Southern Cross Primary has a “Culture of Care and Understanding” for all who attend our school. We have worked extremely hard in the past to develop this and continue to build upon our ethos with student focussed practices in everything we do. Our Programs of Restorative Practices, Circle Time, Tribes and Better Buddies have built and maintained our foundation of a happy, positive and productive learning environment. Our dedicated staff strive daily to embed this positive mindset into our students so we can all work together to maintain our unique environment and continue to produce excellent academic results for all students. As from 2015 our students in need will have access to another new program called Safeminds, which will enhance the capacity of trained staff to effectively identify students with early signs of stress, anxiety or the beginnings of mental health issues. We will be able to offer school based interventions, support families and refer on to other agencies if needed. This program firstly focusses on identifying students in need across the school. This need can be seen by classroom teachers, peers and even family members who report to the school welfare contact. After a discussion with parents is initiated we can then work with the student identifying what the perceived problem is. Options will then be explored and outcomes will be discussed with the student. An option will be chosen to work through and this can be supported by contact with the class teacher and family. After some time the student involved will have a follow up session to see how they are progressing with their choice of action. This step by step process can be followed for all students and will give them a structure for approaching situations that may present as a future concern. We are excited to be using this Education Department supported Student Welfare approach.
Our strong culture of resilience and understanding has developed over the last 6 years with the major aim of ours being to assist our students to become more able to deal with any issues affecting them, through using learned strategies. These strategies incorporate mindful thinking, conflict resolution and an understanding of everyone’s role within the school. Our sessions of Restorative Practice (when dealing with friendship and playground issues) have enabled students to discuss their problems and try to come to a group resolution. If this is unsuccessful they will then come to the appropriate staff and ask for a Restorative Chat. On most occasions the students leave the chat with issues solved. This success rate has only occurred because of the hard, consistent work of all staff involved and the trust of our school community and students of the program’s effectiveness.

Our students are also very connected to the staff and each other and we believe this is due to the other programs we use on a regular basis. Tribes, Circle Time and Better Buddies are part of our curriculum and there are many opportunities across a week where the students participate in activities with each other across the school. All Tribes and Better Buddy groups are multi-aged and the Leadership students have a major role in creating activities and helping lead them. This instils confidence and a strong community ethos amongst all students and everyone looks forward to our whole school activity sessions.

Better Buddy sessions occur fortnightly and are led by our staff that teach their "passion" to the students and are supported by the student leadership group. We encourage our staff to teach their passion so that the students can see how great it is for others learning to share our passions. Better Buddies is a fun rotational activity time on a Friday afternoon that operates for most of the year.

Circle Time is a great way to start the day and operates a number of times across a week. These fun sessions give the teachers and students in each class insight into how everyone is feeling and if there are some issues that need to be addressed. It is an effective communication tool for all in the classroom and is used extensively at the beginning of the year to create an accepting and friendly class culture. As these programs are used by all staff across the school we have developed a consistent, whole school approach to developing our student’s social and emotional competence.
Every staff member and student strive daily to maintain the culture we have worked so hard to develop and our academic and social results are testimony to the educational commitment of us all. Our students are inspired to be curious and learn and the results below of our Attitudes to Schools Survey reflect how engaged they are with all facets of learning. We are well above State and National averages and we share these results with our students and community with great pleasure and accomplishment.

![Graph showing various scores in different quartiles for various categories such as Classroom Behaviour, Connectedness to Peers, Student Safety, Student Distress, Student Morale, Learning Confidence, School Connectedness, Stimulating Learning, Student Motivation, Teacher Effectiveness, and Teacher Empathy.](image-url)