This week, I attended the inaugural meeting of the Brimbank Police and Schools Consultative Committee. Comprising Principals representing Government, Catholic, Independent, Primary and Secondary schools across Brimbank as well as a large group of police officers from our area, the committee has been established as a support network for schools. If the first meeting was anything to go by, this is going to be a terrific and helpful membership.

Overnewton has always enjoyed a close partnership with our local police force. Indeed, many parents within our community are police officers; their advice and support over many years have been invaluable.

As the 30 or so of us introduced ourselves and shared some of the issues that we have in our schools that would benefit from police support it was interesting to hear that we all shared similar concerns.

Not surprisingly, the number one concern for all schools at the meeting was the problem of traffic around our schools and the seeming lack of care drivers show for the precious student cargo they carry or pedestrians they drive past. I am appreciative of the efforts of drivers around our campuses this year but continue to implore everyone to be patient, lawful and careful to ensure that no child is ever harmed.

A brochure prepared by one of our local schools about safely dropping off and picking up students will be made available once I receive a copy.

Other issues shared by the schools present included theft of school equipment such as computers and water meters; safe partying; unwanted visitors out of hours; and, of course, safety in the digital world.

An excellent web page that was shared with us and that parents can visit is www.cybersmart.gov.au. This is a government site that provides extremely helpful tips for parents to use when working through the complexities around helping children operating in the digital world.

When suggesting future venues for our meetings, a couple of schools expressed concern about how it might be perceived if police cars and police officers in uniform turned up at their schools for the meetings. We all agreed that such situations would further show that local police and schools can work together to improve the safety of our children and to be proactive in developing practices that would continue to help our children become responsible and contributing citizens within our local communities.

I look forward to sharing information that arises from future meetings with our families and am extremely grateful to the police of the Brimbank area for setting up this committee.

An article in The Age this week reported that the Victorian Government is investigating the governance of two independent schools in Victoria. Please let me assure families that we are not one of those schools. Our College Board has developed best practice governance procedures over many years and families can be very confident about how the College operates in this regard. I am grateful to the parent who alerted me to the article so that I could make a brief comment about it in Whispers this week.