

# Starting school with success!

**A mothers journey to help her  
VI daughter integrate into  
mainstream Prep**







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Wednesday, January 30, 2013

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**4** DAREBIN NAMES ITS TOP CITIZEN

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# Northcote Leader

**7** NEVA'S READY FOR PREP



ALPHINGTON



Neva's albinism will not get in the way of her studies when she starts school this week.

Picture: MARK WILSON H2BNL114

## Technology helps Neva start school

TECHNOLOGICAL advances have made mainstream classrooms more accessible to students with visual impairments such as four-year-old Neva.

The young Alphington resident said she was looking forward to starting at St

Anthony's School this week. "I want to learn writing and I can learn to read the iPad," she said.

Neva was born with albinism, a genetic condition characterised by lack of pigment that normally gives colour to the skin, hair, and

eyes. It also causes low vision.

Her mother Amy said while all prep students at St Anthony's had an iPad, for Neva it was essential to give her an equal opportunity to learn at school.

Ms Mochi said infor-

mation from the electronic whiteboard could be uploaded to Neva's iPad.

**Want to share a great picture of your child's first day at school? Upload your picture at**  
[northcoteleader.com.au](http://northcoteleader.com.au)



Hi! I'm Neva and I have Albinism. I want to explain to all of my Prep friends about my Albinism in a letter because some bits are tricky for kids to understand but hopefully it will answer some of the questions you and your parents have. I would love to answer your questions if you have any and my Mum Amy will help me too!

Since most people don't know what Albinism is I will start by explaining – it is kind of technical though! Albinism is a genetic condition (this means it came from both of my parents) that affects 1 in 17,000-20,000 people in Australia – so I am one of only about 1200 people with Albinism in Australia – pretty cool huh!! I also happen to be born on 29<sup>th</sup> February so probably the only person with Albinism born on a leap day in the whole world!!! Albinism affects my body's ability to produce melanin (what gives your skin, hair and eyes pigment/colour, and provides your skin with protection from the sun) which is why I have light coloured skin and white hair. My two older siblings Erich (grade 1) and Cuora (grade 3) don't have Albinism.

Albinism also causes vision impairment which can vary from person to person. You will probably have noticed that I can run, jump and play just like you – sometimes, well a lot of the time I am clumsy and fall over or run into things or people. But I still join in because I love to be involved as much as the other kids!

It's difficult to explain how I see or what I see but things look pretty fuzzy like they are out of focus. I can even see some little things if they are really close. I use a slope board on my desk for reading and writing to bring things closer to my eyes so I don't get a sore neck and back from trying to get close enough to see. You may see me using a magnifying glass or a bar magnifier to enlarge the words in a book or on a worksheet – **I like to have things in big print as they are much easier for me to see (like this!).**

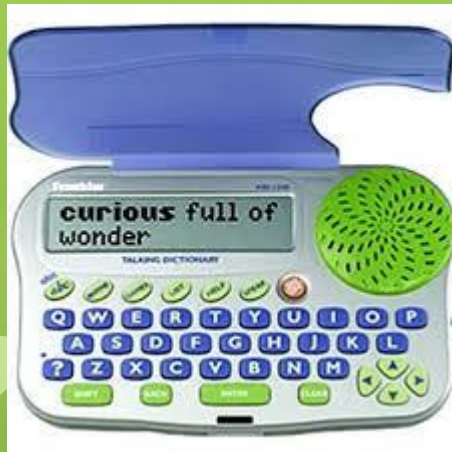


## Logitech K480 Wireless Keyboard

IPad



Franklin Children's Thesaurus



Topaz CCTV



# Halloween Drawing



# Neva's handwriting Age 6 (Grade 1)

Dear mum and dad,  
Just a note to remind you about my  
excursion tomorrow I can wear my  
sport uniform.  
from Neva





**Thank you for your  
interest in helping our  
vision impaired kids  
grow their future**