



# GORDON EDUCATION CENTRE

"Towards Independence"

TERM 1 - Week 9

LISA THOMAS

PRINCIPAL

Dear Families,

We are pleased to share an exciting new initiative here at Gordon Education Centre: the introduction of Berry Street Ready to Learn Plans. These individually tailored plans support our students to identify and use strategies that help them prepare for learning each day, supporting emotional regulation and readiness for participation in classroom activities. Our educators work collaboratively with students to monitor, adjust, and celebrate successes as together we build a strong foundation for learning.

Continuing our commitment to fostering curiosity and engagement, our classes are deepening their learning through our structured Class Learning Expeditions. These projects are designed to extend students' curiosity about the world, encouraging questions, exploration, and discovery in meaningful ways. Families are always welcome to ask their children about what they're investigating—your interest and encouragement makes a genuine difference!

We would also like to thank all the families who joined our recent Numeracy Learning Walk. It was wonderful to have you visit and see our students in action, especially as we incorporate Numicon resources to provide hands-on, practical experiences in Numeracy. Your enthusiasm and participation support our students' confidence and love of learning. Finally, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to our Harmony Day and Purple Day events. These occasions remind us of the vibrant and inclusive community we are building together.

*Key  
Dates*

2nd April - World Autism Day

3rd April - Public Holiday

6th April - Public Holiday

10th April - Last Day 2pm finish

# WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY (NEXT THURSDAY)

Thursday, April 2nd (Week 10) is World Autism Awareness Day. This global event has been celebrated since 2007 to raise awareness, acceptance, and appreciation of autistic people.

At Gordon Education Centre, we are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported. Our Autism Inclusion Teacher (AIT), Michelle Adams, promotes inclusion and diversity by sharing best practices and resources through the AIT initiative.

The poster below shares some considerations that have been made by the autistic and autism communities around some respectful ways we can promote autism awareness, acceptance and appreciation. If you have any questions or would like to chat, you can contact Michelle at GEC or by phone 87231043 or email [michelle.adams323@schools.sa.edu.au](mailto:michelle.adams323@schools.sa.edu.au).

All student to dress in something sparkly or rainbow colours to celebrate acceptance and awareness of autism. (Obviously if they are happy to – keeping in mind this is not their usual routine and many people with autism may struggle to do this). It can be a small ribbon, sparkly shoes, headband, top, dress-up of some kind – whatever makes your student feel like they can sparkle for the day. Students will be participating in a fun session with their peers where they can participate in lots of sensory based activities and tasks based around awareness, acceptance and celebration of our autistic community.





## Promoting Autism Awareness



AUTISM INCLUSION TEACHER INITIATIVE

# World Autism Awareness Day is April 2nd

Since 2007, the United Nations has observed this day to affirm the rights and freedoms of autistic people. Today we have moved beyond raising awareness to promoting acceptance and appreciation of autistic people and their contributions to society.

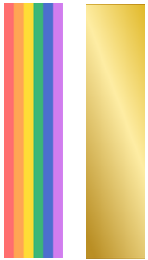
Below are some considerations around respectful ways to raise awareness and promote acceptance and appreciation. To be inclusive when referring to an autistic learner, you can understand and respect their identity by recognising their unique strengths and abilities. Celebrate and affirm your learner however they choose to identify. We have presented the preference of the majority of the autistic community, however we encourage you to use respectful curiosity to learn and affirm each individual preference.



### **We use the infinity symbol to represent autism.**

The infinity symbol also represents neurodiversity and the infinite ways of being. It can symbolise the infinite potential and possibilities. The continual loop represents the continual need for support, understanding and acceptance.

We avoid using puzzle pieces as they can suggest that autism is puzzling, or needs to be solved, or that autistic people need to fit in.



### **We use rainbow or gold to represent autism.**

Rainbow represents the spectrum, diversity and that all colours are included. Gold represents value and worth. The chemical symbol for gold is Au.

We avoid using blue, as it represents the stereotype that it's more common in boys. The 'light it up blue' campaign is associated with an American organisation that wanted to fix or cure autism. Many people in the autistic and autism communities avoid associating with this.



### **Try using identity-first language and avoid diagnostic terms.**

'Autistic student' is an example of identity-first language, versus 'student with autism'. Autism is a valuable and important part of someone's identity, which is why many people prefer to use identity-first rather than person-first language.

Try using terms such as 'autistic' and 'autism'. ASD is a diagnostic term. Unless you are specifically talking about a diagnosis, autism is not seen as a disorder. Similarly, we recognise that everyone's ability varies between every area of living. This is a dynamic view of functioning, versus describing someone as a high or low functioning autistic.



### **We are inclusive.**

Attending education, having needs and engaging in interests is something that everybody has and does. Having a disability might make those things different, but not special. Inclusive education is a fundamental human right of all learners (UNCRPD, 2016).

# *Cal* TAMARA CAMERON

It is week 10 and it is almost Easter!!! Over the last few weeks, we have been busy learning through hands-on activities and curious exploration.

In our inquiry learning, we have been investigating "What is water for?" Students have been thinking about and creating posters of how we use water in our daily lives. We went on our excursion to the valley lakes and took some water samples. We then came back to school and looked at the water under a microscope to see how clean the water was. We then compared this to the water that comes out of our taps. Today we are going to the pumping station to further explore how the water gets cleaned and how it gets to our houses.

In Mathematics, we have been focusing on number skills. Students are practicing counting, ordering numbers, and recognising patterns. They've been using interactive activities to build confidence with numbers in a fun and engaging way. We have also been learning about 3D shapes. Students explored objects such as cubes, spheres, and cylinders, identifying them in everyday items around the classroom and identifying their attributes.

In art we have been exploring different art mediums such as pastels, water colours, and pour painting.

It has been wonderful to see students asking questions, sharing ideas, and making connections in their learning. We look forward to continuing our discoveries together!



# LA2 NAOMI ASTON

In LA2, our students have been engaging in a range of rich, hands-on experiences across different learning areas. In mathematics, we have been patterning with connecting blocks, where our learners practice extending repeat patterns, supporting both their mathematical thinking and fine motor development. The exploration of “same” and “different” using magnetic tiles, provided a colourful and tactile way for our learners to compare and sort by shape and colour, while encouraging language development as we describe what we see.

We have also been investigating “more” and “less” using balance scales and Numicon shapes. This practical maths experience allows our learners to predict, compare quantities, and observe the results, deepening their understanding of number sense and measurement while making maths concepts visible and accessible. In science, everyone had the opportunity to plant radish seeds in clear cups. Watching the seeds grow week by week means our learners can observe the development of roots and shoots, leading to meaningful conversations about plant life cycles and the changes living things go through.

Literacy has been made extra engaging with alphabet recognition experiences using playdough. Our learners have enjoyed forming letters, matching playdough shapes to alphabet cards, and discussing the different sounds, all while building the hand strength necessary for writing. To mark St Patrick’s Day, our cooking session focussed on making and tasting green pancakes. This sensory-rich experience also gave our learners a chance to practise following instructions and develop important life skills. Finally, painting with a variety of tools—from sponges and brushes to natural materials—has encouraged our learners to experiment with artistic techniques, express themselves creatively, and build fine motor control. These diverse learning activities continue to foster curiosity, collaboration, and independence in our class community.



# LA4

## MICHELLE ADAMS

In Learning Area 4, our focus this term has been on building student confidence and a strong sense of belonging through a variety of engaging experiences—both in and out of the water.

Our weekly swimming lessons at Wulunda continue to be a highlight for students. Each week, they are developing their water safety skills and growing more confident in the pool environment. With support from staff, students are moving through the water, learning to kick, “monkey” around the pool edge, and using noodles to practise floating and kicking on both their front and back. Recently, we’ve been working on crucial water safety actions—such as safely falling into the water from the edge and then moving back to the side to climb out with assistance. It’s wonderful to see students becoming more comfortable in the water, building essential skills while enjoying themselves out in the community.

The playground has also been an exciting place for learning and growth. Students are being encouraged to try new things, take safe risks, and develop their physical abilities. Activities like climbing, sliding, bouncing, swinging, and balancing help students build strength, coordination, and self-confidence. Step by step, students are learning what their bodies are capable of and celebrating their progress as they attempt new challenges.

Yesterday, our school community came together for Epilepsy Day. Students in Learning Area 4 showed fantastic participation, with many proudly wearing purple to show their support. They took part in activities such as having glittery hair gel applied and experimenting with face paint. The students showed resilience, especially when letting Tamara put glittery gel in their hair—even if some were a little less enthusiastic about the face paint! Their willingness to try something new and different reflects all the important work we’ve been doing around resilience and having a go even when we feel a bit unsure.

Learning Area 4 students are building confidence, developing new physical skills, taking safe risks with support, and strengthening their resilience and sense of belonging.



# La5

## EMMA BRAMICH



Over the last three weeks, LA5 have been exploring their curiosities during integrated studies around the water. We have brainstormed and researched what would happen if it never rained again. The students participated in an experiment based around pollution in our waterways and how this affects the quality of water and different methods used to clean the water once polluted. Students were able to ask questions and make connections to their learning.



Numeracy has seen the students explore further into the Numicon system. This has been a very engaging few weeks using this resource, and the students are all showing development in their numeracy skills. During our Numeracy circle students are working hard on their positional language using left and right and identifying the properties of 3D shapes alongside developing subitising skills.

During Literacy over the last three weeks students have continued with shared reading, phonics and comprehension activities. Students are enjoying writing at the moment with Easter being a popular writing prompt selection.



Hope you all have a lovely Easter break! It is fast approaching. Please take some time to look after yourselves and spend time with family and friends. After Easter we head into the last week of Term 1. I cannot believe how quickly Term 1 has gone. It has been a lovely start to the year



## MADISON THOMSON

The last three weeks in LA6 have been a vibrant time of growth, teamwork, and hands-on learning experiences. Our class has been exploring the look and feel of our own names, focusing on the letters that make each one unique. It's been wonderful seeing students recognise and practise the letters in their names through tracing, building, and writing activities.

Friday has quickly become a favourite day, as our buddy class joins us for cooking and social play. These shared sessions in the kitchen have given us a chance to follow simple instructions, try new foods, and celebrate our efforts together. During social play, students have strengthened friendships and learned important skills like sharing and taking turns.

Maths lessons have been extra engaging lately, thanks to our work with Numicon. Using these bright, tactile resources, we've practised counting, adding, and building patterns while developing our understanding of numbers in a fun and interactive way.

A new highlight in LA6 has been our introduction to story tables. By recreating scenes and characters from our favourite books, we have found new ways to connect with stories and deepen our comprehension. Story tables encourage imaginative play and help us link the world of books to our own experiences.

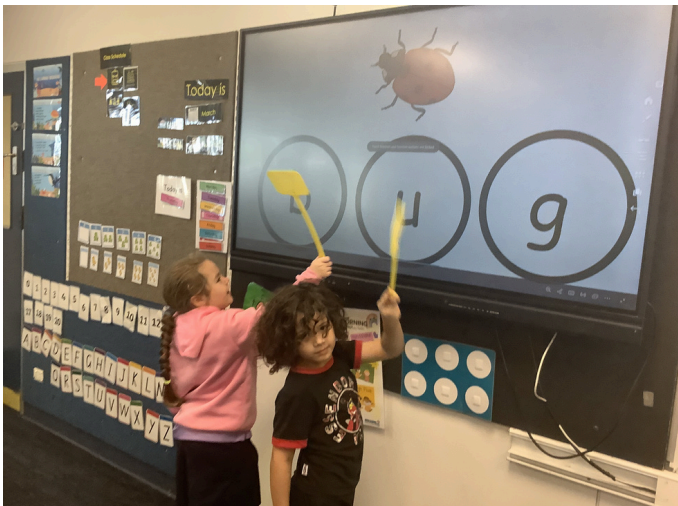
These past weeks have been full of excitement and achievement, and LA6 continues to shine as a caring, enthusiastic, and connected classroom community.



# LA7

## ISABELLE SWANBURY

In LA7 in science we have been engaging in learning investigations on how objects move, and how simple machines such as ramps and levers can make objects move. Our class has explored how the incline of a ramp can make balls and cars roll and explored this with paint to observe the tracks. Students also explored catapults through launching balloons and other objects in the air! Children's learning was supported alongside AAC for students to ask questions and make predictions. In literacy we have been learning about word families and learning to sound out and blend new words. Through games such as splat the word, hopscotch words, bowling and reading the words on the bowling pins, spelling out the words with magnetic letters, and writing words with shaving cream, we have engaged with different ways of reading and writing. In numeracy we have been counting 1:1, learning to write numerals and number words, and learning to order numbers in sequence. We have also started exploring patterns and have noticed patterns around us as well as making our own AB patterns. Students have also practiced our numeracy skills in other ways too, such as cooking and making playdough! We measured and counted our ingredients to follow a recipe and also practiced our turn-taking skills too! LA7 have shown a sense of curiosity and persistence as they try new learning activities



# LA8 KIRILEE CHAPMAN

The last three weeks have been busy with our special event days. We showed off our amazing maths skills during the numeracy walk through by sorting numbers from 1-100 into odd and evens, demonstrating our skip counting by twos to create the pattern to assist with our sorting. We celebrated Harmony day looking at all the different things that make us smart and the different places we come from, we created a list of the things we are good at to share with the school. For "wear it purple for epilepsy" day we made some purple origami flowers, hosted a purple party for LA 2 and 9 to attend, decorated biscuits with purple icing and purple sparkles and wore our best purple outfits. LA8 have finished up their unit on Greek history with a session watching Hercules, it led to some great questions about what actually happened in history and how stories can change to be more magical. Mandy helped us learn how to treat burns, snake bites and dislocations in our first aid sessions. We continue to be amazing readers, writers, mathematicians and all-round learners and look forward to spending the last weeks of term learning about Easter and how it is celebrated in other countries. Happy Easter everyone from LA8



## All the ways to be smart

In LA8 we all have different strengths. We are all good at different things and smart at different things.



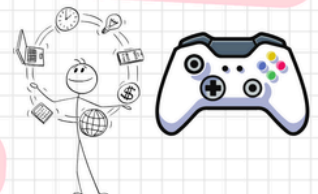
Good at making jewelry - Mia



Good at picking football winners - Ella

Very friendly - Liliana

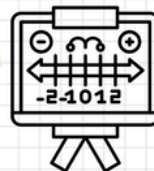
Good at History and video games - John



Trying things even when it isn't easy - Seth



Good at reading the Bible - Malachi



Good at using the number line - Sarah



Know lots of facts about dinosaurs - Riley

# LA9 TAMARA FLEMING

We have had a busy and meaningful time in LA9 recently, filled with important learning and community activities.

For Epilepsy Day, our class spent time learning what epilepsy is and talked about ways we can support our friends who have epilepsy. This was a wonderful way to help our students grow in understanding and kindness.

We also made beautiful flowers as a gift for a family in our school community, showing how we can care for and support each other.

Our class joined in the fun of Harmony Day, celebrating the many cultures in our school and learning all about respect and inclusion.

We continue to talk about our own community and practise remembering important information, like our school and home addresses, to help keep everyone safe.

Our learning with Mandy in first aid is going strong. Students are building their skills to care for their own bodies and learning ways to help others in need.

In English, we are focusing on improving our writing and reading comprehension skills. In Maths, we are working on addition and subtraction, as well as recognising and using money.



GORDON EDUCATION

# Belonging Awards

