

Newsletter

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Important Dates

Book Club Online

Orders Close

Monday 16th February

Parent Coffee Morning

Thursday 19th February,
9.30am, MPR,
Reservoir Campus

Preps Start Full Time

Monday 2nd March

Labour Day

Public Holiday

Monday 9th March
No School

Last Day Term 1

Wednesday 1st April
3pm Finish

SSG Day

Thursday 2nd April
No Buses Running
Student Free Day

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Avenue,
RESERVOIR VIC 3073
Phone: (03) 9462 5990
Fax: (03) 9460 8058

Lalor Campus
35 Duncan Road,
LALOR VIC 3075
Phone: (03) 9464 3480
Fax: (03) 9464 4713



Happy New Year to all our families. We hope you enjoyed a relaxing and joyful break.

It has been wonderful to see our students return with big smiles, ready to learn, explore, and grow in 2026. We are excited for another fantastic year ahead. Our staff remain committed to creating a supportive and engaging learning environment where every student feels valued, respected, and encouraged to reach their full potential.

We are very proud of the achievements and progress our students made last year. Your involvement plays such an important role in your child's learning, and we thank you for your ongoing support and trust.

A very warm welcome to all the new families joining our community this year. We understand that starting at a new school can feel overwhelming, and please be assured that we are here to support you and your child through every step of the transition.

This year, our students can look forward to a range of exciting learning opportunities. Personalised learning will continue to be at the heart of what we do, ensuring that each student receives the support they need to shine.

Leadership Structure

The principal team is the executive leadership team responsible for the overall management of the school, delivering DE and School Council policy decisions, and leading our school strategic plan (SSP) to improve student outcomes.

Principal – Pamela Mathieson

Senior Assistant Principal – Andrea Wallace (Reservoir Campus)

Assistant Principal – Ashlea Nave (Lalor Campus)

Assistant Principal – Jackson Mathieson-Lowe (Reservoir and Lalor Campuses)

The leadership team is responsible for managing the daily operations within the school and leading our annual implementation plan (AIP) actions focused on learning and wellbeing.

Sub School Leaders:

Early Years A – Rachel Levine

Early Years B – Monica Lee

Early Years C – Stevie Parsons

Middle Years A – Tim Farley

Middle Years B – Dylan Ross

Norris Bank Satellite Rooms – Elisa Wang

Later Years A – Principal team - Ash Nave, Jackson Mathieson – Lowe and Pamela Mathieson

Later Years B – Rasheetha Prashanth Sam

Later Years C – Rhianon Parbery and Anna Scott

Later Years D – Ray So

Mobile Phones

The staff at Northern School For Autism will implement the mobile phone policy which is a Ministerial policy formally issued by the Minister for Education under section 5.2.1(2)(b) of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic). Students will be asked to keep their mobile phones turned off and locked away. Students cannot take their mobile phones on excursions. Parents will be phoned to collect their child if rules are not followed. ***The mobile phone policy is attached.***

School Council Elections

It's time of year again to renew the membership of our School Council. This year, we have vacancies for three parent members and one staff member. Nomination information will be sent out via Compass

Pamela Mathieson

Principal



MOBILE PHONES POLICY (Student Use)

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the Department's and Northern School for Autism's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones and other personal mobile devices during school hours.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Northern School for Autism and,
2. Students' personal mobile phones and other personal mobile devices brought onto school premises during school hours, including recess and lunchtime.

DEFINITIONS

A mobile phone is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network.

POLICY

Northern School for Autism understands that students may bring a personal mobile phone to school, particularly if they are travelling independently to and from school.

At Northern School for Autism:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours
- Exceptions to this policy may be applied if certain conditions are met (see below for further information)
- When emergencies occur, parents or carers should reach their child by calling the school's office.

Personal mobile phone use

In accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#) issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones must not be used at Northern School for Autism during school hours, including lunchtime and recess, unless an exception has been granted.

Where a student has been granted an exception, the student must use their mobile phone for the purpose for which the exception was granted, and in a safe, ethical and responsible manner.

Secure storage

Mobile phones owned by students at Northern School for Autism are considered valuable items and are brought to school at the owner's (student's or parent/carer's) risk. Students are encouraged not to bring a mobile phone to school unless

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there is a compelling reason to do so. Please note that Northern School for Autism does not have accident insurance for accidental property damage or theft. Students and their parents/carers are encouraged to obtain appropriate insurance for valuable items. Refer to the Northern School for Autism Personal Property Policy AND/OR the Department's [Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses policy](#).

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, Northern School for Autism will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. At Northern School for Autism students are required to store their phones in their lockers or handed into the Leadership Team to be placed in a lockable cupboard.

Enforcement

Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at Northern School for Autism may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's existing *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*.

At Northern School for Autism inappropriate use of mobile phones is **any use during school hours**, unless an exception has been granted, and particularly use of a mobile phone:

- in any way that disrupts the learning of others
- to send inappropriate, harassing or threatening messages or phone calls
- to engage in inappropriate social media use including cyber bullying
- to capture video or images of people, including students, teachers and members of the school community without their permission
- to capture video or images in the school toilets, changing rooms, swimming pools and gyms
- during exams and assessments

Exceptions

Exceptions to the policy:

- may be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met, specifically,
 - Health and wellbeing-related exceptions; and
 - Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite.
- can be granted by the Principal, or by the teacher for that class, in accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#).

The three categories of exceptions allowed under the Department's [Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#) are:

[1. Learning-related exceptions](#)

Specific exception	Documentation
For specific learning activities (class-based exception)	Individual Learning Plan
For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty	Individual Learning Plan

[2. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions](#)

Specific exception	Documentation
Students with a health condition	Student Health Support Plan

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3. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite

Specific exception	Documentation
Travelling to and from excursions	Risk assessment planning documentation
Students on excursions and camps	Risk assessment planning documentation

Where an exception is granted, the student can only use the mobile phone for the purpose for which it was granted.

Camps, excursions and extracurricular activities

Northern School for Autism will provide students and their parents and carers with information about items that can or cannot be brought to camps, excursions, special activities and events, including personal mobile phones.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to

- Out-of-School-Hours Care (OSHC)
- Out-of-school-hours events
- Travelling to and from school
- Communication Devices
- Students undertaking workplace learning activities, e.g. work experience
- Students who are undertaking VET

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in school newsletter
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Refer to NSA Policies: *Student Wellbeing and Engagement, Code of Conduct, Personal Property, Bullying Prevention and Response*

[Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#)

[Weapons — Banning, Searching and Seizing Harmful Items](#)

[Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses policy](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	5 August 2024
Consultation	The School Council was consulted and recommendations, if any, were made by 8th August 2024.
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2027 – noting that the recommended minimum review cycle for this policy is 3 to 4 years]

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northern.sch.autism@education.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au>

Room 1

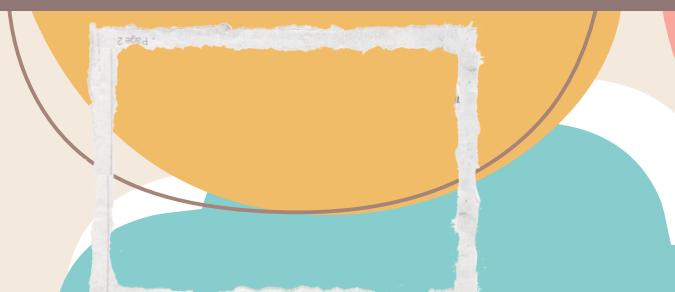
Our first weeks of school have been very exciting as we begin our schooling journey together! We are brand new to school and have been very busy exploring new spaces and meeting lots of new people. As a class, we are learning how to transition to our schedule and navigate our new school environment with confidence.

We have been working in small groups to show our teachers our amazing skills in English, Maths, Art and more. Music sessions have quickly become a class favourite, especially when we get to explore and play the instruments! Outside play is always a highlight, with our courtyard and playgrounds providing lots of opportunities to play and learn alongside our peers.

Our days are full of new experiences, fun and learning. Congratulations, Room 1, on an amazing start to your schooling journey!

Early Years

A



What a start to the year!

This term is all about teaching the brand new structures and expectations in the school settings for Rooms 1 - 5, and reinforcing and supporting students in Room 6 to continue with their English, Maths and Communication skills. Room 6 has gotten straight back into the routine and have demonstrated all the wonderful skills they have learnt last year while participating in a variety of engaging sessions.

Rooms 1 - 5 have done an incredible job at practising fundamental skills required for success at school. These skills have included learning to sit at schedule, engage with new peers, follow a structure and transition around the school. I am really proud of the success of the classroom teams and the therapists for all of their hard work. I am proud of the students for their resilience and participation in a brand new setting.

Rachael (Leading Teacher)

Welcome to LC1

What an amazing start to the year so far for LC1! My name is Tom Entwistle, I am new to NSA but already I am excited to get to work with the students. A bit about me: I love boardgames and following American football but my favourite hobby I would have to say is birding, so any birders out there feel free to drop by and we can chat about anything from Wrens to Whistling Kites.

In LC1 this term our focus is on class cohesion, we have new students from our Reservoir campus and some second years with us too, this is a great opportunity for our older students to engage in mentorship and to exhibit and promote their leadership qualities.

Our students have loved coming back to school to see their friends and our new students have fit right into our classroom as if they have always been here. Have a great year everybody!

From the NSA NDIS Navigator

Hello!

For those new to NSA this year, I'd like to introduce myself as NSA's NDIS Navigator. I've been in the role since 2024 when NDIS Navigators started to be placed in Victorian Specialist Schools.

NDIS Navigators are now in all Victoria Specialist Schools. The role of the NDIS Navigator is to support parents and carers to understand, navigate and access the supports available to them under the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme).

Some things I've helped NSA parents/carers with over the last few years include:

- *Linking in with your Local Area Coordinator**
- *Supporting you to call the NDIS with tricky questions**
- *Plan reassessments and what is good evidence to get**
- *Understanding supports that are available for carers of person with a disability**
- *Finding a local allied health therapist i.e. Speech Pathologist/Occupational Therapist**
- *Understanding NDIS funding available for post-school programs**

I work across the primary and secondary school and my work days are Tuesday (Lalor campus), Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (Reservoir campus).

Please contact me with any NDIS questions. There are no silly questions!

I can talk to you over the phone, email or you can come into the school for a meeting – whatever suits you best.

The best way to contact me is via email: alex.richards@education.vic.gov.au or call the school directly and ask to speak to me.

Thank you,

Alex Richards

NSA NDIS Navigator



Where carers can reach out for support

Do you look after a family member or friend who is ill or has a disability?

Do your caring responsibilities affect your ability to work, study or socialise?

Are you looking for some support to improve your wellbeing?

If you answered yes to any of these questions then Carer Gateway can help you.

carergateway.gov.au

1800 422 737 Monday–Friday 8am–5pm



Connecting carers  to support services

What is Carer Gateway?

Carer Gateway is the Australian Government's national carer hub providing reliable services, supports and advice specifically for carers.

Who can use Carer Gateway?

We encourage you as a carer, and your friends and family, to access the Carer Gateway to find out what types of services and supports you may be eligible for. We recognise all caring situations are unique and that's why we offer a range of services, information and advice to suit individual needs.

How will Carer Gateway help me?

Carer Gateway is the best place to start to help you navigate the many services and supports available for carers through federal, state and local government and non-government providers.

You can now access new supports to help you manage daily challenges, improve your health and wellbeing and plan for the future

Carer Gateway now offers the following services:

- Free one-on-one phone counselling with a professional counsellor over the phone if you feel stressed or overwhelmed or simply to ask for practical support.
- Self-guided online carer coaching sessions to help you reflect on how you're going, how you'd like things to be and how you might take steps towards making things happen.
- New online skills courses to help you learn new skills in caring for someone as well as yourself

- A new online forum for carers where you can register and join other carers in a supportive community. You can share stories and advice and learn from each other in a safe space.

The new supports are free to access for anyone looking after a family member or friend with disability, a medical condition, mental health condition or someone who is frail due to age.

When should I use Carer Gateway?

Research tells us that helping carers manage their daily challenges can make a big difference to a carer's life and improve your overall health and wellbeing.

We strongly encourage you to reach out to Carer Gateway as early as possible to help you get the support and skills you need for your caring journey.

What's coming next?

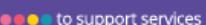
From April 2020 the Australian Government is rolling out a range of new early-intervention regional services and supports for carers. New local Carer Gateway service providers will mean that the person you talk with knows your area and can give you direct help.

If you're using carer services already, your service provider will let you know if anything changes. These changes to carer services do not affect services delivered through My Aged Care or the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), or any state or territory carer services or carer payments you may be receiving.

How do I contact Carer Gateway?

Carer Gateway offers a national website at www.carergateway.gov.au or you can phone 1800 422 737 Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm



Connecting carers  to support services

Being SunSmart in Victoria

When UV is 3+



Slip on covering clothing



Slop on SPF50, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen



Slap on a broad-brimmed hat



Seek shade



Slide on sunglasses (AS:1067)



Download the SunSmart Global UV app to find sun protection times for your location.



Scan the QR code or visit sunsmart.com.au/app to download.



Think UV, not heat! UV rays can't be seen or felt and can damage your skin on cool or cloudy days.

When UV is below 3

Sun protection isn't required unless you are outdoors for extended periods or near reflective surfaces, such as snow.

March 2023



Book
NOW

LEGO CHALLENGE

READY, SET, BUILD!

A space for kids to create,
and parents to connect.

Are you up for a Lego Challenge?
Calling all young people ages
8 – 12 to join a fun, hands-on LEGO
session guided by **Samuel Mollema**,
a past contestant on Lego Masters!

Learn tips and tricks, be inspired and
highlight your creativity as you take on
this exciting challenge.



Samuel
Mollema



Scan the QR Code
to learn more or visit
[whittlesea.vic.gov.au/
lego-challenge](http://whittlesea.vic.gov.au/lego-challenge)



City of
Whittlesea

Saturday
21 February
2pm – 4pm
**Jindi Community
Activity Centre, Mernda**

Bookings Essential. Registration closes
Thursday 19 February 2026.

Parents/carers are invited to stay
and connect with other families over
afternoon tea with activities available for
younger children. Parents can remain
onsite but will be in a separate space to
the Lego Challenge.

Issue 1 of Scholastic Book Club Online

Issue 1 Kick Start reading for 2026!

CLICK ON LINK Issue 1: [ISSUE PREVIEW](#) | Scholastic Australia

In Book Club ...

- NEW! *Bestsellers pages 2-7.
- Discover the gaming books on pages 16 & 17.
- GRAPHIC NOVELS can be found on pages 25
- Gaming & Sports titles check out page 18 & 19.
- TEEN READS details on the page 30.

Orders will close on Monday 16th February and those orders will be delivered to the school the following week.

55 Promo Codes are back in 2026

Every LOOP order on this Issue will receive a \$5 promotional code to spend on Issue 2.

Happy Reading!

NSA PARENT & CARERS COFFEE MORNING

THURSDAY 19th FEBRUARY
9:30AM MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
RESERVOIR CAMPUS
COFFEE, TEA & SNACKS
SUPPLIED

