

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 02

25 MARCH 2026

DATES TO REMEMBER

Thursday 26th March

NDIS Information Exchange Meetings

Thursday 2nd April

Last Day of Term 1 ~
Students will be dismissed one hour earlier.

Monday 20th April

First Day of Term 2

Wednesday 13th May

School Photos

Monday 18th May

NDIS Information Exchange Meetings

Tuesday 26th May

Student-Free Day

Monday 8th June

King's Birthday Public Holiday.

Thursday 18th June

NDIS Information Exchange Meetings

Friday 26th June

Last Day of Term 2 ~
Students will be dismissed one hour earlier.

Monday 13th July

First Day of Term 3

Thursday 20th August

Student-Free Day

Friday 18th September

Last Day of Term 3

Monday 5th October

First Day of Term 4



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Bayside SDS Acknowledges the Bunurong Peoples of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Owners and Custodians, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging

Principal & Acting Assistant Principal's Report

Thanks to those that were able to attend our Parent and Carer Expo on Monday. We had an excellent turnout of providers, who were all very keen to share information about their services with families and staff. Thank you to Mariana for again coordinating the afternoon, putting in a great effort to ensure we had a range of service providers. Mariana responded to parent feedback from previous years, and encouraged providers to be clear about the services they provide. Any further feedback would be welcomed.

On Tuesday, a number of our staff took industrial action, demonstrating not only their solidarity but also their strong commitment to shaping a fair and sustainable future for education in Victoria. We thank them for taking this strong stance and also thank staff who helped manage the school on the day, adjusting arrangements to ensure the wellbeing of students. Thank you to families for your support and your early feedback about student attendance on the day was much appreciated.

This week, two of our school leaders (Carly and Llywela) are taking part in professional learning through the Principals Association of Specialist Schools (PASS). It is fantastic that our next group of school leaders are beginning to make connections through this important organisation.

PASS is the peak professional body representing leaders of Victorian Department of Education specialist schools for students with disabilities. It serves school leaders by ensuring specialist school perspectives shape statewide policy and curriculum. PASS includes more than 200 members across all Victorian specialist schools. Abby and I continue to build strong connections through our PASS colleagues, and we will participate in the annual PASS conference in May.

Bayside SDS staff have recently participated in professional learning in Respectful Relationships, and will shortly continue our work in Positive Classroom Management Strategies (PCMS), planning as a team to ensure this initiative is rolled out in a way that meets the needs of our students, and is supported with resources and appropriate adaptations. Gemma, in her role as Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, is supporting this and working with James Marnell, our PCMS coach – through a DoE funded initiative.

Next week staff will continue to work with the Australian Childhood Foundation, in our professional learning around trauma informed practice. Trauma-informed practice recognises that a student's experiences can influence how they learn, behave, and connect with others. In special education, this approach aligns closely with existing philosophies that prioritise understanding the whole child, adapting the environment, and responding with empathy. By creating predictable routines, fostering strong relationships, and reducing sensory and emotional triggers, trauma-informed practice supports students' wellbeing and helps them feel safe, regulated, and ready to learn - key to effective learning for our students.

This term our senior students have participated in basketball sessions here at the school with McKinnon Basketball Association. Next term, three upper-junior classes will attend a series of gymnastics sessions at the Waverly Gymnastics Centre Oakleigh. We are also looking at some additional and engaging activities for our junior students – more information to come.

School Council

Thank you to the parents who nominated for School Council. We are very fortunate to have nominations for the positions available, so no election was needed. We continue to enjoy a healthy mix of members with various life and professional experiences. Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 30 March at 7pm, where council roles will be decided and we will share our 2025 annual report. Highlights will include:

The development of evidence-based practices supported teaching and learning, with a clear focus on key teaching strategies. Teachers worked together in professional learning communities to review student data, take part in peer observations, and learn from one another. The Southside Café gave students useful, real-life learning experiences.

Student wellbeing was supported through trauma-informed approaches, ongoing staff training, and regular check-ins that helped us measure student wellbeing. Our Wellbeing PLC used this information to improve routines and supports. The Mental Health Practitioner provided extra help for students and families, and programs like Respectful Relationships supported social skills and safety.

The Parent and Carer Group and the Information Expo helped families learn about services and supports. Students shared their views through a school survey, and staff provided opportunities for them to make choices, take part in activities, and build independence

NDIS Exchange Meetings

Our allied health team will again be offering NDIS Exchange meetings with students' external therapists to share important information. These meetings enable the coordination of home and school goals and strategies. The dates for upcoming meetings are Monday 18th May and Thursday 18th June. Please communicate with your class teacher if you would like to arrange an NDIS exchange meeting.

It's hard to believe we are approaching the end of Term 1. Looking on the bright side, we still have three big terms ahead, with lots of opportunities for learning, fun and time together as a community.

Justin & Abby

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From the classrooms!

EEP ~ Carly & Aura

Last week in EEP we celebrated Harmony Day (Week) focusing on the colour orange in lots of activities in the classroom. Orange is used to represent respect, inclusion and a sense of belonging for everyone.

There was something hands-on for everyone to explore, make, and interact with including our orange sensory play – a mix of dyed chickpeas, rice, orange ribbons and orange balloons, where students explored different textures and materials. We used all the corresponding rich play language such as, “in, out, pour, more, look!, listen!, feel, full, and empty”. We also had a great time making orange playdough, with lots of squishing, rolling and cutting.

As part of crafting activities, we made love hearts with cut up or ripped up pieces of orange paper representing kindness and friendship in our room. We did attempt making a paper chain ... which quickly turned into something different - paper crowns!

Motor control, bilateral coordination, hand strength, pre-writing skills and finger isolation have been a big focus in our mornings with our rotating table activities. It is always great to see that on the second day of an activity, students are more aware of the expectations and enjoy greater success.

Room E4 ~ Natasha & Paddy

E4 has been diving into the world of construction through the story *Roadworks*, and the room has been full of energy as students brought each part of the book to life. The class has been exploring the language, rhythm and action of the text by acting out the different stages of building a road. From digging and lifting to rolling and paving, the students have been using big movements, strong gestures and expressive voices to match the action on each page.

Isaac has been especially enthusiastic during the loud truck moments, while Khizr throws himself into the digging scenes with focus and determination. Xavier enjoys the steady rhythm of the rolling machines, and Zaylan lights up during the dramatic “crunch” and “crack” sound moments, while Ema has been joining in with growing confidence, watching her peers and matching the actions beautifully. Taiga has shown great engagement during the building and lifting sections, using clear, purposeful movements.

It's been a fantastic blend of literacy, movement and imagination.

Room E5 ~ Cheryl, Lucy & Danielle

E5 Are On the Go!

“Go” has become the word of the term in E5. Whether students are pressing the Big Mac switch, finding the symbol on Proloquo2Go or the PODD home page, or using the giant core board, everyone is loving the excitement of an action about to begin.

Each student has their own favourite way to go: Tommaso likes to “go” and get his lunchbox. Leilani likes to “go” up and down in the hoist. Cate likes to “go” and press the video for *The Ants Go Marching*. Evie likes to “go” and press her photo on the board. Chester likes to “go” and jump on the trampoline.

We also love to “GO” up to the gym on Wednesday mornings. It's a new transition for some students and is quickly becoming a weekly highlight. Waiting for us each time is a giant, colourful ball that's ready to “GO” the moment we arrive.

Cate, Chester, Tommaso, Evie and Zayd have all enjoyed rolling, tapping, hitting and pushing the big ball - but the favourite activity is the chase, sprinting across the gym as the ball scoots along the floor, sometimes even seeming to “follow” a few students too.

Room E6 ~ Llywela, Karryn, Emma & Vania

There have been so many things to celebrate in E6!

Certificates handed out during our weekly school assembly have highlighted some of the wonderful achievements we've already seen:

Jordan: following instructions to put his lunchbox away in his tub;

Khang: using a photo to independently find the Imagination Station;

Raghav: using his iPad at lunchtime to say, "I want more";

Adele: answering the telephone call from Southside Café and letting everyone know it's time to go;

Hannah: following all the steps of the Southside Café program in sequence.

Adele, Raghav, and Khang have loved their opportunity to participate in the swimming program with Katherine. As expected, there has been some reluctance to get out of the water at the end of each session!

Everyone has been excited to see the Southside Café reopen on Fridays. Chocolate mousse continues to be very popular and is the most-ordered item on the menu so far.

We hope everyone enjoys the upcoming Easter / school holiday break. We look forward to all that Term 2 brings when students return.

Room N1 ~ Penny & Marion

During the last half of Term one in N1, we have been very busy learning about numbers and repeating patterns. During our reading sessions, we had lots of fun with sensory stories and enjoying the experiences through objects, images, sounds, and song.

N1 has enjoyed the swimming and science cooking program experiencing lots of changes in both food and combining simple kitchen pantry products.

Aaliyah enjoyed our work on the letter Ww. Ww is for Winter. Winter time is wonderful.

Loki looked dashing with his Ww wig. What a beautiful smile on Wednesday.

Mamoud thoroughly enjoyed 'purple day,' perusing the purple outfits everyone wore on the day.

Naila has loved class music, keeping time by tapping the drum to the beat.

Nicholas followed directions on his ALD to mix food dye and oil.

Tida has enjoyed time outside, making friends and sharing her blue ball with friends.

Room N2 ~ Gemma, Mel & Julia

Thank you to all families who attended SSG meetings. It was wonderful to hear your aspirations for your children and learn more about life at home. Following these conversations, IEPs are being finalised and will come home next week. We are excited about the new format, especially the addition of the Individual Goal, which is curriculum-linked yet deeply personal and meaningful for families.

Many goals focus on independence and align well with Health and Physical Education. The boys have also been developing their Personal and Social Capabilities, building their understanding of expectations and daily routines. It has been lovely to see their growing autonomy. James is working on greetings and caring for his belongings, while Arya enjoys lining up and preparing for transitions.

Maths and English continue to be a major focus. Harry has been practising one-to-one counting, Patrick is exploring adding and taking away, Franco is working on initial sounds and CVC words using sensory materials, and Mitchell is sorting and distinguishing between letters and objects.

The boys approach learning with enthusiasm, and with IEPs soon finalised, their individualised progress will continue to grow. Great work, N2!

Room N3 ~ Gloria & Dearbhla

Hi Everyone,

As we race toward the end of Term 1, our dynamic group has certainly been busy. We've been making the most of garden walks, checking on what's growing, and were very excited to spot pumpkins. This week we picked juicy green capsicums - some enjoyed them with lunch - and we also smelled and tasted dill and spring onions.

During Shared Reading we've been exploring the story *Emergency!* and having lots of fun using the programmable voice buttons. Last week's cooking session was sausages and chips, which were a hit for some students, while others preferred their familiar lunches.

Our Friday visits to the Southside Café continue to be a highlight, choosing a treat and saying hello to friends from the West Wing.

We were glad to see Kayla return last week; she's on light duties for now and not yet back in the classroom. In the meantime, Dearbhla has been filling in beautifully. Sadly, this week will be her last before she heads off on an adventure to New Zealand and then home to Ireland. Thank you, Dearbhla, for everything.

Room W2 ~ Marshall, Jacqui & Bridget

It's hard to believe that Term One is almost done! It has been a fantastic start to the year, with students settling into routines, building confidence, and embracing all the learning opportunities on offer.

One of the clear highlights for students has been our weekly trips to Woolworths to purchase items for the café. Students have loved reading shopping lists, locating items using aisle numbers, scanning products, and using the card to pay. These real-world experiences have been incredibly valuable, and the bus trips into the community are always a favourite.

Sensory Science has also been a big hit this term. Students have enjoyed measuring and mixing ingredients to create a range of sensory materials, including slime, playdough, kinetic sand, and cloud dough. These hands-on activities have been both engaging and fun.

We have also been busy in the garden, planting lettuce and learning how to care for it. Students have taken pride in watering and watching their plants grow.

It's been a wonderful term, and we look forward to more exciting learning ahead!

Room W3 ~ Ka Ling & Mark

Term 1 has flown by, and we are already nearing the end of a busy and enjoyable start to the year. We celebrated two special milestones, with Archer and Sam both turning 14.

In Mathematics, students have been exploring Measurement using both formal and informal units. Archer and Kanata have been particularly engaged in measuring and comparing objects with Unifix Cubes. Bike Riding has also been a highlight, with Dylan and Chris showing enthusiasm and developing confidence each week.

We have been doing shared reading around the book *Aussie's Easter Hat Parade*. Students have been creating their own Easter hats and discussing detail on a parade to showcase their hats. Constantine showed great focus and creativity while decorating his hat.

Each Friday, W3 has taken on customer service roles at the Southside Café. The class has worked together to ensure smooth service, and a special mention goes to Sam for confidently using a speech output button to invite classrooms to attend.

It has been a wonderful Term 1. Wishing all families a restful holiday break, and we look forward to more learning adventures in Term 2.

Room W4 ~ Kate, Charles & Anouk

We've had a great few weeks in W4 as everyone settles into the year. With a big year of 18th birthdays ahead, we kicked things off celebrating Tommy's Golden Birthday ... 18 on the 18th. It was wonderful to see him enjoying the day with his family, classmates, and staff who have appreciated his company over the years. There was plenty of food, dancing, karaoke, and cake, and by the end we were all happily exhausted.

In class, we've been busy cooking (milkshakes and carrot cake), practising personal care and room-tidying routines, working on cut-and-paste fine motor skills, and getting active with our energetic basketball coaching sessions.

Will has been reading *All Around Australia*; Kate and Ellie have loved getting back on the Rifton trike; Tommy has thrown himself into basketball; Sam has been joining in songs with his cheerful "La, la, la..."; and Sara has been keeping the beat on the washboard during our percussion jams.

Good work, W4!

Are you a parent or primary caregiver of a child with an intellectual disability?

Is your child between the ages of 3 and 10?

Do you want to receive \$40 for speaking about your experience?



We are conducting an important study looking at the emotional challenges that parents and primary caregivers of children with intellectual disabilities can face



TO READ THE CONSENT FORM AND SEE IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE CLICK ON THE FOLLOWING LINK OR USE THE QR CODE:

<https://tinyurl.com/ParentingIDstudy>



THIS STUDY INVOLVES PARTICIPATING IN ONE 45 MINUTE ONLINE INTERVIEW & COMPLETING TWO QUESTIONNAIRES

KEY OUTCOMES:

- Identify key emotional and relational needs of parents
- Highlight gaps in current parent support services
- Inform future development of tailored support programs

THIS RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED OUT OF THE UTS GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HEALTH BY JACK MAZARAKI (Jack.Mazaraki@student.uts.edu.au)

ETHICS APPROVAL NUMBER: ETH21-6431

My name is Mariana, and as the Bayside SDS NDIS Navigator, I support parents and carers in understanding, navigating, and accessing the range of NDIS-funded supports available to their children. I provide guidance and advice to help them build their capacity to advocate effectively and choose appropriate services. I work closely with parents, carers, school staff, and local service providers to foster strong, collaborative relationships that enhance coordination between families, schools, and NDIS supports.

Part of the role is to facilitate communication and cooperation between NDIS-funded therapists and schools by providing necessary information, documentation, and support for information exchange. When families encounter difficulties with the NDIS, I assist them in resolving issues through the most helpful channels. I also organise and deliver information sessions, including presentations from the NDIA (National Disability Insurance Agency) and local area coordinators, to raise awareness and understanding of the NDIS.

While I don't recommend specific providers, I guide families in finding and selecting the most suitable supports for their child. I help parents and carers navigate the NDIS application process, ensuring they understand the documentation and evidence required. I also inform families about their options to review and appeal their child's NDIS plan if it isn't meeting their child's needs.

At key transition points, such as when students leave school, I provide tailored guidance to support families through these changes. I collaborate with local area coordinators to ensure families have access to ongoing advice and support.

On **March 23rd** this year, we held our **annual Disability EXPO** at our school's **Jan Lake Centre**. The EXPO was very successful, and helps parents find various services for their children. We strongly encourage everyone to attend this expo as it is a great opportunity to find services that may suit your child.

I look forward to working with everyone in 2026!





Multi-Sensory Therapy Report

Jo Robinson

We have made a great start to the year during our Multi-Sensory Therapy sessions, including welcoming new students to the program: Zayd, Chester, Raghav and Aaliyah. They have all discovered the unique Multi-Sensory Environment Room, affectionately known as the Magic Room, located in the south wing of the school. This location also provides opportunities to practise transitioning to a different area within the school.

Students have been discovering how both engaging and relaxing the Bubble Columns can be, watching bubbles float from the base to the top while slowly changing colours. They have also explored how a wireless switch can be pressed to make the bubbles stop or go, demonstrating the cause and effect of their interaction with the switch. There have been many wonderful smiles, giggles and quiet, reflective moments shared.

Students have also been introduced to aromatherapy massage and have had an individual massage cream created for them using a unique blend of essential oils curated for their specific needs, for example, to support calming and balancing the central nervous system or to assist with muscle relaxation. Each student's aromatherapy massage cream is also available for use in the classroom.

Cause and effect has also been explored using the Magic Carpet, an interactive projection system capable of projecting hundreds of apps for students to engage with, ensuring there is something appropriate for each student's interests. Using a motion-detection camera, students' interactions provide instant responses or changes to the projection, such as scattering stars or popping floating bubbles. Students have also been embracing Easter, enjoying Easter-themed tactile objects and the Easter egg app projected from the Magic Carpet, where coloured eggs move around and, when interacted with, crack open to reveal a rabbit saying "yippee".

Supporting Independence Through Toileting Routines at School:

As we come to the end of Term 1, it's been wonderful to watch our students settle into their routines, grow in confidence, and take on new challenges. One area of learning that doesn't always make the spotlight—but has a huge impact on student wellbeing—is toileting. This term, we've been busy updating and refining toileting plans to make sure every child feels safe, supported, and confident throughout their day.

How Toileting Routines Support Students

A predictable toileting routine can make a world of difference for students. It helps them understand what's happening, feel secure, and build healthy habits. Across the school, our toileting plans often include:

Consistent timing and predictable routines that help students recognise patterns and reduce anxiety.

Clear communication supports, such as key word signs, visual symbols, and simple language.

Encouragement and praise, helping students feel proud of their efforts.

Responsive support, so students can go when they need to—not just at scheduled times.

These routines create a calm, reassuring experience for students during a task that can sometimes feel overwhelming.

Environmental Supports

A well-designed environment helps students feel comfortable and confident. Across the school, staff use a range of supports to make toileting safe, private, and dignified:

Handrails and steps to support safe transfers.

Privacy curtains and change tables for students who need extra assistance.

Mobility aids, such as walkers, to help students access the bathroom independently.

Hygiene materials, including pull-ups, wipes, and hygiene foam.

Calm, uncluttered spaces that help students stay focused.

Adjustable equipment that allows staff to support students safely and comfortably.

These supports help students feel secure while giving them the chance to participate as independently as possible.

Building Independence Through Everyday Skills

Across the term, we've seen students take greater ownership of their routines, showing growing confidence and capability in managing key steps themselves:

Walking to the bathroom using their mobility equipment.

Using handrails instead of relying on staff for physical support.

Completing parts of the routine independently, such as pulling up clothing or washing hands.

Following visual cues and prompts to understand each step.

Taking the time they need, with gentle reassurance along the way.

Celebrating every success, no matter how small.

Communicating in their own way, whether through speech, gesture, key word sign, or symbols.

These small moments add up to meaningful progress in students' self-care skills and confidence!

Occupational Therapy Report

Emily Challis

Looking Ahead

As we move into Term 2, we'll continue working closely with students, families, and staff to ensure toileting routines remain effective, respectful, and tailored to each child's needs. Supporting students in these essential daily skills is one of the many ways we help them grow in independence and confidence across the school year.



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