

## Important Dates

Student Free Day  
Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November  
No classes or buses

Melbourne Cup Public  
Holiday  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November  
No classes or buses

Dental Van  
Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November to  
Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November  
RC NB LC

Reservoir Graduation  
TBC

Lalor Graduation  
TBC

Last Day Term 4  
Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December  
2pm finish

First Day Term 1 2025  
Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
9am start

**Reservoir Campus**  
16-18 Gertz Avenue  
RESERVOIR VIC  
3073

Phone: (03) 9462 5990  
Fax: (03) 9460 8058

### Lalor Campus

2 - 4 Lyndon Street  
LALOR VIC 3075

Phone: (03) 9464 3480  
Fax: (03) 9464 4713



## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Hello Parents and Carers,

Term 4 is proving to be a busy term. Next year, the Lalor Campus is opening five new classrooms, and the Reservoir Campus is opening one new classroom. The leadership team is actively recruiting teachers and education support staff for 2025.

### World Teachers Day

We celebrated World Teachers Day on Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. It was a chance to recognize and celebrate the teachers working with our students. I would like to say a big THANK YOU to all our teachers for their hard work and commitment to our school community. We could not do it without you.

### Term 4 is SunSmart

As summer approaches, it's important to stay SunSmart. Please ensure your child comes to school with a hat and sunscreen. We encourage you to apply sunscreen at home before sending your child to school. If you need help purchasing a sun hat, we can organize this through State School Relief.

### Enrolment Policy

The updated enrolment policy has been attached. Just a reminder: students are provided with 13 years of schooling. Therefore, students will graduate from Northern School for Autism after their 13<sup>th</sup> year of schooling or the year they turn 18, whichever comes first. Students who have started their schooling in another setting will still only be entitled to a total of 13 years of schooling. For example, a student starting at NSA in Year 2 will only have 11 years of schooling with us, as they have already completed 2 years at another school.

### Mobile Phone Ban

To promote a focused learning environment, we remind you of the Department of Education's mobile phone ban. Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school; if they do bring them, the phones must be locked away each morning. If students require extra support with this, we will call home for assistance.

### Excursions/Camps/Incursions/Activities

I have been really excited to see the planning involved in this term's extracurricular activities. Excursions, incursions, and camps are great ways to generalize the skills learned in the classroom and have very positive results for sustained learning.

### Child safety and wellbeing at Northern School for Autism: information for families and the school community

Northern School for Autism is committed to providing an environment where students are safe and feel safe.

Our child safety <https://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au/policies-protocols> explains how we support and maintain child safety and wellbeing at Northern School for Autism. It includes our:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Reporting and Responding Obligations Procedures, and
- Child Safety Code of Conduct, which outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviours for all staff and volunteers at our school.

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Our students and families are important partners in providing a child safe environment. These regular newsletter reminders are one of the ways we ensure our school community is aware of:

- our commitment to child safety, and
- how to provide feedback or raise child safety concerns.

As valuable partners in promoting and maintaining child safety and wellbeing at Northern School for Autism we welcome and encourage your feedback. If you have any suggestions, comments or questions in relation to our child safe policies and practices, please contact Pamela Mathieson, Principal [pamela.mathieson@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:pamela.mathieson@education.vic.gov.au)

### **Parent Payment Policy 2025**

*Our School Council is proud of the excellent quality of our facilities and resources available for our students to enjoy and few schools match the numerous programs we offer to cater for students' needs and interests. However, these do not come without extra costs.*

The Parent Payment Policy for 2025 will be emailed with the Newsletter via Compass or can be found on our website [www.northernautism.vic.edu.au/policies-protocols](http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au/policies-protocols).

This is provided in advance to enable families to plan or budget accordingly. We are not asking for payments until 2025. Curriculum Contributions and Other contributions are voluntary and are tax deductible as NSA is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

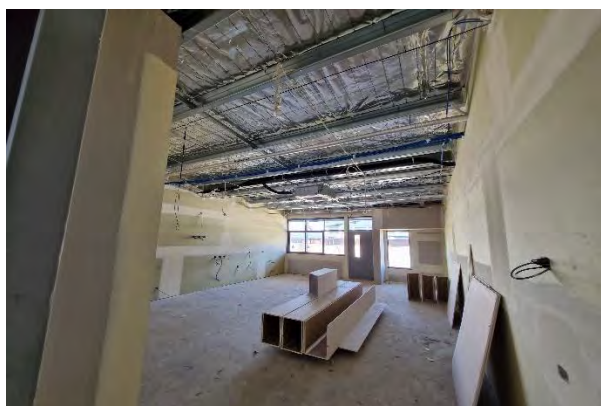
If you are unable or choose not to make financial contributions, your child will not be disadvantaged or denied access to the resources required to deliver the curriculum.

*Northern School for Autism* would like to thank all parents who have contributed towards the school this year.

If you have yet to contribute this year and would like to do so, it can be done via Compass or by contacting our Finance Manager, Christine Jacob.

### **New Building News**

Below are some photos of the new buildings. It is very exciting to see the progress each week.



**Pamela Mathieson**

**Principal**



## Enrolment Policy

### BACKGROUND

Northern School for Autism provides educational programs for students with disability and high needs who have autism.

By law in Victoria all children from the age of 6 up until they turn 17 years must be enrolled at a registered school or registered for home schooling unless they have a reasonable excuse. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with a comprehensive educational program and access to support networks. It also helps to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and active participation in their local community.

Specialist schools, including Northern School for Autism, have been established to cater for the specific educational needs of students with a disability or with additional needs. Under State and Federal discrimination law, specialist schools are permitted to set specific enrolment criteria and to not enrol students who do not meet these criteria. If students continue to meet the criteria to attend Northern School for Autism they can be enrolled at the school for 13 years or until the year they turn 18 years whichever comes first.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify the enrolment criteria for students seeking enrolment at Northern School for Autism and the evidence required to support applications for enrolment.

It is intended to provide clarity for the local community on the enrolment criteria and ensure a smooth and supported transition for enrolling students.

#### Scope

Enrolment at Northern School for Autism is based on a student's disability and associated educational needs. Subject to capacity, student intake may be at any stage of the year, providing the student is of school age and satisfies the eligibility criteria. All applications for enrolment at Northern School for Autism require regional approval.

### ENROLMENT CRITERIA

The following enrolment criteria have been specified and approved by the Regional Director, North West Victoria Region (as the Minister's delegate) under section 2.2.16(b) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).

The enrolment criteria have been determined based on the identified education needs of students in the community. A student's enrolment will be reviewed periodically in line with their needs.

Students seeking to enrol must have:

#### Autism Spectrum Disorder

- A. A diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder;  
and
- B. Significant deficits in adaptive behaviour established by a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean on an approved standardised test of adaptive behaviour (for example a Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales composite score of 70 or below);  
and

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- C. Significant deficits in language skills established by a comprehensive speech pathology assessment demonstrating language skills equivalent to a composite score of two standard deviations or more below the mean, (for example a core language score of 70 or below on one of the recommended comprehensive language tests).

- Students must be at least five (5) years of age, by 30th of April of the year in which admission is sought.
- The student must be an Australian citizen or hold appropriate visas. Information regarding enrolment of overseas students may be obtained from the International Studies Unit (03) 9637 2202.
- As an enrolment ceiling is in operation (as approved by the NWVR Director), students whom are eligible to enrol and for whom NSA is deemed the most suitable school will be placed on a prospective enrolment list.

#### Transfer Students

If a prospective student is eligible under the Autism Spectrum Disorder criteria, a transfer to NSA will be considered, providing NSA is deemed the most suitable educational pathway for the student. The student will be placed on a prospective enrolment list if a place is not immediately available.

If the prospective student has not yet been deemed eligible under the Autism Spectrum Disorder criteria and is already enrolled in a State Government mainstream school, that school may refer the student to resources within the Department of Education for assessments to be completed.

#### Foundation (Prep) Students

Prospective foundation students will be placed on a prospective enrolment list. Parents (usually with the support of their Early Childhood Intervention Services) need to provide the assessments listed in Enrolment Criteria in this policy.

Enrolments are not activated until the Specialist School Disability Category Verification application is approved and a place is confirmed. If the process is not completed by the end of the academic year, or in time for the Prep Orientation Sessions, a provisional place may be offered until one can be confirmed.

Foundation (Prep) students participate in the Orientation Program in November/December of the year before they commence school. Transition Programs will be negotiated for students transferring across school settings.

Applications from students who do not meet the above criteria will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the region, in consultation with the Principal, in consideration of the student's education and support needs. The Regional Director, North West Victoria Region must approve enrolments for students who do not meet the eligibility criteria.

### PRIORITY ORDER OF PLACEMENT

In circumstances where the school may not have sufficient accommodation to be able to accept all applications from eligible students, the school will manage enrolment applications in accordance with the following priority order of placement:

1. Students with a sibling at the same permanent address who are attending the school at the same time.
2. Students who reside nearest to the school. [Getting to and from school for students with disability | Victorian Government](#)

The school must ensure that all applicants eligible under the first criterion have been offered a place before moving to consideration of the second criterion.

#### Verification of permanent address

When assessing enrolment applications under the priority order of placement, Northern School for Autism may ask for supporting documentation to assist them in verifying a student's permanent residence.

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Northern School for Autism may request original or certified copies of rental agreements, unconditional contracts of sale or other official documentation that demonstrates permanent residence.

Documents should show the same address and parent's/carer's name as recorded on the school enrolment application form.

The school may also make the following enquiries to verify the information provided:

- a) checking the electoral roll at an Australian Electoral Commission office or the Victorian Electoral Commission head office
- b) checking with a real estate agent to confirm a rental address
- c) for a rental property which is a studio apartment or a one-bedroom unit, checking whether there are any regulations/codes limiting the occupancy of these apartments to one person per apartment.

The enrolment application may be unsuccessful if, after reasonable enquiries, the Principal is unable to verify that the evidence provided is genuine and valid. Applicants may then seek to appeal the decision according to the Appeal process outlined below.

#### Enrolment on compassionate grounds

In exceptional circumstances, a student seeking enrolment at Northern School for Autism who meets the enrolment criteria may be approved by the Regional Director North West Victoria outside of the priority order of placement, based on compassionate grounds. This is an overarching consideration and does not form part of the priority order of placement. Further advice and support when considering applications on compassionate grounds is available on the [Policy and Advisory Library](#) and from regional staff.

## EVIDENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

To support a student's application for enrolment, the following evidence and supporting information should be provided:

#### Autism Spectrum Disorder

A diagnosis provided by professionals with experience and knowledge in the assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorder that includes:

- a) a comprehensive report from a child psychiatrist or paediatrician;
- b) a signed report from a psychologist providing an assessment of adaptive behaviour (not more than 12 months old);
- c) a signed report from a speech pathologist containing a comprehensive speech pathology assessment (not more than 12 months old) and where appropriate, an occupational therapist.

The Department provides assessment services to support specialist schools in determining whether the student meets their enrolment criteria. Department regional offices also play a role in supporting specialist schools with enrolment processes.

**NOTE:** Enrolment applications may not be successful if the requested documentation is not provided or invalid.

#### Enrolment Review

Students enrolling at NSA do not necessarily remain at the school for the entire length of their school education. Student enrolment is reviewed if/when needed in consultation with families in SSG meetings determine if NSA remains the most suitable educational pathway. If it is deemed that a student would benefit to a greater extent from programs in an alternate setting, including mainstream, specialist or SDS schools, this recommendation will

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be made to parents/carers and we will work in collaboration to determine the best educational pathway for students at any given time.

Enrolment is reviewed over time:

- to ensure each student is accessing the most beneficial and relevant educational program;
- to ensure each student is continuing to benefit from the autism specific educational environment and programs;
- to ensure as many places as possible are available for students in need, who have not accessed the program and would benefit from the program.
- to promote inclusion and ensure that wherever possible students are supported to participate in a mainstream educational pathway.

#### Funding Review

Once a student has been accepted into the Specialist School Disability Category Verification funding program, the resources allocated accompany the student until DET mandatory funding review at 11 or 12 years of age (year 6 approximately).

## APPEAL PROCESS

Parents/carers can appeal against the decision not to approve an enrolment. This can occur in relation to enrolments at any age or year level. Further information on appeals can be found at [Enrolment Enrolment in specialist schools | education.vic.gov.au](#).

## COMMUNICATIONS

The Northern School for Autism's enrolment policy will be made available to the school community on the school's website.

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy approved by	Principal on 10 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Next scheduled review date	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2027 <i>note that this policy should be reviewed every 3-4 years or more often if required</i>

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Australian <sup>school club</sup>  
Fundraising  
specialists

THE  
**BETTER CHOICE FOR**  
**FUNDRAISING!**



Northern School  
*for Autism*  
*"Learning for Life"*

Dear parents and carers,

Thank you for all your support. It is with great pleasure we share that our Colour Explosion School Run 4 Fun was a huge success.

It is fantastic to see the spirit and enthusiasm that was displayed in supporting our school. Seeing the smiles on the students' faces and everyone coming together as they walked/ran was truly amazing!

We raised \$51,538 which will go toward our resources for the new Lalor campus.

The incentive prizes have been ordered and are on their way. Thank you to anyone that donated to a cause, your donation has been transferred and will be very much appreciated.

Thank you to all those parents that gave their time and enthusiasm on the day.

Thank you to those parents that gave their time and support well before the day, helping to spur on the fundraising, helping to organise the day, and for making the massive balloon arch for Reservoir.

Again, our most sincere thanks for your support and fundraising efforts. We couldn't have done it without you!

Andrea Wallace  
Senior Assistant Principal

# Room 16

Room 16 has had a fantastic year so far! In Terms 1 and 2 the students greatly enjoyed going on weekly excursions to Reservoir Leisure Centre to participate in the school swimming program and Gymnastics excursions at Macleod YMCA, where they had fun exploring a new environment, bouncing on the trampolines, jumping & swinging into the foam pit and playing on the other various gym equipment! In Term 3, We Rock The Spectrum Kids Gym excursions were a highlight, aswell as commencing fun & engaging Science lessons with Joanne (one of our Science Specialist Teachers)! We are proud of ourselves for performing our concert dance to our concert song 'I Just Can't Wait to Be King' from 'The Lion King' movie on-stage in front of a large audience in the MultiPurpose Room! As the weather warms up in Term 4 we are excited to be spending quality fun-in-the-sun time outside at our off-site activities venues being Wombat Bend and Mill Park All Abilities Playgrounds! The students liked both the bus rides to/from all of these location venues, and had lots of fun exploring these different recreational leisure environments! We have also enjoyed the many interactive, sensory and hands-on experiences during wonderful Science incursions throughout the year. For Math we have explored a range of topics including: addition & subtraction, colour & shapes, multiplication & division, data collection & display, money, location & transformation, patterns & repeated routines. We look forward to the learning, development and fun that our classroom members will have during the rest of the year! 😊

# VPC (Victorian Pathways Certificate)

VPC students have had a terrific semester. On trains, trams and buses they explored Melbourne CBD, attended external VET (Vocational Education and Training) classes, and discovered a ton of fascinating and free city landmarks.

8 of our 13 students became independent travellers. They met us at our venues, having planned their commute and a Plan B for unexpected change. Our 5 other students learned to use Myki and bank cards, plot routes and read timetables, and make more and more decisions for themselves.

Students continued boxing classes and, a little less exerting, providing weekly canteen meals. Working together like a well-oiled machine they carried out fitness drills and, later in the week, provided hot foods and helpful service to satisfied diners.

Students went to Geelong! The 3-day camp was a wonderful highlight with all campers fully engaged and tired out!

All VPC students studied Certificate 2 in Hospitality. Everyone passed some or all units (eg Providing First Aid, Coffee Making, Serving Non-Alcoholic Beverages).

**Well done, VPC students!**

# Communication at meal times

Meal times are a wonderful learning opportunity we engage in every day. Families spend time preparing and cooking, eating, talking, and cleaning up after meals and snacks.

It is a time for motor skills - washing, chopping, spreading, serving

It is a time for sensory experiences - touching, smelling, seeing

It is a time for executive functioning skills - planning, organising, remembering instructions step by step

It is a time for COMMUNICATION!

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

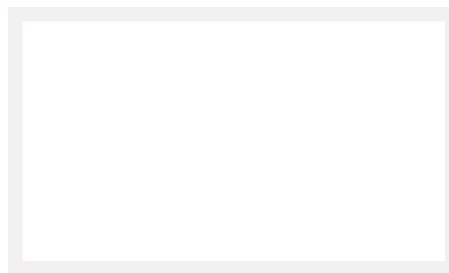
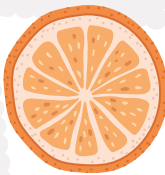
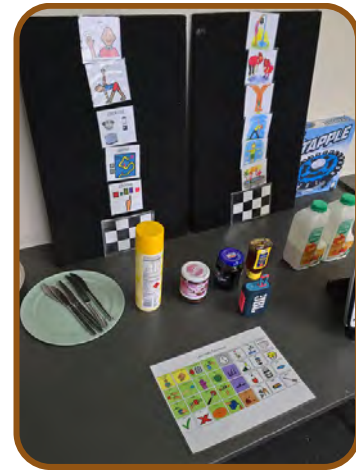
We can use our voice, communication books or devices, aided language displays or single photo visuals.

We can model examples for others - what can I say in this situation? What can I ask? What are the names of foods? See the next page for more ideas!

We can follow schedules to remind us of different routines or steps in a process.

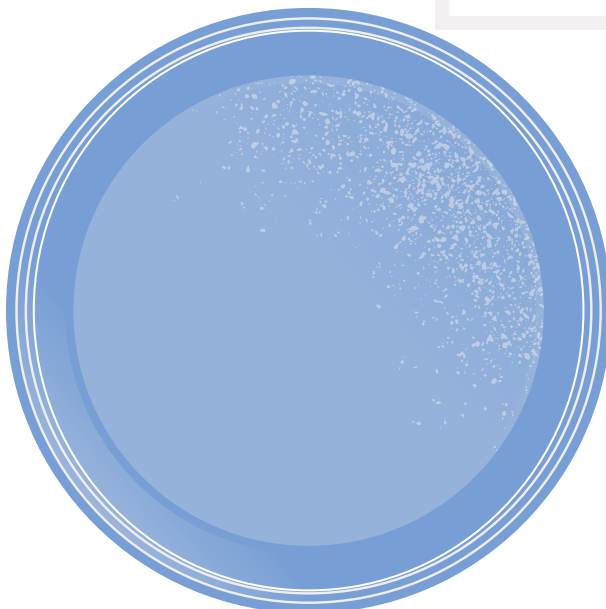
We can express likes and dislikes.

We can practise social skills as a family.



## Welcome!

We have a new Speech Pathologist! Bridget joined the Lalor campus in Term 3.





# Communication opportunities at Mealtimes

I want ... help more  
food spoon blue plate

## Requesting

Exchanging pictures  
for food or items



"Do you want milk?"  
No

## Refusing/rejecting

"I want to finish"



"Do you want Toast?"  
Yes

## Accepting



"Do you want/like?"  
Yes/No

## Answering Questions



"What colour plate do you want?"  
Red plate

"What do you want on your toast?"  
Butter

? ?  
Making a choice

Choosing between  
two items  
three items



## Labelling

"This is \_\_\_\_"



"Get the \_\_\_\_"

"Put in \_\_\_\_"

## Following Instructions

"Give me the \_\_\_\_"



"I am happy"  
Expressing Feelings  
and Opinions

"I feel sad" "I'm hungry"

"I like this"



## Asking Questions

Model questions e.g.  
"Do you want \_\_\_\_?" if the  
child is offering you something



# LALOR STEAM NEWS

In Term 4, the STEAM program is in full swing, with students diving into a variety of engaging projects. The LEGO We Do kits paired with iPads have become a core focus, allowing students to build and code creations like cars, windmills, and cranes. These hands-on activities provide an excellent opportunity for students to strengthen their problem-solving and collaboration skills, while also exploring the fundamentals of coding and engineering. The excitement and creativity displayed by students in these challenges have been outstanding, as they eagerly tackle each new build with enthusiasm.

Alongside the LEGO challenges, students have also embraced the use of OSMO on iPads, which has been instrumental in improving hand-eye coordination. Some of the most popular OSMO activities include Tangram, where students manipulate shapes to fit into patterns, and the Numbers and Words games, which support both numeracy and literacy development. The Detective's app has also become a favourite, as students virtually travel the world, learning about famous landmarks and using their critical thinking skills to solve mysteries. This combination of fun and learning has kept the students highly engaged throughout the term.

Additionally, the STEAM club has been a wonderful extension of the regular program. Here, students are encouraged to show their creativity and innovation through various open-ended projects. Whether coding robots or designing new structures, the club has fostered a vibrant atmosphere where students can explore their interests in technology, science, and art. The start to Term 4 has been a dynamic and rewarding experience, and the students' growth in STEAM-related skills is clear.

Caroline Inglis STEAM Specialist