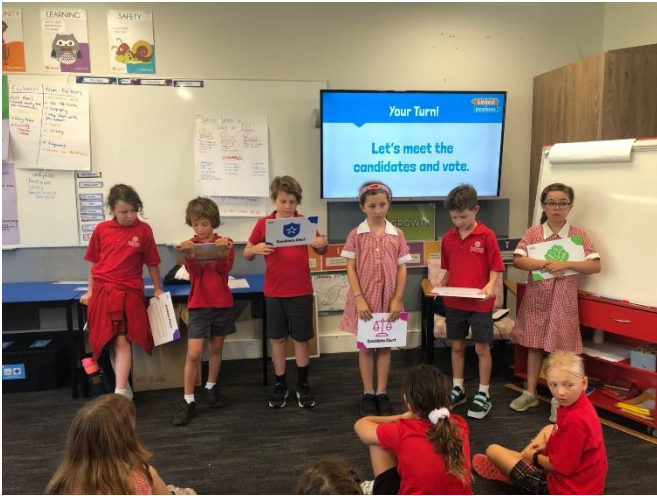
Over the last two weeks, exciting things have been happening in Grade 1/2! Our students have been diving into the world of memoir writing and the results are heartwarming. Our young writers explored the art of memoirs, favourite memories, special memories and treasured places which then involved crafting stories that reflected their unique perspectives. Grade 1/2 students have continued following along with the writing cycle as they have started to revise and publish their memoir pieces.



Maddison Knight  
1/2K Classroom Teacher

### Year 3/4 – ‘Making Your Voice Heard’ (Week 3)

This week in Grade 3/4 two of the classes participated in the ‘Democracy and Me’ incursion. This involved learning about the three levels of government in Australia whilst focussing specifically on local government and how people can become involved in making changes and having their voice heard. The students were involved in voting for candidates and saw how the preferential voting system works. They also were involved in a mock Council meeting as either Councillors or the general public.



The candidates: Rose, Fenton, Finn, Alice, George and Emilia.



Lucas and Jack checking in voters.



Mabel and Summer in charge of the electoral votes.

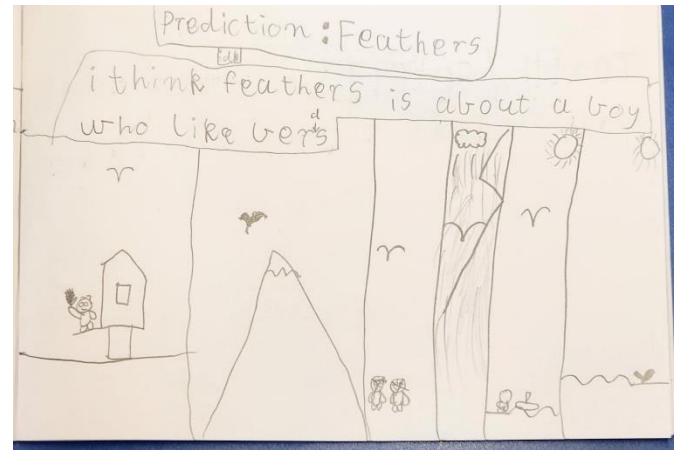
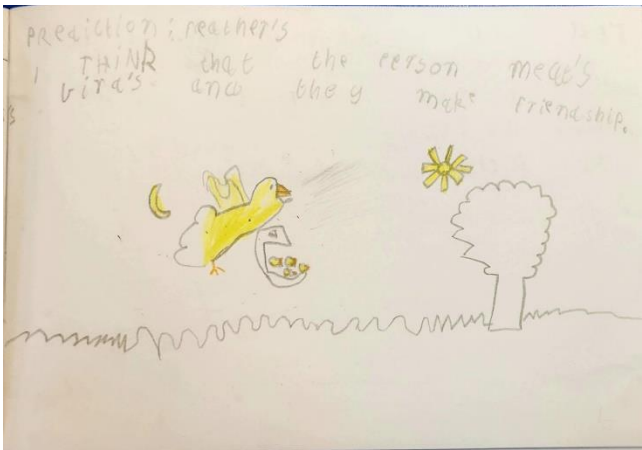
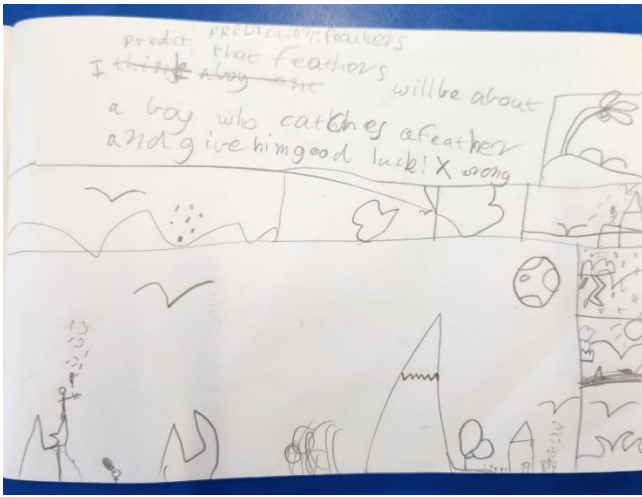


Council meeting in progress!

Tracey Kelly  
3/4K Classroom Teacher

### Year 3/4 – ‘Reading is Thinking’ (Week 4)

We have started our learning in reading this year by focusing on the concept the “Reading is Thinking” where we use one mentor text across the week and each day we change the reading strategy that is focused on. We have learnt how predictions, questions, connections and writing summaries help us to understand the text we have read. We started this week reading the text “Feathers” by Phil Cummings however we did not look at the pictures to begin with. First, we listened to the story and while we listened to the story we visualised (drew) what we could hear happening.



James McKimmie  
3/4M Classroom Teacher

**Year 5/6 – Literature Circles (Week 3)**

This week, the 5/6 students met for their first Literature Circles discussion! The purpose of Literature Circles is to foster a love of reading and talking about books, whilst building core reading comprehension skills (including predicting, visualising, questioning, connecting, identifying, inferring and evaluating) along with strong, regular, reading habits. In Week 2, students chose a book, appropriate to their reading level and interests, to read and make predictions. In Week 3, they met with their group and shared their predictions along with a summary of the first section of their book. It was wonderful to see the buzz of excitement in the room as students animatedly engaged in discussions about literature. Well done 5/6s!



Harry, William, Clem and Willow

Emily Matheson  
5/6E Classroom Teacher

## Year 5/6 – Mentoring our Prep Buddies (Week 4)

This week, our Grade 5 and 6 students demonstrated outstanding leadership by mentoring our Prep buddies, seamlessly integrating them into the school environment. The interactions between the older and younger students have been filled with warmth and laughter, reflecting a genuine commitment to their buddies' well-being. We are immensely proud of our older students' dedication to fostering inclusivity and respect, exemplifying the spirit of Spotswood. We believe these bonds will continue to flourish in the future. Well done to our 5 and 6 students!



Nicola O'Shea  
5/6O Classroom Teacher

### Specialist – Music (Week 3)

In Music students have been learning about Beat & Rhythm. Students are learning to read, play and create rhythmic patterns to a beat. The Music program has also been fortunate to purchase two new three player marimbas this year! Spotty students have been enjoying playing songs on the new instruments. Here are 3/4 V practising "Antigravity" by Jon Madin:



Michelle Papafotiou  
Music Teacher

### Specialist – Auslan (Week 4)

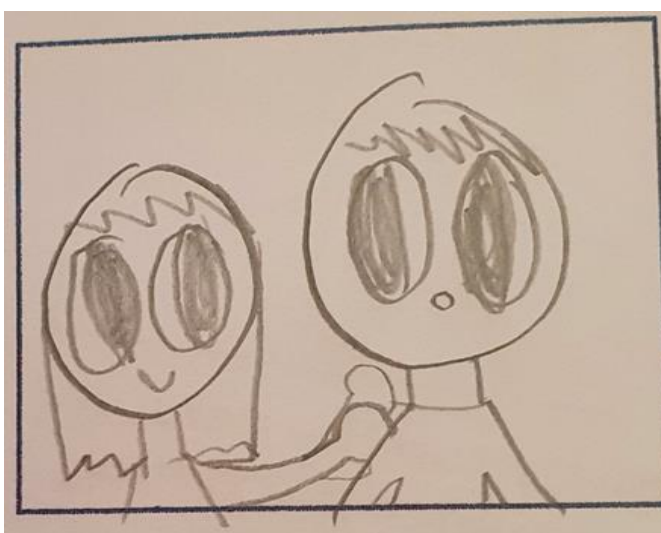
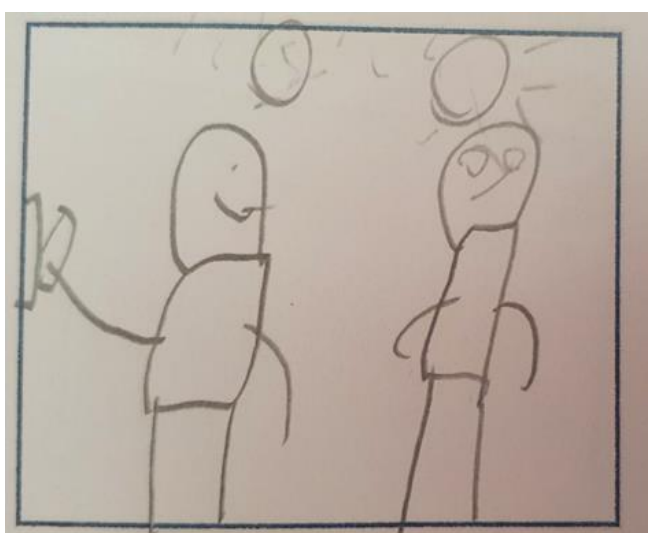
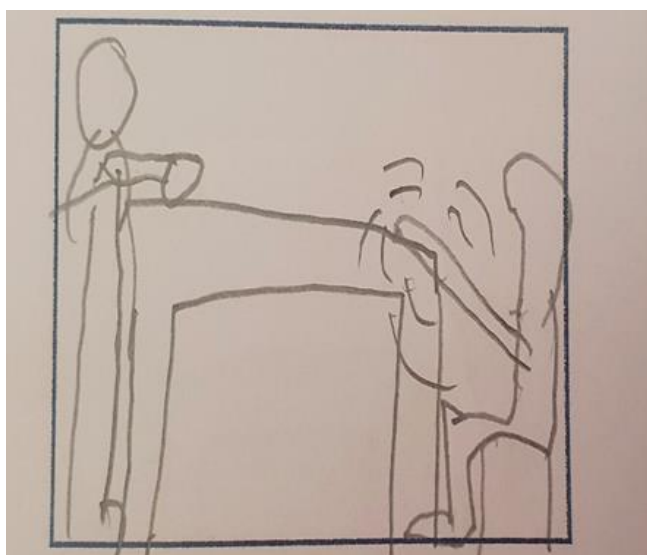
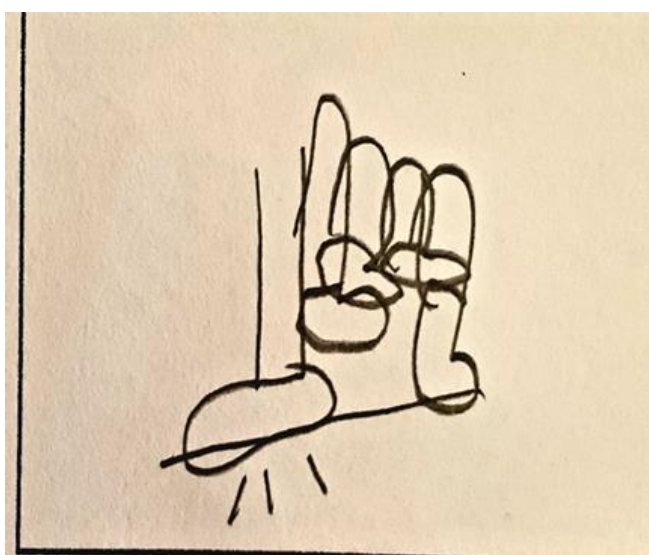
Over the last 4 weeks we have been very busy in our new Auslan classroom. Here is a snapshot of the students learning from Grade Prep to 6.

These photos show Grade 5/6s practising some new classroom instruction signs.

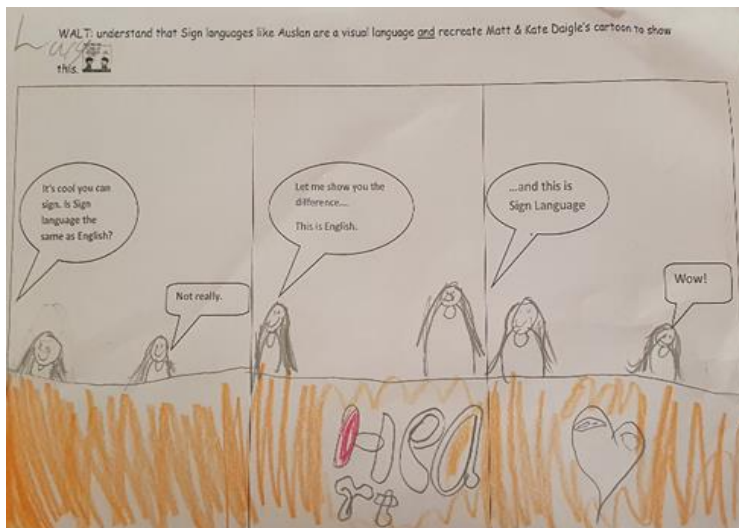
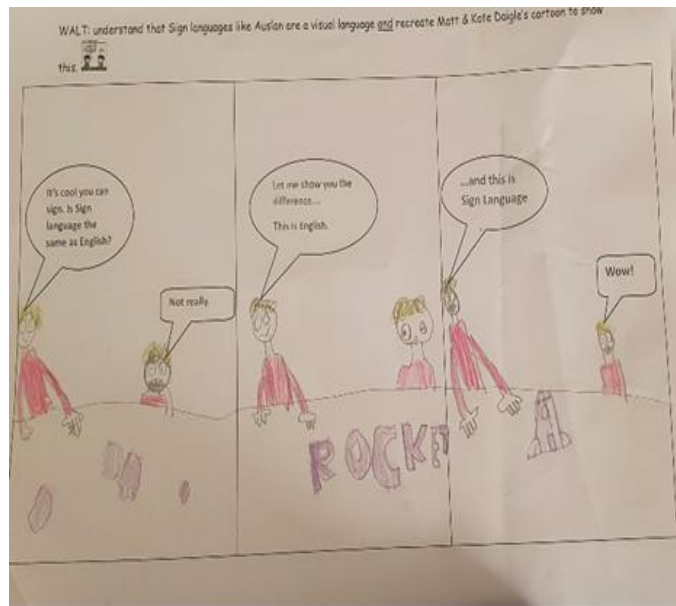
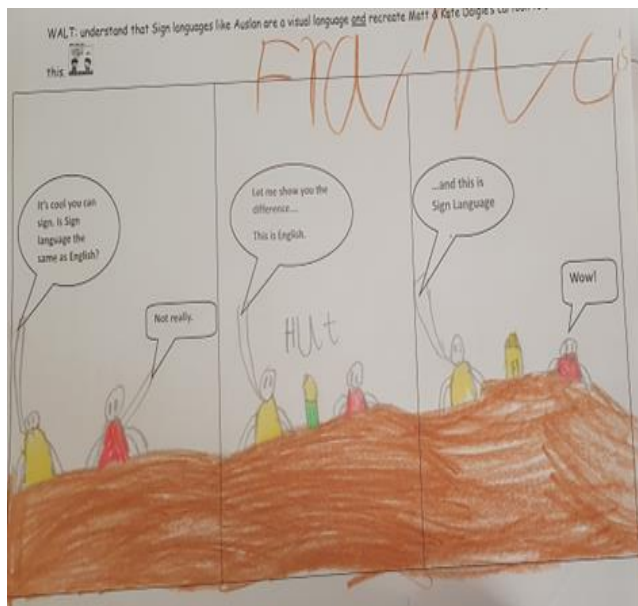




In Grade 3/4 they have been exploring ways to get a Deaf person's attention. Angus, Juin Khye, Luke and Ayla designed posters to teach hearing people how to get a Deaf person's attention. Here are some of the illustrations they used.



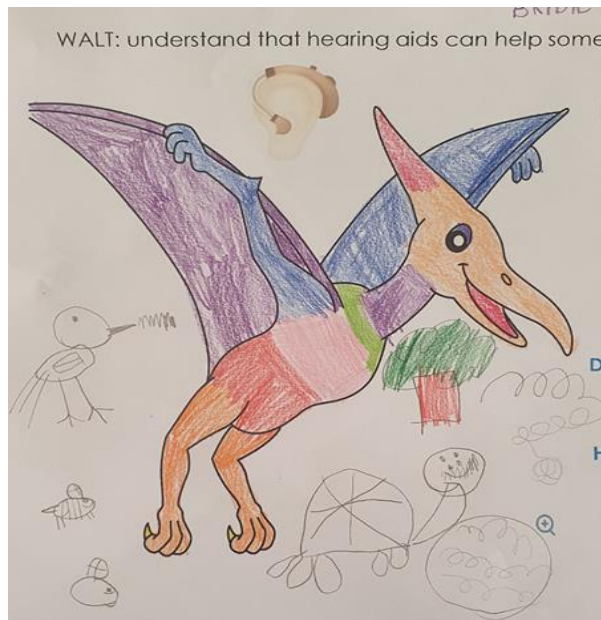
Grade 1/2s have been learning that Auslan is a visual language. Lucy, Francis and Max P created a cartoon to explain how Auslan is different to the English language.



In Prep students have been learning what it means to be Deaf and how hearing aids can help some Deaf or HOH people to hear. They have explored stories with Deaf characters such as Dachy's Deaf. Here are some drawings by Louisa, Jasper and Bridie showing some of the sounds that Dachy could hear when his hearing aid was switched on.







## Deaf Community News



**Emma Memma will be flying over the Yarra River to raise money for Deaf support organisation Expression Australia, on Sunday the 10th of March at 11am.**

Expression Australia are honoured to be the charity of choice for this year's Moomba Monarch, Emma Memma, in the Birdman Rally! The Birdman Rally is a long running Moomba Festival tradition, with people attempting to fly over the Yarra River in homemade flying machines for charity.

Emma Memma is a trailblazer for Auslan access and inclusion in children's music and entertainment. She will take to the sky this year to raise funds for Expression Australia in a joint effort to support every Deaf child's right to sign language. It's important that Deaf children are given the opportunity to learn Auslan early in life as it not only provides them with language skills, but also an increased quality of life well beyond their childhood.

We hope that some of our Spotty students get to see the Birdman Rally and have the opportunity to cheer on Emma Memma for this worthy cause. Good luck Emma!

Pamela O'Sullivan  
Auslan Teacher

## 5/6 National Young Leaders' Day

For many students this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be in the same room as their heroes and role models. The Leadership Day provided a unique opportunity for our newly appointed School and Vice Captains to hear some of Australia's high-profile people share insights from their own leadership journey. Below is a reflection of the day.

Gabrielle Mullins

5/6M Classroom Teacher and Learning Specialist

Last Friday, the school leaders went into the city for the National Young Leaders' Day (N.Y.L.D) at the Convention Centre. We learnt a lot about leadership from four amazing leaders: Anastasia Woolmer, the two time winner of the Australian Memory championships, Bryson Klein competitor in Ninja Warrior, Jane Bunn, weather reporter for Channel 7 and Melissa Barbieri, ex Matilda's captain and goalkeeper. These inspirational leaders taught us about never giving up on our dreams and persevering through hard times. We even had an opportunity to dance with Dean, from Dance Curriculum.

There were many inspirational quotes and stories such as 'be the napkin' from Bryson Klein. The story behind this is as follows. One time Bryson was camping with his mates when one of them tossed a napkin onto the fire. After 5 minutes, Bryson remarked that it hadn't burned yet. 10 minutes had passed and they were cheering the napkin on. By 15 minutes, the fire was climbing higher and they were still cheering it on. After 20 minutes, the log was nearly on fire and finally after 25 minutes it burst into flames. So, the saying is to remember to be the napkin during hard times, be patient, persevere and never give up. We had a great day and thank you to Ms Mullins for taking us.



Written by Angus Ward, Orla Lynch, Jack Spiteri and Halle Hitch  
School Captains and Vice Captains

### Student Awards (Week 3):

Congratulations to the following students who received a Student Award at assembly last Friday:



**Prep S** ..... Bridie Lesich - for having a wonderful start to Prep and always showing her best listening. Well done, Bridie!

**Prep T** ..... Isla Gillies - for her bravery and resilience in overcoming some of her worries. Amazing stuff Isla.

**Prep V** ..... Jessica Sigle - having a fabulous start to school and for being kind and friendly to everyone. Well done Jessica!

**1/2B** ..... Django Bryson - sharing some amazing facts about objects from the past. You contribute such great ideas to our group discussions!

**1/2K** ..... Lottie Harvey - for having a wonderful step up to Grade One. You have continued to grow in confidence at morning transitions. You're a star Lottie!

**1/2P** ..... Myles Chan - for his diligent application of sunscreen during this week's heat wave.

**3/4C** ..... Esme Craik - applying yourself in the generating ideas stage of the writing cycle, this surely helped create a creative and interesting narrative! Well done!

**3/4K** ..... George Hurley - for participating enthusiastically in the Inquiry Incursion and playing his role of the Honourable Mayor of Grade 3/4K so brilliantly!

**3/4M** ..... Lorelei Doxey - for composing a captivating narrative and confidently sharing this writing with the class.

**3/4V** ..... Lennox Coxon - for volunteering to read a shared text to the grade with great confidence!

**5/6E** ..... Miles Doxey - for a terrific start to Grade 6 this year. Your willingness to challenge yourself and take risks with your learning this week has been fantastic to see. Well done!

**5/6M** ..... Sebastian Nedinis - for working diligently and always trying your best. Your start to Year 5 has been impressive.

**5/6O** ..... Jet Diolosa - always supporting his peers in the classroom and trying his absolute best. You're a pleasure to teach. Well done Jet!

**Music** ..... Kingston La - for always trying your personal best, being focused and contributing to class discussions in Music. Keep up the great work Kingston!

### Student Awards (Week 4):

Congratulations to the following students who received a Student Award at assembly today:

**Prep S** ..... Callan Coxon - for giving everything a go and having a growth mindset. Well done, Callan!

**Prep T** ..... Luke Devlin - for having a wonderful start to Prep, being kind to everyone and always showing his best listening. Great work Luke!

**Prep V** ..... Zoe Tyo - being a respectful and responsible class member who is always trying her best. You are a superstar!

**1/2B** ..... Lachie Wolrath - completing some amazing independent writing when writing about your special place. Super effort!

**1/2K** ..... Kruze - for setting an exemplary example of positive behaviour. You're a super star Kruze, keep up the amazing efforts!

**1/2P** ..... Mala Nagesh-Hobbs - for going out of her way to offer help to people who need it.

**3/4C** ..... Olivia Ward - for an outstanding reading conference, including a comprehensive summary, prediction AND development and explanation of your new reading goal.



## Fact sheet : School Council Elections – Information for Parents

### What is a school council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally constituted bodies that are given powers to set the broad direction of a school, in accordance with Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils, and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In doing this, a school council may directly influence the quality of education for students.

### Who is on the school council?

For most primary school councils, there are several possible categories of membership:

- **A mandated elected parent member category** – members of this category generally comprise more than one third of the council's total membership. Department employees can be parent members at their child's school providing that they are not engaged in work at the school.
- **A mandated elected school employee member category** – members of this category make up no more than one-third of membership. The principal of the school is automatically one of these members.
- **An optional community member category** – members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experience. Department employees are not eligible to be community members.
- A small number of school councils have nominee members.
- For all schools with a Year 7 and above cohort, there is an additional category of membership:
- **A mandated elected student member category, two positions.**
- Generally, the term of office for all members is two years. The term of office of half the members expires each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

### Why is parent membership so important?

Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills and a range of experiences and knowledge that can help inform and shape the direction of the school.

Those parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

### Do I need special experience to be on school council?

Each member brings their own valuable skills and knowledge to the role, however, in order to successfully perform their duties, councillors may need to gain some new skills and knowledge.

It is important to have an interest in your child's school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school's future.

### Code of conduct for school councillors

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

School councillors must comply with the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. The Code of Conduct is based on the Victorian public sector values and requires councillors to:

- **act with honesty and integrity** – be truthful, open and clear about their motives and declare any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest and duty
- **act in good faith in the best interests of the school** – work cooperatively with other councillors and the school community, be reasonable, and make all decisions with the best interests of students foremost in their minds
- **act fairly and impartially** – consider all relevant facts of an issue before making a decision, seek to have a balanced view, never give special treatment to a person or group and never act from self-interest
- **use information appropriately** – respect confidentiality and use information for the purpose for which it was made available
- **exercise due care, diligence and skill** – accept responsibility for decisions and do what is best for the school
- **use the position appropriately** – not use the position as a councillor to gain an advantage
- **act in a financially responsible manner** – observe all the above principles when making financial decisions

- **comply with relevant legislation and policies** – know what legislation and policies are relevant for which decisions and obey the law
- **demonstrate leadership and stewardship** – set a good example, encourage a culture of accountability, manage risks effectively, exercise care and responsibility to keep the school strong and sustainable.

### Indemnity for school council members

School councillors are indemnified against any liability in respect of any loss or damage suffered by the council or any other person in respect of anything necessarily or reasonably done, or omitted to be done by the councillor in good faith in:

- a. the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a councillor, or
- b. the reasonable belief that the act or omission was in the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a council.

In other words, school councillors are not legally liable for any loss or damage suffered by council or others as a result of reasonable actions taken in good faith.

### How can you become involved?

By participating in, and voting in the school council elections, which are held in Term 1 each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might consider:

- standing for election as a member of the school council
- encouraging another person to stand for election.

### What do you need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations in Term 1 of each year. Council elections must be completed by 31 March, unless varied by the Minister for Education.

If you stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or, you can nominate yourself in the parent member category. You can only be nominated by another member of the same category that you are eligible for (e.g. a member of the parent electorate may only nominate another parent of that electorate).

Department employees with a child enrolled at a school where they are not engaged in work, are eligible to nominate for parent membership at that school.

Return your completed nomination form to the principal within the time stated on the Notice of Election. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt via post, email or by hand delivery.

Generally, if there are more nominations than vacancies a ballot will be conducted in the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

### Remember

- Consider standing for election to school council.
- Ask the principal for instructions if you are not sure what to do.
- Be sure to vote if the election goes to ballot.
- Contact the principal if you are unsure about what is required at any stage of the election process.