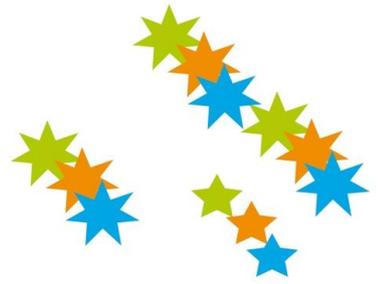


Southern Cross Early Childhood School



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. These guidelines and accompanying procedures aim 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.

VISION: We will inspire a passion for learning across our whole community and provide opportunities for children to play, learn and grow.

MISSION: We recognise children as being capable, creative and competent learners. We partner with their family and our community to nurture their development. We prioritise relationships, play experiences, quality practice and inclusive environments with meaningful connections to Country. We respect and value everyone as learners.

VALUES: respect, resilience, kindness and creativity

Positive Practices

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

Child and adolescent development

From conception to young adulthood, a person's physical, cognitive, psychological, and social development undergoes rapid change. Many factors, including genes and environment, influence this. Most children and young people will experience a positive developmental trajectory, and you can support this through your positive relationships with them. Positive relationships help children and young people better handle challenges, and learn skills that can improve health and wellbeing, resilience and learning outcomes. Responsive relationships also support brain development. In the early years, these relationships, stimulating environments and play are crucial to the developing brain and, therefore, optimal development. These years are also when developing brains are most vulnerable to negative experiences. Poverty, deprivation, toxic stress and trauma, and harsh or unreliable relationships, can compromise healthy development. *Be You 2021*

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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.

Be You

Southern Cross Early Childhood School uses the Be You Framework to support learning about wellbeing and mental health across out school. The five domains of Be You highlighted below are interrelated and support our school to implement a whole learning community approach to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Each is important for supporting child wellbeing and mental health. Our school has a Be You Action team and all families are welcome to join. The action team work with a member of the Leadership Team to enhance whole school practices.



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. Some classes use it at the beginning or end of the school day or to hold class meetings.

Repairing Relationships

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. Restorative conferences are most often done with the support of the executive team.

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?

Southern Cross Early Childhood School

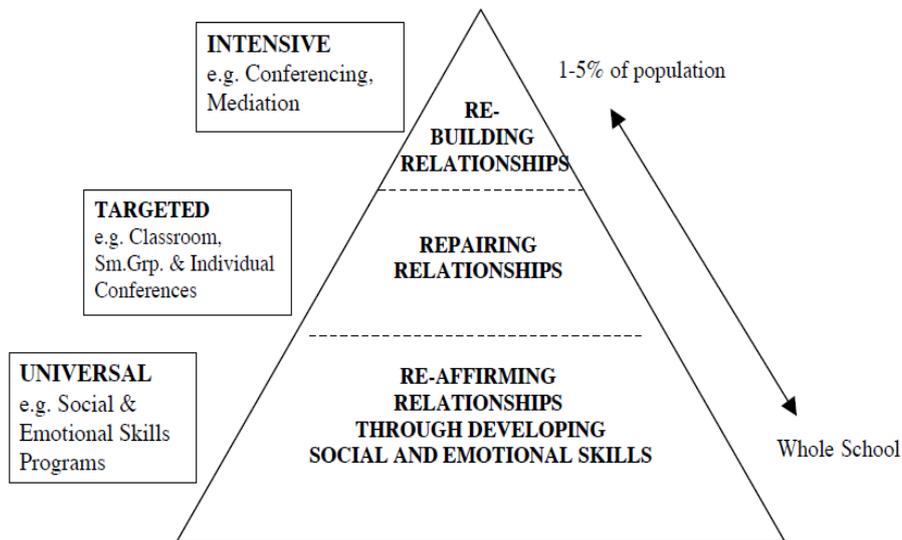


Figure 2: Hierarchy of Restorative Responses, Morrison (2004)

See appendix 2 for further information

Trauma Sensitive

There has been an increase in the understanding that schools need to move towards becoming trauma informed and trauma sensitive. Southern Cross Early Childhood School educators have participated in many professional learning experiences to enhance our knowledge over the past few years. Schools, educators and all 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 and responded to appropriately.

Mindfulness

Children across preschool to year two are provided with Mindfulness experiences every day. For children in kindergarten to year two, this occurs after lunch from 11:50am to 12pm every day. Preschool classes participate in Mindfulness throughout the day. Experiences which are offered include: guided yoga, breathing exercises, stretching, knitting, and guided meditation either by the teacher or an app such as Smiling Minds. For further information please speak directly with your child's classroom teacher.

All children are born with fundamental needs for connection, attunement, trust, autonomy, and love.

When these needs are met in a predictable and reassuring manner, children learn to test the parameters of dependence and interdependence.

The self emerges from a strong foundation, with the confidence it needs to approach learning.

Craig 2016, p. 9

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

/Wait

I – Investigate

T – Talk it out

S – Seek help

(see appendix 3)

We also use the language of having

“safe hands & safe feet”

Protective Behaviours

Southern Cross Early Childhood School explicitly teaches Protective Behaviours lessons each week during term 2. The two core themes emphasised throughout the Protective Behaviours Program are:

THEME 1: We all have the right to feel safe all of the time

THEME 2: We can talk about anything with someone we trust no matter what it is

Concepts include: Safety, Early Warning Signs, Networking and Persistence

Good Vibes

Good Vibes afternoons are held at Southern Cross once per term. Children are placed into groups from preschool to year two or kindergarten to year two. Groups then work together to investigate a range of topics, including social and play skills, Harmony Day experiences, WITS and general community building. Good Vibes afternoons are promoted each term in the school newsletter and the topic for the session is shared with families.



Southern Cross Early Childhood School



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 within their classroom
- Thinking Time with a buddy teacher

Step 3

- Thinking time with a member of the leadership team
- 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.

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



Supporting 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 and/or Disability Education Contact Officer (DECO)
- 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.

Emotion Coaching

The key aspects of Emotion Coaching identified by Gottman and colleagues were:

- Being aware of children's emotions
- Viewing children's display of emotions as a time for intimacy and teaching
- Helping children to verbally label the emotions being experienced
- Empathising and validating children's emotions
- Helping children to solve problems (and setting limits where appropriate)

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.

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



- 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 Positive 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 Education Directorate and the Early Childhood Education and Care 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



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)

Be You Professional Learning Summaries, 27 September 2021, Be You, (2021)
<https://beyou.edu.au/learn>

Craig, S, (2008) Reaching and teaching children who hurt: Strategies for your classroom, Paul H Brooks Publishing, Illinois

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.

Tuning in to Kids, University of Melbourne (2021)
<https://tuningintokids.org.au/professionals/>

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.

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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 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 or group feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Mindfulness: is the idea of learning how to be fully present and engaged in the moment, aware of your thoughts and feelings without distraction or judgement.

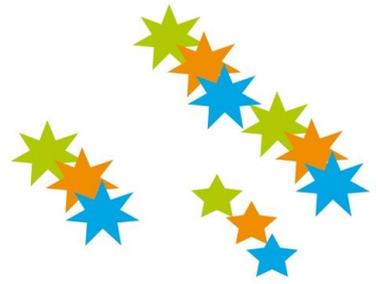
Protective Action: describes the interventions taken by staff to minimise the risk when a significant danger is present. This might include restrictive practices, non-physical interventions and changes to the immediate environment. The danger may be from the actions of a person or from hazards in the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

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



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, 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.

Complaints

We encourage you to speak with:

- your child's class teacher in the first instance
- team leader
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

If your complaint is still unresolved contact:

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

Online: [Education Directorate Contact Form](#) (via Access Canberra)

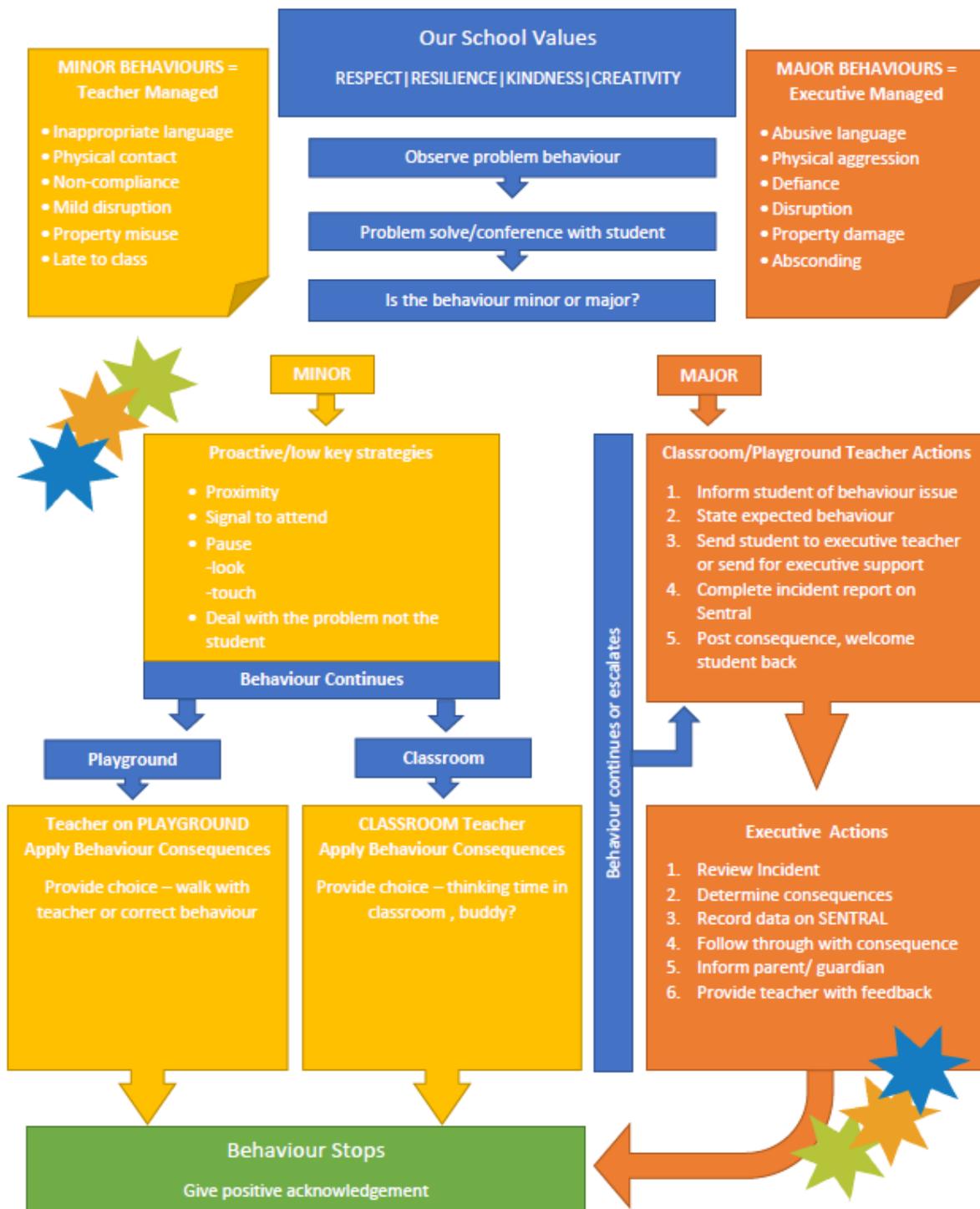
<https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/s/feedback-and-complaints>

Phone: +61 2 6205 5429

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Appendix 1. Behaviour Response Flow Chart



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 move our bodies in a safe and respectful way.

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

Walk away/Wait

Investigate

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

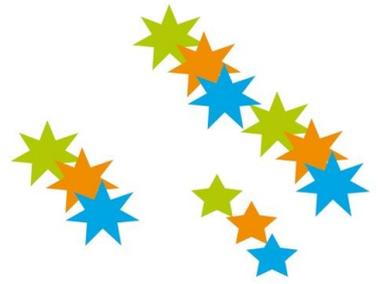
GOOD CHOICES

or

POOR CHOICES

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

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Appendix 3. 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.

Walk away/wait

Investigate

Talk it out

Seek help

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

Seek help IMMEDIATELY!!