FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome Back!
It has been great that the students have all settled back into school after the spring break. Many of the students attended the Royal Melbourne Show or went on a family holiday so there is lots of news for them to share. Now the children are back at school mums and dads can have a rest! NSA staff are all well rested and looking forward to a productive term 4.

Sad News
Sadly over the holiday break one of our students’ mother’s passed away. The family are very private so I will not mention names, I would simply like to extend the school community’s sincerest condolences at this sad time. Life is very precious and tragedies such as this serve as a reminder to enjoy every day and make sure we cherish our loved ones.

World Teachers’ Day – thank you
This week on Friday is World Teachers Day – there will be a special afternoon on Friday to give our sincerest appreciation to the hard working teachers at NSA. Teachers spend a lot of time organising their rooms and programs so that students can achieve the very best outcomes. Thanks to all of you for your commitment to the NSA students and wider community.

Jacana Campus, Separation of the School – Jacana School for Autism Update
Corinne Pupillo and the Jacana Team are doing a great job planning and organising for the separation of the school. The process is well underway. All documentation for VRQA purposes has been re-badged and submitted to the Department. JSA has a school number and the finance team are working toward separating the school budget. Staffing processes are well underway and all staff who wish to move from NSA to JSA are able to do so – this means the current Jacana staff will simply remain in situ! School Council have made a submission to the Department about establishing an interim school council. Soon we hope to have news regarding the appointment of a principal. Given the short time line it is most likely that the Department will initially appoint an acting principal, when we have confirmation of this you will be informed - as yet there is no definite plan.

Industrial Action
The next wave of industrial actions involves bans on report writing – the sub-branches will vote as to whether or not AEU staff at NSA will participate. If so I will inform you in regard to the impact this will have on end of year reports. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support in this matter. It is with reluctance that staff members undertake industrial action.

Anna Rigoni
Principal
Northern School for Autism Newsletter

CAMPUS NEWS

Jacana Campus

Staffing Update
We welcome Masa Cuzekovic in room 13 this term. Helen Young has moved to Preston Campus to fill a vacancy there and will remain with Northern School for Autism into 2013. We wish Helen all the best at Preston Campus. We farewelled Cliff Tuffnell who is has resigned to peruse a career in teaching. We are also currently in the recruitment process for staffing for 2013. We intend to appoint our new staff for 2013 as early as possible and this will assist in the preparations and staffing allocations for 2013. I will also be commencing Long Service Leave from the 26th October until 16th November. Sue Johnston will be in the Acting Campus Principal role for this 3 week period. Please contact Sue during this time for any campus specific issues.

Class Groups for 2013
It is our intention to advise staff of the class groups and staffing on Friday 14th December. I have received a few telephone calls already for request for 2013. Whilst we try our best to accommodate family requests there are often a number of factors that are taken into consideration when placing students in classes and allocating staff. Whilst we try to accommodate requests, at times it is not possible due to the complex nature of this particular task. Please discuss any particular needs with your child’s sub school leader as they know your child best.

Family Support Meetings - term 4
Wednesday 24/10/12
Informal coffee and chat

Wednesday 7/11/12
Interchange North West- Recreational activities for children and young people with disabilities

Wednesday 21/11/12
TBA

Wednesday 12/12/12
End of year celebration

Special Lunch Order Day
Thursday 13 December. More information will be provided from your child’s teacher later in the term.

Prep Orientation Days
We are currently processing all new prep applications for 2013. Prep Orientation will be held on Thursday 6th and Thursday 13th December. It a really exciting time for our new families and we will also invite them to the last family support meeting in term 4 so they can have a chat and meet some of the staff and other families.

Corinne Pupillo
Campus Principal
SISTER SCHOOLS

The Northern School for Autism, which is currently located in Tyler Street Preston, will relocate to new purpose built facilities in Reservoir on the former site of Burbank Primary School early in 2013. The facilities will include twenty classrooms, specialist areas, administration and staff amenities.

The school is one of a number of specialist schools which operate within the Northern Metropolitan Region of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The Jacana Campus of the Northern School for Autism in Jacana will become a separate school from the commencement of 2013 with its own Principal and School Council.

Up until now NSA has been operating across three campuses, a Prep to Year 12 campus in Jacana, a Junior/Middle Years campus in Preston and a Senior Campus in Lalor.

Northern School for Autism began operating at the Preston site at the beginning of 2006 when the then School Council of the former Preston Special Developmental School, after consultation with the school community, put a request to the Minister for Education to change its focus and to become a school for autism. The request was approved.

At this time Western Autistic School operated a campus in Jacana and shared a school site with Jacana Primary School. It was considered appropriate to transfer this campus to the Northern School for Autism. Thus NSA opened in 2006 with 47 students at the Jacana Campus and 37 students at the Preston Campus.

The Senior Campus of NSA began operating in Lalor at the commencement of 2012 and shares a school site with Peter Lalor Secondary College. It currently caters for up to 40 students and will continue to operate as a campus of NSA.

The enrolments at the Jacana and Preston campuses have increased significantly over time with the current enrolment at Jacana reaching over 170 students and Preston over 120 students. The age range the school caters for has gradually increased over this time with the older students turning 18 this year. With the move to new premises the NSA (Reservoir and Lalor campuses) will have a combined capacity of 184 students.

In 2011 after a lengthy consultation process with the school community the School Council, due to the growth in enrolments and the location, made a request to the Minister for Education and Early
Childhood Development that the Jacana Campus become an autonomous school from the commencement of 2013. It was envisaged from the outset of the establishment of the school that as the school grew the Jacana Campus would evolve into an autonomous school. The Jacana Primary School had vacated the site at the end of 2009 to become part of the Broadmeadows Valley Primary School and so the school for autism could utilise the whole school site from this time.

The Minister has given approval for the Jacana Campus to become a separate school from the commencement of 2013 with the interim name of the Jacana School for Autism. This change will mean minimal, if any, disruption for students and staff. The school will have a capacity of around 180 students.

It is anticipated that the two schools will continue to have a close relationship, sharing professional learning opportunities and resource development.

Both schools will continue to provide comprehensive, individually designed, educational programs for students with Autism. The five key learning areas are; Literacy and Communication, Numeracy, Interpersonal Learning, Personal Learning and The Arts. Specialist teachers provide Visual Art, Music and Physical Education.

The opportunities for students with autism and their families continue to flourish within the Northern Region.

It is an exciting time for the school community.

For further information contact;

Ms Anna Rigoni, Principal, Northern School for Autism, Telephone, 9478 9711

Ms Corinne Pupillo, Campus Principal, Jacana Campus of NSA, Telephone, 9309 6258
Art has been a very popular specialist session in all our Early Years rooms. Room 8 have been doing some wonderful art work.
EYB
Room 1 & 3 Travel Training
and Melbourne Museum
Middle Years Footy Day!

Footy Day was lots of fun! We all played together and kicked goals, made hand ball passes, and enjoyed the spirit of football finals all in our favourite team colours!
Middle Years Welcome you back to a new and exciting term. There is lots to learn and we are excited to welcome Masa (Teacher) and Carly (Education Support) into our Sub School in Room 13, where some extra students have moved to keep them company, and everyone is already hard at work! On Wednesday 24th October we are having some special furry and scaly guests join us for a school based excursion (an incursion!) We can’t wait to meet some Australian Animals here at school. Make sure you get your permission forms signed and returned. It’s been a cold start but we’re warming up for a fun filled term!
Later Years students celebrated Footy Day by having their special footy lunches and fun activities in the afternoon. The weather in the morning was not looking good but by lunchtime, the sun was smiling and the students were ready for some fun. The students practiced their AFL and soccer goal kicking and AFL handball skills. The students had lots of fun playing “What’s the time Mr Football” and ‘Football, football, goal” otherwise known as duck, duck goose. Staff fitness levels were tested when they had to run hard when chased by students. There were lots of laughs and both staff and students enjoyed the activities.
Changes to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for 2013:

The EMA continues to help families on lower incomes with financial assistance to cover the cost of educational expenses including textbooks, stationery, uniforms and excursions for their child up until the age of 16.

From 2013, the Victorian Government is restructuring the EMA to better target financial support to families on lower incomes. Payments made direct to parents will be increased for eligible recipients at all year levels up to age 16, with an additional increase for parents with students in Years Prep and 7 in recognition of the additional costs at those transition points.

In 2013 the annual EMA payment for families with children in primary school (years 1-6) will receive a payment of $150. Families with children in secondary school (Year 8 up until the age of 16) will receive an annual payment of $250.

The School Start Bonus which was previously received by EMA families has been discontinued as a separate payment from 2013. However, additional funding has been incorporated into the EMA meaning that parents of children in Prep and Year 7 will receive boosted EMA payments of $200 and $300 respectively in those years.

From 2013, the EMA will no longer be paid 50/50 between the parent and the school. The 50% school portion of the EMA will no longer be paid to schools on behalf of parents. However, $62 million over four years will be redirected to the State’s most needy schools to assist families on lower incomes. These funds will form part of the school Student Resource Packages to be allocated at the local level.

New EMA payment option

From 2013, on the EMA application form you can choose to have your EMA payment;

- Paid by direct deposit (Electronic Funds Transfer) into your nominated bank account or
- Paid by cheque which will be posted to the school for collection or
- Paid to the school to be held as credit which you can use towards education expenses

The introduction of the new payment option to have the EMA payment directed to the school provides parents with extra flexibility to assist with budgeting towards education expenses.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for the EMA in 2013, you must:

- be either a parent or guardian of a primary or secondary school student up to the age of sixteen; and
- be an eligible beneficiary of a Centrelink pension, allowance or benefit within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 2004* or be a Veterans Affairs (TPi) pensioner or be a temporary foster parent.

* i.e – the parent/guardian must be the holder of a valid Health Care Card or valid Pension Card.

The eligibility criteria must be met as at 29 January 2013 (Instalment One) and 15 July 2013 (Instalment Two).
Payment Amounts - 2013:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prep</th>
<th>Years 1 - 6</th>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Year 8 – Age 16</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instalment One</td>
<td>$140</td>
<td>$105</td>
<td>$210</td>
<td>$175</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instalment Two</td>
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<td>$45</td>
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<td>$75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Total</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$250</td>
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</tbody>
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*Student year level (or age for ungraded and special school students) will determine the amount payable. Parents of students turning 16 years in 2013 are paid on a pro rata basis.

Contact: School Office for an EMA application form and to lodge your application. The closing date for EMA application forms to be submitted to the school is 28 February 2013.
Financial Assistance - Information for New Parents

Jacana School for Autism

Financial assistance available to parents with children commencing school in 2013

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA):
The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is provided by the Victorian Government to lower-income families to help with education-related costs.

If you have a child under 16, and hold a valid Health Care Card, Pension Card, or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible to receive the EMA. The allowance is paid in two instalments, one in March and one in August.

The payment is intended to assist with education-related costs such as; uniforms, excursions, textbooks, and stationery. You can elect to have your EMA paid in one of the following ways:

- Paid by direct deposit (Electronic Funds Transfer) into your own nominated bank account; or
- Paid to the school to be held as credit which you can use towards education expenses; or
- Paid by cheque which will be posted to the school for collection.

In 2013, the annual EMA amount is:

- $200 for prep students
- $150 for students in years 1 - 6.
- $300 for year 7 students
- $250 for students in year 8 – until age 16.

How to Apply: Contact the school office to complete an application form for the EMA.

Closing Date: Parents/guardians need to lodge an EMA application form by 28 February 2013.

For more information about the EMA, visit www.education.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/financial/ema.htm

Schoolkids Bonus:
From January 2013, a new payment called the 'Schoolkids Bonus' will be introduced by the Commonwealth Government. The Schoolkids Bonus will be paid by Centrelink in January and July each year to help families with school costs.

Families receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A will receive:

- up to $410 for each child in primary school
- up to $820 for each child in secondary school.

For more information about the Schoolkids Bonus, visit www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/information/schoolkids-bonus
Dear Parents/Carers,
In order to get into the Christmas spirit we have been invited by the Lions Club of Glenroy to once again participate in their project called “Letters from Father Christmas”.
All you need to do is read the 6 letters that have been attached and choose the one you would like your child to receive.

If you are interested please fill out the form below and return it to the school attached with $3.00 by Monday 20th November 2012.

--------------------------------------------------
Childs Name:____________________________________

Number of chosen letter:__________________________

Address:_________________________________________

Contact Number:_________________________________

Please have this slip returned by the 20th November 2012
LETTER #1

HO, HO, HO,

It’s almost Christmas time again, and I am writing to tell you that I am looking forward to visiting your house after I have brought there by my wonderful reindeers in my sleigh.

Some children go away at Christmas. Others stay at home, but do not worry my reindeers are very clever, they always find every child who expects me to visit.

Even if someone’s house does not have a chimney, I have magic which allows me to get in. Actually, I don’t like chimneys very much. MY SANTA suit gets dirty and my reindeers have to lick it clean, but they have magic too so it doesn’t take very long.

I hope you like what I bring and that you have a very happy day with your friends and people who love you.

Your friend,
Father Christmas

LETTER #2

Dear ________,

My reindeers have been groomed by my helpers to be ready for our long trip to visit you on Christmas Eve. They will have plenty to eat before we leave the North Pole in the sleigh with many sacks of presents. They have been doing their work for a long time now and are very fit. They love the chance to take to the sky with me. I am sure that you will like what we bring to your house. Perhaps you will get a big surprise.

I hope that you have a lot of fun with friends and the people who care for you.

Your friend,
Father Christmas

LETTER #3

Dear ________,

Another big sack of letters has arrived at my workshop at the North Pole, where I am very busy with Mrs Clause and my helpers getting ready for my long trip to Australia.

Your letter was among the mail delivered to me today. Thank you for writing to me. I love to receive letters and drawings from children in many parts of the world.

I will do my best to bring you what you would like for Christmas. Sometime many children ask for the same things and I run out of certain presents, but you will know that I will choose your special gift, maybe more, with care and love.

I hope you and your friends and loved ones will have a very happy and peaceful day.

Your friend,
Father Christmas
LETTER #4

Dear ____________,

It was a fantastic surprise to open your letter at the North Pole. I receive many letters but each one makes me so happy. Thank you for sending your letter to me.

Some children ask for only one present, others send a long list. I always try to bring what they want when my reindeers land me and my sleigh on so many roof tops. But sometimes, the sleigh is so heavy that I cannot carry everything each child has asked me for, but I’ll do my best to bring you the next best thing if my sleigh is too full. I am sure that what I leave for you will make you happy.

Mrs Clause and my helpers are working non-stop to be ready in time for Christmas Eve but I know we will make it in time for my long trip. The reindeers have been ready to leap into the sky for weeks although they are tired when they return home.

Enjoy Christmas day with the people who love you, with lots of fun and yummy things to eat.

Your friend,
Father Christmas

LETTER #5

Dear ____________,

Your letter has arrived at the North Pole. What a wonderful surprise, thank you for writing to me. I do hope to be able to bring you what you would like. But sometimes my sleigh is very heavy and I can’t deliver everything that every child wants. Yet I am sure that on Christmas day, you will be happy with what I deliver from my sleigh when I land on your roof with my reindeers.

I am still busy with Mrs Clause and my helpers but the reindeers are ready to go. They get very excited about flying across the world just once a year.

Have lots of fun on Christmas day with everyone who loves you, I am sure you will have a fantastic time with lots of good food to eat.

Your friend,
Father Christmas

LETTER #6

Dear ____________,

It is so cold here at the North Pole so I am really looking forward to visiting Australia during your summer at Christmas. I was so pleased to receive your letter. I showed it to Mrs Clause and my helpers. Some children also send drawings which my helpers pin up on the wall.

I hope that I can bring you the special present you would like but if it is not the exact gift that you have wanted, I am sure it will make you very happy.

We are working very hard to make sure that all the presents are ready in time for Christmas Eve to be opened by children in most parts of the world the morning after. We are so busy we do not feel cold so much in my workshop but it will be different when my reindeers pull my sleigh from some places which are cold to other which are hot.

I hope you and your family and friends who will share your Christmas day will have a wonderful time and that you enjoy many more in the future when I visit you again.

Your friend,
Father Christmas
Genetic test could predict the risk of autism in infants

Kate Hagan  
Published: September 13, 2012 - 3:00AM

A GENETIC test to predict a baby's risk of developing autism has been developed by Melbourne researchers, paving the way for earlier intervention to improve behaviour and functioning.

Research led by Melbourne University identified 237 markers in 146 genes that predicted a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder in 70 per cent of cases.

Neuropsychologist Renee Testa said children were often diagnosed with autism at age three or four and only after there was "a significant and negative impact on a child's level of functioning".

She said in some instances clinicians still had doubts about whether a child had autism and needed to monitor their behaviour over another year.

Dr Testa said waiting for an autism diagnosis placed a significant burden on children and parents and delayed interventions such as speech therapy and social skills training.

"If we can do something to alleviate that burden, that's fantastic," she said.

While some genetic markers are known to increase an individual's risk of developing autism, researchers also identified for the first time markers that protected against it.

Their insights into the complex interaction of genes that contribute to autism raise the possibility that drugs could be developed to turn genes on and off to treat the disorder.

Melbourne researchers developed the test using data from 7500 people, including 3300 diagnosed with autism.

They analysed genetic make-up, giving an increased score for autism markers and reduced score for protective markers to accurately predict an autism diagnosis in 70 per cent of cases.

Lead researcher Stan Skafidas said the findings meant that a blood test could be used to predict autism in babies, in a breakthrough by a team from Melbourne and Monash universities and Melbourne and Austin Health reported in the journal Molecular Psychiatry.

He said further studies were needed to replicate the findings including to identify children at risk and follow them up over a period of years.

Professor Skafidas, director of Melbourne University's Centre for Neural Engineering, said the test was not accurate enough to predict an autism diagnosis before birth.

But it would be useful to families with a history of autism, he said, and "could be a normal test that is administered to every child at six months of age in order to determine whether they are at risk". Professor Skafidas said the study showed there was "a very important genetic component" to the development of autism spectrum disorders, but environmental factors could play a role.

About one in 150 children are born with autism, which affects about 150,000 Australians.
Stephanie Baker, whose sons both have disorders on the autism spectrum, said obtaining diagnoses for her boys was a long process. Robert, 5, has Asperger’s syndrome and Hamish, 3, has autism.

"Robbie, because he's high functioning, it got brushed under the table a lot," she said. "It wasn't until three months ago that he was diagnosed. It was the best thing that could've happened; finally I can understand him and how to help him ... the sooner you intervene, the better the results."

For people under 18, sexting is illegal and penalties can be very serious.

What is ‘sexting’?

'Sexting' means sending sexually explicit photos or videos electronically (e.g. by mobile phone, app, chat, social networking or email).

With modern technology this can be done instantly, but it can have serious and lasting consequences.

What are the possible consequences of ‘sexting’?

Once digital images are sent, there is no way to get them back. They are not private, and they are permanent. They can resurface again when least expected, such as during a job application. They can be published and found by anyone, including friends, family members, complete strangers, and sexual predators. Images can be used to bully and harass.

Possible legal consequences

For people under 18, sexting is illegal. It is a criminal offence to take, possess, or transmit a naked image of a person under the age of 18 years. It doesn’t matter how you came to possess the image. It doesn’t matter if you took a photo of yourself and willingly sent or published it. It doesn’t matter if the person in the image is your girl- or boy- friend or if you are the same age. You cannot 'give someone permission' to break the law. Penalties for these offences are very serious and can result in being placed on the sex offender’s register.

What are the reasons for ‘sexting’?

Young people are naturally curious and interested in exploring sexuality. They are also exposed to a wide range of sexual imagery, in songs, video clips, movies, advertising and online. This can promote the idea that sexual behaviour has no repercussions. Unfortunately the reality is more complicated and young people often only become aware of this after the event.

The Pew Internet Project and the University of Michigan (2009) conducted six focus groups with middle and high school students in three cities as part of a wider study. In this study teens described the pressure they feel to share sexually explicit images. One high school girl wrote:

> When I was about 14-15 years old, I received/sent these types of pictures. Boys usually ask for them or started that type of conversation. My boyfriend, or someone I really liked asked for them and I felt like if I didn’t do it, they wouldn’t continue to talk to me. At the time, it was no big deal but now looking back it was definitely inappropriate and over the line.
Talk with your child.

Ensure that you regularly talk with your children about their experiences with communications technology. Ask them what they have seen or done, and if they have had any problems.

Make sure that you continually reinforce to your children that nothing is so bad that they can’t talk to you about it. Let them know that they should come and tell you when they have any problems, if they see something that they know is wrong, or anything that upsets them.

Children often fear telling a parent an issue as they think this will result in blocking access. Don’t threaten to disconnect your child – this will only cause them to keep problems hidden from you.

What do I do if I find explicit images of my child?

- Don’t yell, scream or panic. Try to remain calm. It is really important to be able to speak rationally to your child about this issue.
- Talk to them about your concerns or suspicions and allow them time to respond.
- Try to work out how/where this has happened and who else may be involved. Where are the images now? Who may have them?
- Make an appointment to speak to someone at the school such as a counsellor, teacher, or principal, and let them know what has occurred.
- Be aware that in some instances, police may need to be involved and schools have certain obligations in relation to the reporting of incidents. Please don’t withhold information from the school because you are concerned about police involvement. Police are very well placed to deal with these issues and have tools to minimise the impact. They have the ability to retrieve data and trace electronic communication. The important thing is to act as soon as you are aware.
- If you believe that the ‘sexting’ is a result of your child being the victim of an online sexual predator rather than adolescent naivety, please notify the police immediately.
NEWSLETTER: SEXTING

'Sexting' means sending sexually explicit photos or videos electronically (e.g. by mobile phone, app, chat, social networking or email). With modern technology this can be done instantly, but it can have serious and lasting consequences.

For people under 18, sexting is illegal. It is a criminal offence to take, possess, or transmit a naked image of a person under the age of 18 years. It doesn’t matter if your child took their own photo and willingly sent or published it. You cannot ‘give someone permission’ to break the law. Penalties for these offences are very serious and can result in your child being placed on the sex offender’s register.

It is important that you regularly talk to your child about their experiences with communications technology. Make sure that you continually reinforce that your child should come to you if they have any problems, if they see something that they know is wrong or anything that upsets them.

If you require further support, please speak to your school principal or student wellbeing co-ordinator.
“Social Stories” (developed by Carol Gray), can be a very effective tool for increasing a child’s understanding of many social situations.

Do you want to know how to write “Social Stories”? This workshop will consist of the theory associated with “Social Stories”, and time to practice writing them.

Who should attend:

- Parents of Preschool, Prep, Grade 1 & 2 children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and
- Professionals working with young children in Preschool, Childcare, Family Day Care, Early Childhood Intervention, and Early Years Primary School with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- We suggest that the Early Childhood Professional and the parent attend together so you can write a story for the child

When: Tuesday 30th October 2012 from 6.30pm to 8.30pm

Where: Broad Insight Group
        Bluebird Way Child & Family Centre
        12-14 Bluebird Way, Roxburgh Park
        Melway 179 H2

Cost: Professionals $30, Parents - Donation

There are limited places so please book early

Bookings: Jenny Orso (Mon - Thurs 8.30am – 3.30pm)
          During school terms

Phone: 9435 8311

Cheques payable to: ‘Kalparrin N-ASD Network’ Direct Debit available ABN: 61 827 714 605
Invoice/Receipt available upon request. Payment requested at time of booking