

# NEWSLETTER



Tarwin Lower Primary School

20th February 2026

Issue #2

## PRINCIPAL NEWS

On Thursday 12th February I attended the South Gippsland Principal Network meeting.

One of the focuses for schools in this area is attendance. There are 17 school networks in the state. South Gippsland ranks 15th of 17 for attendance. The average days away from school last year in the network was 24 days – which is half a term.

Research has found that absenteeism up to **10 days** is associated with a huge drop in proficiency rates, to below 20% of students scoring proficient in Math and English. Last year it averaged that each student at TLPS was absent for over 20 days. This is 40% higher average than similar schools and above the state average.

Our school focus continues to be on unexplained absences and letters have been sent home today to families that have students with any unexplained absences. You can either fill in the form and return it to school or go onto Compass to put the reason for the absence. Letters are sent home twice a term.

Schools have a duty of care to all our students and this can only be discharged if we know where they all are. This is our legislative requirement. Parents are required to ensure their child attends school and to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school, meeting their legal obligations.

The Department of Education attendance and absence recording guide has been updated and you may see some changes in Compass which reflect this. One of the biggest changes is to Family Holiday.

Families can no longer choose Extended Family Holiday for absence in Compass. Parents/Carers must receive prior approval from the principal for the absence and a Student Absence Learning Plan has been considered, and agreed to by the school, student and parent.

### TOP NEWS

- \* Understand the changes to family holiday absences
- \* School Council Elections now open
- \* Mitch Tambo Incursion permission and payment open in Compass
- \* Years Prep-3 Glasses for Kids
- \* Years 5/6 Somers Camp Eol
- \* Compass Comment Reading out now!

*Jen Cox*

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

Friday 20th February	District swimming trials Year 3-6 @Toora for selected students
Wednesday 25th February	Years 1-6 swimming
Friday 27th February	Division Swimming @Korumburra for selected students
Friday 27th February	Clean Up Australia Day
Wednesday 4th March	Years 1-6 swimming
Friday 6th March	Colour Run Fundraiser @2.30pm
Monday 9th March	Labour Day Public Holiday
Wednesday 11th March	NAPLAN writing- Years 3 and 5
Wednesday 11th March	Preps first Wednesday
Wednesday 11th March	Years 1-6 swimming lessons
Thursday 12th March	NAPLAN reading- Years 3 and 5
Friday 13th March	NAPLAN language conventions- Years 3 and 5
Monday 16th March	NAPLAN maths- Years 3 and 5
Monday 16th March	School Review
Monday 16th March	IEP meetings in the last 3 weeks of school
Tuesday 17th March	School Council @4pm
Friday 20th March	Waratah Athletics- Years 3-6
Friday 27th March	Glasses for Kids Years P-2
Tuesday 31st March	Mitch Tambo Incursion \$15ps
Wednesday 1st April	District Athletics Years 3-6 for selected students
Thursday 2nd April	Last day of Term 1- 2.20pm finish
Monday 20th April	First day of Term 2

## School Council Elections

School Council elections are now open. They remain open for one week. Please consider this volunteering opportunity. We meet twice a term on Tuesdays at 4pm.

Some of the key functions of school council include;

- to establish the broad direction and vision of the school within the school's community
- to arrange for the supply of:
  - goods
  - services
  - facilities
  - other things or matters required for the conduct of the school, including the provision of preschool programs
- to raise funds for school related purposes in accordance with applicable Department of Education fundraising policies
- to exercise a general oversight of the school buildings and grounds and ensure they are kept in good order and condition
- to generally stimulate interest in the school in the wider community

Please Note- All School Councillors are required to hold a WWCC (either employee or volunteer).

Please collect a nomination form at the office.

## Mitch Tambo Incursion

We are looking forward to the Mitch Tambo incursion in the last week of this term. The cost of the incursion has been reduced with DET funding to make it accessible for all families. CSEF can be used for this incursion.

Mitch Tambo is an acclaimed recording artist, author, and qualified social worker who brings his unique blend of culture, music, and motivation to schools. Through his "I AM ME" youth tour, Mitch delivers high-energy performances and inspiring talks.

Each session is filled with uplifting storytelling, original music from his upcoming album, and powerful messages around identity, belonging, and resilience. Mitch's engaging style and

authentic approach create a lasting impact on students and educators.

Please pay and give consent on Compass now.

## Footwear

Just a quick reminder to please send your child to school in shoes that are comfortable, easy for them to take on and off independently, and safe for running and active play. This is especially important on Mondays for PE.

## Parent / Teacher Conferences

Thank you to those families who attended the conferences on Monday. If you missed your meeting or did not make one, please get in contact with your child's teacher to arrange another time. Communication between home and school is vital for your child to thrive.

## School Photos

A link will be sent via email to view and purchase photos.

## Colour Run

Will be looking for parents to volunteer on this day, you need a WWCC. We currently have two people volunteering.

One the day, students need to bring a white or light coloured t-shirt and old shoes, as they will get stained. If the student is catching the bus home, they will also need a towel to sit on. Some students have already been busy collecting money and returning it to the school! Well done!

There will be a sausage sizzle lunch for students on the day! Ordering will be out soon. There are prizes for classes and the individual who fundraises the most!

## ICT

Last Monday our Acceptable Use Agreement for Digital Learning was sent home. Please go through this with your child, sign and return it to school.

## Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund

See flyer further in the newsletter. CSEF is available to families with a Centrelink Card. This year the amount paid has increased to \$400 per

child. As the name implies, this money can be spent on Camps, Sports & Excursions. If all of your money is not spent, it can accumulate in your school account. If you change schools to another Victorian school, the leftover money will be sent to the new school.

Application forms are available at the office. Please see Lindy on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

### **Curriculum Contributions**

Curriculum Contributions can now be paid through Compass (also known as Course Contributions). Apologies for the delay as we had some set up hiccups. Of course you can still pay these via direct deposit into the school account or cash.

The suggested amount is \$160.00 per student and there is a \$40.00 voluntary contribution which goes towards grounds maintenance if you wish to contribute.

### **Cluster Swimming Trials**

A huge congratulations to Tahlia and Arthur who represented our school last Friday in the Waratah Cluster swimming trials. They did a wonderful job representing our school and should be very proud of their efforts! Tahlia has also made it through to the next round and will be competing against other schools in the Corner Inlet Cluster today - good luck!



### **Compass Comment**

Reading comments for your child is now uploaded into Compass. Read how they are progressing.

### **School Swimming**

Our swimming lessons have got off to a great start! All the kids showed resilience and had lots of fun in the water!



### **Help! Our old stage needs to be removed!**

We had a small stage at the back of the oval. Unfortunately it became rotten and then it was partially pulled up.

It is a hazard for the students and needs to be removed. If you are able to do this for us, it will save us money that can be used for the students.

Please contact the office if you are able to help.

### **Facebook**

Want to keep up to date with what is happening at school? Then follow us on Facebook where we post photos of the students learning and having fun.

### **Somers Camp**

Years 5 and 6 students have the opportunity to attend Somers Camp with students across south and west Gippsland.

From Wednesday 4th November to Thursday 12th November for \$350. We are currently seeking expressions of interest. Please note, this does not confirm attendance, as it is dependent on how many places we are offered. See flyer.

### **Glasses for Kids**

Year Prep - 3 students have an opportunity to have a free eye test and possibly glasses. Don't forget to fill in the form or complete the form online.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



# Somers School Camp

A nine day residential outdoor and environmental experience for Year 5 & 6 students

Focusing on developing the Victorian Curriculum Capabilities

- Personal & Social
- Ethical
- Intercultural
- Critical & Creative Thinking

Experience  
FOR  
a Lifetime



Inspiring optimism and developing the consciousness and care of  
**SELF, OTHERS and the ENVIRONMENT**

Years 5 & 6 Students from Schools in your area will be participating in the Somers Camp.

From: Wednesday 4th November 2026 To: Thursday 12th November 2026

**FURTHER INFORMATION WILL BE SENT SOON**

[www.somerscamp.vic.edu.au](http://www.somerscamp.vic.edu.au)



# Autism Connect

## National autism helpline

Autism information you can trust. Free, confidential and independent.

Autism Connect will connect you to a friendly team of advisors who provide expert information and advice in many areas, including:

- Exploring autism and autistic identity
- Behaviour and communication strategies
- Assessment and diagnosis support
- School and education
- The NDIS
- Referrals to services
- Peer support connections
- Finding autism-inclusive events
- Making environments accessible

**Phone: 1 300 308 699**

**Email: [info@autismconnect.org.au](mailto:info@autismconnect.org.au)**

**Webchat: [amaze.org.au/autismconnect](https://amaze.org.au/autismconnect)**



# Autism Connect

Autism Connect is an expansion of Amaze's Autism Advisor service delivered in Victoria for 12 years, helping over 20,000 people.

Autism Connect is available to anyone seeking support related to autism. The service was created for autistic people seeking guidance around diagnosis and services, their families or friends, and anyone supporting an autistic adult or child in education, health settings or workplaces.

**"I got diagnosed at age 40 and I found that really enlightening and validating. You've got the ability to send a five-second message and then get a human response. They were friendly, patient and empathetic. They were really just nice to deal with on the phone and it felt like the easiest thing ever."**

**- Catherine, Autistic mother of 2 autistic boys.**



**For more information, visit  
[amaze.org.au/autismconnect](https://amaze.org.au/autismconnect)**



**If you need an interpreter, contact the TIS National Contact Centre on 131 450 and ask to speak to Autism Connect on 1300 308 699.**

**Autism Connect is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services**

## 6 ways to support children settle into a new class

*Tips for parents, carers and families*

Starting a new school year is an exciting time for many, but for some students (and their parents) it can also be quite challenging. The return to school can be tricky for parents and carers to navigate to ensure their child is happy and settled in the classroom. Your child may be upset about changing classes or be worried that they might not be in the same class as their friends. Many students experience these anxieties as a new school year begins.



Questions such as *'is this a great opportunity for my child to build resilience and expand their social circles?'* and *'my child might be miserable, should I talk to the school about changing classes?'* are common dilemmas faced by families.

While there's no one size fits all approach, here are 6 tips from Sharon Baker, Principal in Residence at the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership, informed by Australian research and the general principles of child psychology.

### 1. Acknowledge their feelings

- **Validate emotions:** Let your child know it's okay to feel sad, anxious, or disappointed. Acknowledging these emotions can reduce anxiety by making them feel understood (Beyond Blue, 2021). You might say, 'I know it's hard to leave a class where you felt comfortable, and it's normal to feel a bit nervous about what's coming next.'

### 2. Focus on positives and familiarity

- **Highlight exciting aspects:** Emphasise the positive opportunities that come with the new class, like meeting new friends, trying different activities, or having a fresh start with a new teacher. This reframing can help children start seeing change as an opportunity.
- **Identify familiar faces:** Point out any friends or known peers who might also be in their new class. Familiar faces can help ease the transition (Dockett & Perry, 2007).

### 3. Encourage problem-solving and independence

- **Plan for success:** Brainstorm strategies with your child to help them feel more comfortable, such as introducing themselves to new classmates, joining group activities, or asking for help when needed.
- **Build coping skills:** Teach your child positive self-talk, like reminding themselves, 'I can handle new things,' which research shows can reduce anxiety and build resilience (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2021).
- **Model a positive outlook on change:** Show a positive attitude toward change yourself, sharing times when you successfully handled transitions or new experiences. This can

---

set a model for them and show that they can handle new situations too. Let them see that you are confident in their ability to handle the change, which can help them feel more secure.

#### 4. Set and maintain predictable routine

- **Consistency and structure:** Establishing a daily routine, including consistent bedtimes, meal schedules, and even homework times, helps children feel secure. Familiarity with routines can help them feel more in control amid changes in their school life (ARACY, 2018).
- **Transition preparation:** If possible, practice aspects of their new routine, such as packing their school bag or visiting the new classroom, to help them feel prepared and ready.

#### 5. Encourage open communication with teachers

- **Connect with educators:** Let your child know they can approach their teacher with questions or concerns. Building rapport with the teacher early on can help them feel supported. Communicating with the teacher yourself may also help establish support for your child if any specific anxieties arise.

#### 6. Promote friendships and social skills

- **Arrange playdates or social time:** If possible, arrange for your child to meet some classmates outside of school. Positive social interactions help children build confidence in their social skills and see their new class as a space for friendships (Dockett & Perry, 2007).

Supporting a child through a class transition takes time and patience. You can make the adjustment more manageable by recognising their feelings, setting positive expectations, and helping them prepare for the change.

Teachers and school leaders have generally seen it all and will be well-placed to support and provide advice. Contacting your child's school to understand what supports are available, and how other students who may have experienced similar concerns in the past have gone on to excel is often a great way to draw on the experience and expertise from those who are also committed to seeing your child flourish in the new year.

For more information, resources like [Beyond Blue](#) and the [Australian Institute of Family Studies](#) provide helpful guidance on fostering resilience and managing transitions for children. The Department of Education also provides some helpful [Tips for Starting School](#) and a [Starting School Guide](#), which has hints for changing schools and supporting children with additional needs.

LETS START 2026  
WITH A  
**COLOUR  
RUN**

**MARCH 6TH | 2.30PM**

**1st, 2nd & 3rd prize rewards for the classes who raise the most funds, as well as a single prize for the Grand Champion fundraising individual**

**Donations can be accepted at the office or via trybooking event page.**

**If you would like to assist with making this event happen, please leave your name with the office.**



# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

## INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Every Victorian child should have access to the world of learning opportunities that exist beyond the classroom. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund [helps](#) ensure that no student will miss out on the opportunity to join their classmates for important, educational and fun activities. It is part of making Victoria the Education State and the Government's commitment to breaking the link between a student's financial circumstances and their outcomes.

## CAMPS, SPORTS and EXCURSIONS FUND (CSEF)

School camps provide children with inspiring experiences in the great outdoors. Excursions encourage a deeper understanding of how the world works while sports teach teamwork, discipline and leadership. All are a part of a healthy curriculum.

CSEF is provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school excursions, camps and sporting activities.

If you hold a valid means-tested concession card or support an out of home care student, you may be eligible for CSEF. A special consideration category also exists for asylum seeker and refugee families. The allowance is paid directly to the school to use towards expenses relating to camps, excursions or sporting activities for the benefit of your child.

The annual CSEF amount per student is \$400 for all school students.

### HOW TO APPLY

New applicants should contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from the website below.

If you applied for CSEF at your child's school last year, you do not need to complete an application form this year unless there has been a change in your family circumstances.

You only need to complete an application form if any of the following changes have occurred:

- **new student enrolments:** your child has started or changed schools this year.
- **changed family circumstances:** such as a change of custody, change of name, concession card number, or new siblings commencing this year.

Check with the school office if you are unsure.

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information about CSEF visit:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/camps-sports-and-excursions-fund>

