

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Southern Cross Early Childhood School is committed to the provision of a safe environment for all children, staff and community members.

We believe that:

- All children are capable and can learn
- All children and adults have the right to feel safe at school
- All children and adults have the right to be treated with respect and dignity
- behaviours are designed to meet the basic needs of: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, fun and the positive empowerment of the children through learning
- behaviour is a form of communication
- We can only control our own behaviour

Wellbeing & Behaviour Guidelines

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School we create a positive, cooperative community based on the belief that all children have the right to grow, learn and live in a supportive and respectful learning environment.

Rationale and Context Statement

Southern Cross Early Childhood School upholds high standards of behaviour for all members of the school community. This policy and accompanying procedures aims to provide clear and consistent information on how a safe and supportive environment will be maintained that allows all children and adults to learn and work to their full potential.

Positive Practices

These are some of the ways we build a positive and supportive school environment:

Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)

One hour a week is dedicated to the intentional teaching of social and emotional skills. This learning is focused on developing understandings of self and others to build skills of inter-dependence to manage emotions, relationships and actions. Our goal is to build capacity of children to be able to explore and solve problems themselves.

KidsMatter

Southern Cross Early Childhood School uses the KidsMatter Early Childhood Framework to support learning about wellbeing and mental health across the school. The four components of KidsMatter highlighted below are interrelated. Each is important for supporting child wellbeing and mental health.

The Four Key
Components
of KidsMatter
include:

1.
A positive
school
community

2.
Social and
emotional
learning for
students

3.
Working
with parents
and carers

4.
Helping
students who
experience
mental
health issues

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Circle Time

Circle Time is a safe, supportive way in which the classes at Southern Cross Early Childhood School build relationships, provide an avenue for discussing issues, develop communication skills, celebrate achievements, develop active citizens, and develop emotional literacy of self and others. It can be used at the beginning or end of the school day or to hold class meetings.

Restorative Practices

The focus of the restorative process is about reconnecting and nurturing relationships within the school community. The conference process provides a way for individuals to be accountable for their behaviour through opportunities to repair harm, have harm repaired and find a way forward. Children learn about the restorative process by participating in conferences, Circle Time and SEL lessons. Children have the opportunity to learn the skills of listening and responding thoughtfully when seeking solutions to social problems as they develop an understanding of and empathy for others. They acquire skills that assist them to participate successfully in restorative conferences and develop a sense of belonging to the school community.

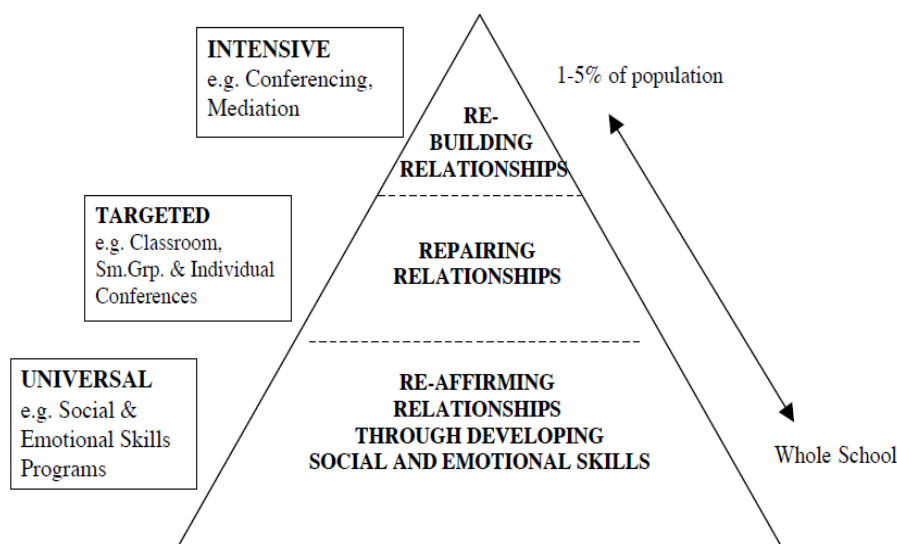


Figure 2: Hierarchy of Restorative Responses, Morrison (2004)

Restorative Conferencing

Includes getting both the person harmed and the wrong doer together to 'restore the relationship'

Questions for the victim include:

What happened?

How did it make you feel?

What do you need to happen to feel safe and ok?

You need to use your words to tell the wrong doer how you felt and what you want to have happen.

Do you feel ok?

Questions for the wrongdoer include:

What happened?

What were you thinking at the time?

What have you thought about since?

Who has been affected by what you have done?

In what way?

What do you need to do to make things right?

See appendix 2 for further information

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Trauma Understanding and Sensitive Teaching (TRUST)

There has been an increase in the understanding that schools need to move towards becoming trauma informed and trauma sensitive. This is exactly what the educators at Southern Cross Early Childhood School have been focusing on during their professional learning over the past few years. Schools, educators and admin staff have a huge role in the lives of children. It is essential that they provide safe and supportive environments where the impacts of experiences of adversity and trauma are recognised and acknowledged.

Mindset

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School we talk about the importance of developing a growth mindset (based on the research and findings of Dr Carol Dweck). We encourage our children, educators and families to adopt a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset. The term 'growth mindset' refers to a way of thinking, learning and taking on challenges. A person with a growth mindset is open to constructive criticism, takes feedback and uses it, takes on new challenges, pushes themselves outside of their comfort zone and shows resilience and perseverance.



Growth Mindset Statements



"If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning. That way, their children don't have to be slaves of praise. They will have a lifelong way to build and repair their own confidence.

- Carol S. Dweck

| Instead of thinking... | Try Thinking... |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| I'm not good at this | What am I missing? |
| I give up | I'll use a different strategy |
| This is too hard | This may take some time |
| I made a mistake | Mistakes help me to learn |
| It's not good enough | Is this really my best work? |
| She's so smart, I'll never be as smart as her | I'm going to figure out how she does it. |
| Plan 'A' didn't work | Good thing the alphabet has 25 more letters. |

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Strategies for Children:

We give strategies and common language to the children.

When we ask children to 'use their WITS' This stands for:

W – Walk away

I – Ignore

T – Talk it out

S – Seek help

(see appendix 3)

We also use the language of having

"safe hands & safe feet"



Procedures

Step 1

CREATE A POSITIVE CLIMATE

- **Praise** and encourage positive actions and attitudes
- **Class Goals** are collaboratively discussed, agreed upon, reviewed regularly and are readily visible in the learning environments
- **Circle Time** promotes community discussions and a free exchange of ideas whilst building social connections and building relationships
- **Restorative Practice** strategies and language is used and implemented to build and maintain positive relationships
- **Respond** to children's individual needs and be **flexible** and **creative** in developing appropriate strategies to assist individual children

Step 2

- Remind about class goals
- Resolve the issue through conferencing
- Thinking Time – where children are given time to reflect on their behaviour choices in a quiet space
- Thinking Time with a buddy teacher

Step 3

- Quiet time with executive
- To maintain a collaborative relationship, parents and carers may be notified and involved in discussion of the child's needs and jointly develop appropriate responses and strategies to assist the child

Step 4

- To ensure a safe and positive learning environment for all members of the community, any act of physical violence, or racial comments or harassment will not be tolerated.
- If the behaviour persists, a suspension from school may follow.

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Managing inappropriate behaviours

Southern Cross Early Childhood School adheres to the processes outlined in the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy Guideline A in preventing and addressing bullying (including cyber bullying), harassment and violent behaviour. The school:

- Works hard to ensure the safety and well-being of all and seeks to address and follow-up any issues in a respectful way.
- Follows processes both in the indoor and outdoor learning environments that include timely intervention to ensure the safety of everyone (refer to flowchart in Appendix 1)
- Applies processes that ensure comprehensive investigation and documentation of events in line with Directorate processes including consultation with the Safe and Supportive Schools Contact Officer.
- Acknowledges the professionalism of educators and the school leadership and values their professional judgment in how to recognise and manage the challenging behaviours of individual children.
- Gives children the language and understanding about what constitutes violence, bullying and harassment through SEL lessons and through the 'Good Vibes' program. This includes understanding the role of positive peer influence and also the role of the bystander.
- Put natural and logical consequences in place. Examples of consequences are: if a child is rough in the playground they lose their right to play there; or if a child is refusing to complete the assigned task they will need to complete it at another time.
- When warranted, in-school or formal suspension may occur following Directorate processes and in consultation with families.

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School we seek to build capacity within our children to solve problems themselves. We use the following script in the outdoor learning environment when children come to us seeking help.

- "How can I help you?"
- "What have you done to help yourself?"
- "What else could you do?"
- THEN

Help if needed.

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School we value that everyone is an individual and that all children are on a social learning curve. We recognise that children are learning about their world and how to relate to others. We operate around the core value of RESPECT at all times and in all circumstances.

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Managing more complex needs

The school follows the processes outlined in the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy Guideline B in responding to complex and challenging behaviours. The school:

- Works closely with parents/carers to support children's learning and participation in school.
- Works to meet the individual needs of children and to support staff and families through the implementation of Individual Learning Plans (ILP), Behaviour Response Plans and where appropriate risk assessments.
- Works with all children to support them in understanding diversity and the complex needs of other children e.g. Mother Tongue Day, fundraising/awareness for Type 1 Diabetes etc.
- May use flexible resourcing to support child engagement both in the indoor and outdoor learning environment e.g. lunchtime clubs, sports experiences.
- Recognises that the risk of harm can never be eliminated, therefore staff may take preventative action in accordance with the Directorate guidelines to protect and maintain the safety of all.
- Maintains clear documentation of events including school and Directorate reports as required. Where a restrictive response is planned it is documented as part of Behaviour Response Plan.
- May refer to Directorate and other external supports with family agreement as required.

Note: At Southern Cross Early Childhood School there are two organisations the ACT Government Directorate and the Childcare component. Where possible, and with parent consent we work together to maintain consistency for all children across both settings.

Support for Families

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School, We believe that when you enrol a child, you enrol the family. As a team we work hard to develop positive relationships between children, staff, families and the community. If parents or carers have any concerns they should seek support from:

- The classroom teacher
- Executive teacher
- Deputy principal
- Principal
- School psychologist
- Community Coordinator

We encourage families to come and talk to us if they have any concerns. All information shared is in confidence. The school has dedicated resources to assist families. We run a number of different courses throughout the year and have an up to date parent resource library. We also endeavour to link families with external support agencies if necessary.



Southern Cross Early Childhood School
Wirraway Crescent Scullin ACT 2614
Telephone (02) 6142 0020
Email: info@scecs.act.edu.au
Web: www.scecs.act.edu.au

Well-Being and Behaviour Guidelines
September 2016

Revision Frequency: 4 years
Due for Revision: September 2020

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Related Documents & References

ACT Government Education and Training

Safe and Supportive Schools Policy (2016) policy identifier: SASS201603

ACT Government Education and Training

Safe and Supportive Schools Policy Guidelines (2016)

Guideline A – Preventing and Addressing Bullying, Harassment and Violence in ACT Public Schools

Guideline B – Safely Responding to Complex and Challenging Behaviour in ACT Public Schools

ACT Government Education and Training

Safe and Supportive Schools: Behaviour Support Guide (2015)

Dweck, Carol S. Mindset the New Psychology of Success (2006)

KidsMatter Australian Primary Schools Mental Health Initiative (2013)

Morrison, B. E. (2005). Restorative Justice in Schools. New Directions in Restorative Justice: Issues, Practice and Evaluation. Devon: Willan Publishing.

Definitions

Bullying: an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

Bystander: is a person or group of people who witness or know about any type of bullying or harassing behaviour and are not directly involved. Any member of the school community can be a bystander and can act to prevent or stop bullying, harassment and behaviour.

Behaviour Response Plan: is a documented action plan for managing a child's behaviour. It is designed by teachers in collaboration with parents/carers, relevant professionals and the child where appropriate. The plan may include changes to the learning environment, teaching strategies, timetable modifications, scripted responses and reward/feedback systems relating to specific behaviours and is regularly monitored and evaluated.

Circle Time: Is a teaching strategy used to provide a structured, regular time when a group meets in a circle to speak, listen, interact and share concerns.

Diversity: is about recognising the value of individual differences to school culture. Diversity can include sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, cultural background, age, religious belief, family makeup and family



Southern Cross Early Childhood School
Wirraway Crescent Scullin ACT 2614
Telephone (02) 6142 0020
Email: info@scecs.act.edu.au
Web: www.scecs.act.edu.au

Well-Being and Behaviour Guidelines
September 2016

Revision Frequency: 4 years
Due for Revision: September 2020

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



responsibilities. Diversity also refers to other ways in which people are different, such as educational level, life experience, work experience, socio-economic background, personality, marital status and abilities/disabilities. Diversity is more than merely accepting people from diverse backgrounds – it is about active support and celebration of difference.

Duty of care: the responsibility to exercise reasonable care to protect the safety of any child against injury that should reasonably have been foreseen. This duty exists whenever a child/teacher relationship exists, while children are on school premises during hours when the school is open and while on school based activities taking place elsewhere.

Good Vibes: A day, or part day, designated to focusing on the positive strategies children can use when faced with social issues. Children will spend this time in small mixed age groups learning the meaning of words like bullying and harassment. They will also be involved in scenarios and role plays to increase understanding.

Harassment: can be verbal, physical or written. It is any unwelcome comment, advance, request or other unwelcome conduct which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Protective Action: describes the interventions taken by staff to minimise the risk when a significant danger is present. This might include restrictive practices, non-physical interventions and changes to the immediate environment. The danger may be from the actions of a person or from hazards in the immediate environment.

Reasonable Adjustment: describes the interventions taken by staff to minimise the risk when a significant danger is present. This might include restrictive practices, non-physical interventions and changes to the immediate environment. The danger may be from the actions of a person or from hazards in the immediate environment.

Respectful Relationships: are interpersonal interactions where all parties feel safe, are treated with fairness, are valued and feel accepted. This concept applies to all relationships, including friendships, child-child, child-teacher, teacher-family, family and partner relationships.

Restrictive Practice: a practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person, with the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm. Restrictive practices must not be used to gain compliance in children and must never be used on their own, but should instead be employed within the context of an overall positive behaviour response plan. Refer to *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy Guideline B*.

Safe and Supportive Schools Contact Officer (SASSCO): schools identify at least one female and one male as the contact officer who will respond to complaints from and provide support to children who have experienced bullying, racial and sexual harassment. The SASSCO will be provided with training to support them in their role.

School Community: The term is used generally to include all stakeholders associated with a school. This may include, but is not limited to: children, staff, parents, families, volunteers and visitors.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): is the process through which children acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals,

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



understand and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive respectful relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Wellbeing: is defined as a state of positive psychological functioning that allows children to thrive, flourish and engage positively with their school and other people.

Trauma: is a response to a negative external event or series of events which surpasses the child's ordinary coping skills. It comes in many forms and includes experiences such as maltreatment, witnessing violence, or loss of a loved one. It is known that traumatic experiences can impact brain development and behaviour inside and outside of the school setting.

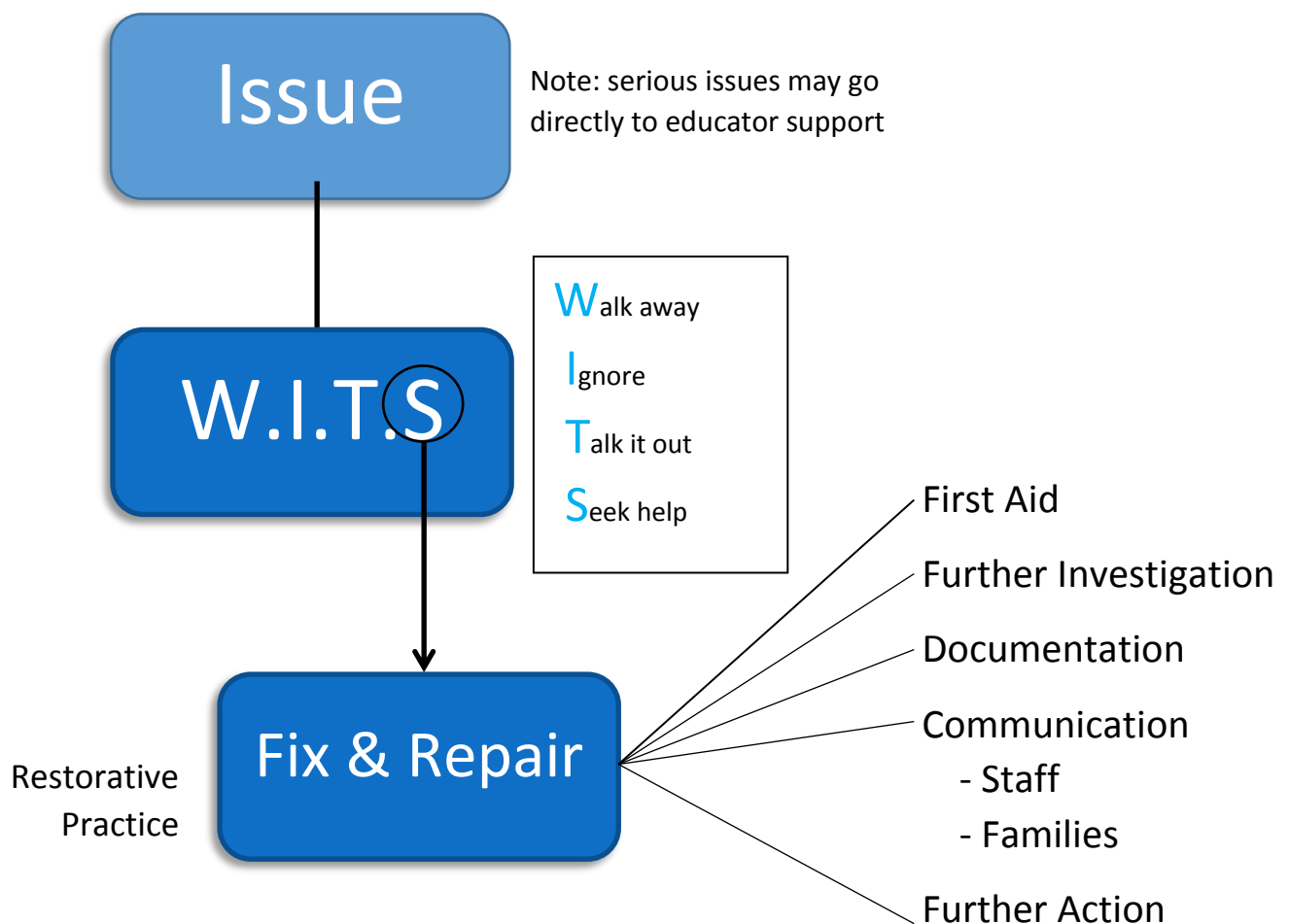
Violence: is the use of force, threatened or actual, against another person(s) that results in psychological harm, property damage, injury or in extreme cases death. Violence may involve provoked or unprovoked acts and can be a single incident, a random act or can occur over time. Threatened or actual actions that involve implements used as weapons or actual weapons are considered to be serious acts of violence.



Appendix 1

When Things Go Wrong Flowchart

This may include an incident with or without causing injury where violence, bullying or harassment is a contributing factor. These systems are in place to ensure safety and are responsive to individual needs.



Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Appendix 2

Explicit Strategies Summary Sheet

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School we seek to build capacity within our children to solve problems themselves. We equip our children with the following strategies and language to build independence, resilience and to help them navigate their way through challenging social moments.

Restorative Conferencing

At Restorative Conferencing Includes getting both the person harmed and the wrong doer together to 'restore the relationship' The questions for the person harmed include:

- What happened?
- How did it make you feel?
- What do you need to happen to feel safe and ok?
- You need to use your words to tell the wrong doer how you felt and what you want to have happen.
- Do you feel ok?

Questions for the wrongdoer include:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done?
- In what way?
- What do you need to do to make things right?

We use the common language of having:

"Safe Hands"

And *"Safe Feet"*

This language allows us to remind children about the appropriate ways in which hands and feet should be used when at school. It draws attention to the safety of everyone and the need to moving our bodies in safe and respectful ways.

When we ask children to "use their WITS" This common language stands for:

Walk away

Ignore

Talk it out

Seek help

See appendix 3

When children come to us seeking help, across the school we use the following script:

"How can I help you?"

"What have you done to help yourself?"

"What else could you do?"

THEN...help if needed.

NOTE: If a child is injured, harmed or needs a basic human need met then help will be given immediately. Staff will use discretion and manage each incident on a case by case basis.

We like to focus on the behaviour not the child. Therefore we talk about the children making

'GOOD CHOICES'

or

'POOR CHOICES'

We believe children are capable of making choices. We guide them towards making good choices.



ACT
Government
Education

Southern Cross Early Childhood School
Wirraway Crescent Scullin ACT 2614
Telephone (02) 6142 0020
Email: info@scecs.act.edu.au
Web: www.scecs.act.edu.au

Well-Being and Behaviour Guidelines
September 2016

Revision Frequency: 4 years
Due for Revision: September 2020

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Using WITS at Southern Cross Early Childhood School

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School we teach our children about using their 'WITS' for when social situations arise.



We do a lot of work around using WITS with our children, and give them opportunities to practice using their WITS through scenarios and role plays.

We are careful to explain that if there is any:

- imminent danger
- safety concerns
- concerns about the welfare of a peer
- risk that things will get broken
- problem that you just cannot solve by yourself (including personal care)
- early warning signs (the 'no' feeling) that children should

S seek help **IMMEDIATELY!!!**