



## Principal's Message

I have a surprise announcement for you all. I have decided to retire at the end of this year. This has not been an easy decision for me by any stretch of the imagination. Those I work with - students and staff - know that I *absolutely love* my job, so the decision has nothing to do with the workplace. Students, staff, parents, community – you have been brilliant and I extend my heartfelt thanks to you each and every one of you.

I was warmly welcomed here from day one. That warmth and support have strengthened during the time I've had the privilege to call myself, 'Principal, Westlawn Public'. This school is sensational. I hope you all realise how fortunate you are to be in the Westlawn Public School catchment zone. I certainly have appreciated every moment of my time here.

So, if it's not about school, what is it about? Well, I'm no spring chicken and I've come to the realisation that most of my life is now behind me. Whilst on the home stretch, I've decided my focus will be family. The hours teachers spend when they decide to work in a school are long and 'school thinking' is a constant companion. A patient and supportive family is essential. It's time for me to give back to the two blokes who have given so much to me over my many

years in schools – my husband, Phill and my son, James.

I imagine your next question is, now what happens? This school is a gift to any principal, so I imagine the position will be hotly contested. Decisions made regarding the process and timing are made by the Director, Educational Leadership. I will pass on information to you as it is received.

All that said, it really is 'business as usual' at WPS. We are currently finalising the Situational Analysis and have begun work on the Strategic Improvement Plan which will direct school action over the coming four years. Our students remain the focus and our teaching staff continue to be the hard working, clever and dedicated crew they always have been.

Kind Regards,

Sandra

## CONGRATULATIONS MASON

Mason Thorley has won the 'District Award in the Year 5 Division' of the Newcastle Permanent Primary Mathematics Competition. Mason and his family will meet soon with the Competition Director to organise the presentation of his

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Award which includes a Newcastle Permanent account worth \$50. Well done Mason!

## PARENTING INFORMATION FROM MICHAEL GROSE

### YOU HAVE CHOICES

What drives kids' behaviour? Is it impulse, mood, emotion, age or genes that cause kids to be sociable and safe or unsociable and risky?

The motivating forces behind kids' actions are as complex as the many behavioural theories that have done the rounds over the years. Psychiatrist Sigmund Freud suggested that most behaviour is driven by internal desires, which were difficult to control. "Boys will be boys!"

His colleague Alfred Adler believed that behaviour is driven by the need to find a place within our groups. "Would someone pay me some attention!"

Development psychologist Jean Piaget suggested that children's behaviour was largely governed by their stage of development. "It's just a stage she's going through."

All theories have validity but they neglect to highlight something that we've always known but not recognised enough – **that kids choose how they behave**. Their choices may be negatively impacted by tiredness, hunger or irritability but ultimately, they make a decision to act in certain ways, or step back to let their impulses take over.

There are caveats. A hungry, overtired three year old who is being annoyed by a sibling is unlikely to make a reasoned choice about how they respond. Lashing out, a screech for parental help or an unrestrained tantrum are a more likely response. Parent common sense comes to the fore in determining how to respond to their child when mitigating factors are at play.

**"Good choice, Harry"**

When a young child is kind to a sibling or friend a parent can praise the behaviour ("It was great to see you be kind, Harry") or the choice ("Good choice, Harry").

When parents focus on the decisions kids make we teach them that they have a say in their behaviour. We reach out to their pre frontal cortex – the part of their brain responsible for reasoning – and say, "You're in charge of how this child behaves. Good for you as you chose well." Continual reinforcement of choices over time is likely to have a strong impact on how a child perceives himself. Reinforcement of choices places the locus on control on the child, rather than on external factors such as mood, peers and gender as likely causes of poor behaviour.

### **"You have choices"**

A child who misbehaves at home or in social situations can be reminded "You have choices." It helps if kids experience the consequences of their poor choices rather than be sheltered from them. A child who refuses, which is a choice, to clean up a mess left in the living room may lose those items for a period of time. If they value those items then they may make different choices next time around. Choices teach responsibility, when they are coupled with behavioural consequences.

### **"Can you make a smarter choice?"**

A parent may need to outline some of the choices – walk away from conflict, come to them for help, do nothing – but ultimately the decision is a child's to make. Similarly, going over poor choices with a child or young person in a quiet moment after an event can help them reflect and reset their brain for better choices in the future. "What behaviour can you choose next time?" is a helpful question to ask a child or young person who got themselves into a behavioural pickle.

### **"Choose between these two"**

Anecdotal evidence suggests that approximately one in three children don't like to be told what to do. These kids value control and use resistance strategies

such as arguing, negotiation or procrastination to assert their authority. These children can be wearing for parents, but the flipside is, that they generally make assertive adults as long as their spirits aren't dampened when they are young. The use of choices works well with children who value control over their own actions.

It's best to give them a choice between two options, which is an illusion of power. "If you stay inside you need to be quiet. If you want to play noisy games you need play outside." Kids will usually take one of the options offered, provided they're reasonable, as they feel they are calling the shots.

The focus on choices can start when children are toddlers continuing into adolescence and beyond. It's an empowering concept that prepares kids to live fully in the civilised society that they will be entering. It balances personal empowerment with personal responsibility, two character traits highly valued by schools, community groups and employers.

*Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's an award-winning speaker and the author of 12 books for parents including Spoonfed Generation, and the bestselling Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It. Michael is a former teacher with 15 years' experience, and has 30 years' experience in parenting education. He also holds a Master of Educational Studies from Monash University specialising in parenting education.*

### Reminder

***This term the canteen is open for first break orders only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Orders must be taken to the canteen first thing in the morning.***

### School Banking

School Banking is back. School Banking Day will be Friday, commencing on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020. School Banking is a fun, interactive and engaging way to help young Australians learn about money and practice good savings habits. For each weekly deposit made at school, students will receive a Dollarmites token. Once they collect 10 tokens, they can redeem them for a School Banking reward.

If your child has previously participated in School Banking, or has an existing Commonwealth Bank Youthsaver account, they can start banking straight away by bringing their Dollarmites deposit wallet to school on School Banking day.

If your child has lost their deposit wallet, please contact your School Banking Co-ordinator or visit any Commonwealth Bank branch for a replacement.

Our School Banking program is made possible because of volunteers. Thank you to those volunteers for donating their time to run School Banking for our students.

If you would like to know more about School Banking, please ask for a 2020 School Banking program parent guide from the school office or visit [www.commbank.com.au/schoolbanking](http://www.commbank.com.au/schoolbanking)

## Intention to apply for Year 7 placement in a selective high school in 2022

***Please note the following information is only for students currently in Year 5 (2020)***

Dear Parent/Carer

Selective high schools cater for academically gifted students with high potential who may otherwise be without sufficient classmates at their own academic standard. Selective high schools help these students to learn by grouping them with students of similar ability, and by using specialised teaching methods.

Applications for selective high school placement are considered mainly on the basis of the Selective High School Placement Test results and school assessment scores. The Selective High School Placement Test will be held on Thursday 11 March 2021.

If you would like to have your child considered for Year 7 selective high school entry in 2022, you need to apply on the internet using a valid email address (not the student's email address).

Detailed instructions on how to apply online will be available in late September 2020 at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-7>.

The application website opened at that link on 6 October 2020 and will close on 9 November 2020. You must apply before the closing date.

There are no paper application forms. If you do not have internet access, you could apply at a public library. If you have a disability that prevents you from using a computer, you can contact the Team for assistance after 6 October 2020.

You must submit only ONE application for each student.

### **DIARY DATES**

|              |                                                                        |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wed Oct 28   | Hot Dog Day                                                            |
| Fri Oct 30   | Basketball Gala Day at PCYC                                            |
|              | Kindy Orientation 12-2pm                                               |
|              | Year 2 Intensive swimming continues                                    |
| Thurs Nov 5  | Kindergarten excursion – Bridge walk and park                          |
| Mon Nov 9-11 | Book Fair Opens for sales                                              |
| Tues Nov 10  | GHS Year 7 2021 Parent Chromebook Information Evening (details TBA)    |
|              | “Paint the day purple” fundraiser – gold coin donation and wear purple |
|              | NAIDOC Week                                                            |
| Wed Nov 11   | Book Character Parade                                                  |
| Fri Nov 12   | Year 6 GHS Taster Day for Year 7 2021 students                         |
| Fri Nov 13   | Kindy Orientation 9.30-2.30pm                                          |

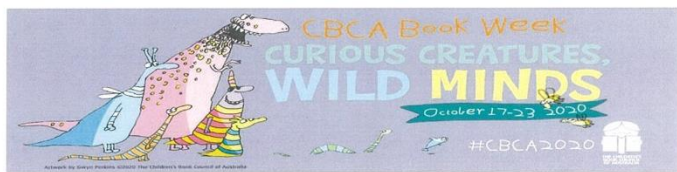
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An Artic blast is about to embark Westlawn's library when the fair arrives in Week 4! So much excitement is building as we announce this year's competitions. Children can choose to enter any of the following competitions for their chance to win a prize from this year's book fair.

**1) Curious Creatures, Wild Minds:** Use your imagination to create your own Lego creatures. Don't forget to attach your name and class to your creation.



**2) Colouring in Competition** Pick your sheet up from Mrs. Palmer.

**3) CURIOUS CREATURES - WILD MINDS LETTERING COMPETITION**

Write the character's name OR the title of the book they belong to for a chance to win a wild and curious prize! Pick your sheet up from Mrs. Palmer.

**4) Wild minds poster.**

Let your imagination run wild and create a poster of your imagination when reading your favourite book.



Entries due to the library by Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October (Week 3)

Happy creating! Mrs. Palmer



## Check out the checkers comp!

The annual checkers competition is underway this week. Students who have signed up will participate in a knockout competition with Stage 3 held on Monday and Wednesday and Stage 2 Tuesday and Thursday to begin with until we get closer to the semi-finals and finals.



**Book Fair 2020 style:**

**Week 3:** Book week Competitions are due to Mrs Palmer by Friday.

**Week 4 & 5:**

The Book Fair is our major fundraiser for the library each year and the students have been busily preparing to decorate the library with an Artic blast to celebrate.

Students will be able to browse the book fair and write a Wish List from Week 4 Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November to Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November. Due to COVID-19 restrictions purchasing will be a little different this year. Information will come out about that on Monday for online ordering that week and for Cash sales in Week 5 Monday 9<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November. Stay tuned for our digital catalogue to be released to assist with your shopping. If anyone wishes to use this opportunity to assist with their Christmas shopping please let us know and we can put them in a special packaging for you.

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November we will host our Book Character Parade so get your thinking caps on to work out which character you will come dressed as this year. Unfortunately, due to restrictions we are limited to a different style parade this year, but I am sure it will be just as fun and a little curious.

*See you in the library! Mrs Palmer*



**THE UNIT is a Technology Club where high functioning kids on the Autism Spectrum can explore their technology interests at their own pace in a safe environment, with support from professional I.T. mentors.**

*(No diagnosis or referral required)*

**THE UNIT is not a classroom. THE UNIT provides a social venue where kids can blend in, be understood and not be judged.**

**2-Hour Sessions each Saturday.**

**New School of Arts, South Grafton.**

**For ages 9 to 17**

**phone or text: 0419 610 917**

**email: [b.carnaby@bigpond.com](mailto:b.carnaby@bigpond.com)**

*(NDIS and 'Creative Kids Voucher' friendly)*

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Education &  
Communities

# Compulsory School Attendance

Information for parents

Education for your child is important and regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. NSW public schools work in partnership with parents to encourage and support regular attendance of children and young people. When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.

## What are my legal responsibilities?

Education in New South Wales is compulsory for all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age. The *Education Act 1990* requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at, and regularly attend school, or, are registered with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards for homeschooling.

Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

## The importance of arriving on time

Arriving at school and class on time:

- Ensures that students do not miss out on important learning activities scheduled early in the day
- Helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- Give students time to greet their friends before class
- Reduces classroom disruption

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents.

## What if my child has to be away from school?

On occasion, your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstance (e.g. attending a funeral)

Following an absence from school you must ensure that within 7 days you provide your child's school with a verbal or written explanation for the absence. However, if the school has not received an explanation from you within 2 days, the school may contact you to discuss the absence.

Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens the principal will discuss their decision with you and the reasons why.

Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long term absences are explained as being due to illness. Principals may also seek parental permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the principal can record the absences as unjustified.

## Travel

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school principal. An *Application for Extended Leave* may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and therefore contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

In some circumstances students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days. This should be discussed with your child's school principal.







**My child won't go to school.  
What should I do?**

You should contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to the school's learning and support team or linking your child with appropriate support networks. The principal may seek further support from the Home School Liaison Program to develop an Attendance Improvement Plan.

**What might happen if my child continues to have unacceptable absences?**

It is important to understand that the Department of Education and Communities may be required to take further action where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unexplained or unjustified absences from school.

Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- Compulsory Schooling Conferences

You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as Undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.

- Application to the Children's Court – Compulsory Schooling Order

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department

may apply to the Children's Court for a *Compulsory Schooling Order*. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

- Prosecution in the Local Court

School and Department staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

**What age can my child leave school?**

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling.

**Working in Partnership**

The Department of Education and Communities recognises that working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

**If a student misses as little as 8 days in a school term, by the end of primary school they'll have missed over a year of school.**

Further information regarding school attendance can be obtained from the following websites:

**Policy, information and brochures:**

Please visit the Department of Education's *Policy library*

**The school leaving age:**

Please visit the Department of Education's *Wellbeing and Learning* website

**Do you need an interpreter?**

Interpreting services are available on request, including for the hearing impaired. The Telephone Interpreter Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 131 450. You will not be charged for this service.

For further advice and questions contact your educational services team

T 131 536

Learning and Engagement

Student Engagement & Interagency Partnerships

T 9244 512

[www.dec.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au)

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