

Student Welfare and Child Safe Policy

Section 1. Southern Cross, School Profile Statement.

Southern Cross Primary School is situated in Endeavour Hills, part of the City of Casey. Endeavour Hills is at the start of the City of Casey growth corridor. The City of Greater Dandenong is located 10 kms southwest of Endeavour Hills. The school is an active member of the Endeavour Hills Cluster of schools and part of the Casey North Network.

There are approximately 180 students with 11 teachers, 1 Principal and 1 Assistant Principal and 6 SSO's (4 full time Integration Aides and 2 office staff). The staff profile includes a mix of experience from graduate to expert. The leadership team comprises Principal, Assistant Principal and 2 co-ordinators. Students are taught in double classrooms with two teachers. Team teaching approaches are evident in every classroom.

Our students come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds which makes for an interesting mix across the school. All students work well together and have adopted our Tribes principles with enthusiasm and ease.

- All rooms are well-equipped and conducive to effective learning
- All spaces are heated and air-conditioned
- Extensive range of play spaces for children including an oval and 2 adventure playgrounds

Social - community and demographics

- Located in a very mixed social demographic
- 46% of families entitled to receive CSEF
- 5% of families where one or both parents/guardians are professional or business proprietors
- The majority of housing is in older homes owned or rented and approximately 25% of our cohort is transient.

The Disabilities and Impairment program is extensive. The program is inclusive and does not differentiate according to disability. The students enrolled in the school come from the categories of Intellectual Disability, Vision Impaired, Autism and Severe Behaviour Disorder.

The school provides extensive support programs for Student Wellbeing in the belief that all students benefit from a proactive and supportive approach to improving their social

competence. Since the implementation of our school wide programs in Restorative Justice, Tribes, SafeMinds and Circle Time, our student wellbeing and connectedness to school profiles have remained high. All staff and students use and demonstrate the principles of these programs on a daily basis with all aspects of school life. Our Leadership Team jointly monitors student data and professional development to assist parents and staff.

We also have a trained Child Social Worker working with our students, staff and families on a fortnightly basis. She has vast experience when working in school settings and has supported many of our struggling families. This in turn supports the students at school which has a positive impact on their learning.

Endeavour Hills is often a place of first residence for many new arrivals to Australia. Because of this, the enrolment characteristics of our school change as the pattern of immigration alters. For many of our students, Southern Cross is their first Australian school.

The proportion of students who have a Language in addition to English is approximately 78% with many commencing with no English.

The number of languages spoken is 38 including English.

The gender breakdown of the students is only slightly more males 52% than females 48%.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents/carers and school staff is nil.

Currently there are 0 students in out-of-home care following Child Protection involvement. At any stage this number has been historically very low.

Section 2. Whole School Prevention Statement.

At Southern Cross Primary School we have a variety of current programs and strategies in place to promote high student engagement, attendance and positive behaviours.

These programs have been put in place to address the need for staff, students and the wider parent community to feel that Southern Cross is a school that will support their students to attend regularly and participate in class/school events and enjoy learning.

Programs and practices we use are:

- Weekly reminders via our newsletter and fortnightly Monday assemblies of the need to be at school regularly and on time. Contact with families who regularly offend, to ascertain possible need for intervention from school support staff or our school Psychologist/ social worker.
- The use of a more proactive approach,(from School Leadership or Psychologist) to the families of students with chronic, serial absences. Seek support from SMR when appropriate.

- The implementation of a support program to provide practice lessons and a "trip diary" for students travelling overseas as there is a definite need for this in our school.(this is the major contributor to long term absences across the school)
- Establishment of a transition program for students who enter and leave our school throughout a year that follows the line of the program developed by the Department of Defence titled "Moving Schools, making the transition positive."
- Continually embedding our Whole School Student Wellbeing and Values Program which incorporates: Restorative Justice, Circle Time, SafeMinds and Tribes. This needs to be an ongoing commitment so that any new students and staff will be able to benefit from this whole school approach.
- Extending and strengthening our Student Leaders' program, seek students' support in improving perception of safety amongst the student community across the school.
- Utilising the services of the SSSO, who are based in our school, when the need arises.
- Utilising external agencies. - *Refer to Services and Practitioners Directory.*
- Continuing to monitor the need for programs such as, Breakfast and homework Club to suit the changes in our school enrolments,
- The school runs lunchtime computer, gardening, woodwork and sport activities during some lunchtimes.
- Our school regularly consults with students, staff, parents/carers and the wider community to ensure we are meeting their expectations. We have parent/teacher evenings and provide an interpreter service for our non English speaking parents at any time. We also have a weekly newsletter, which outlines both school events and details of school expectations, as well as messages to parents/carers on how to best assist their child's education and life experiences.
- Diaries are used in grades 3-6 to assist further with communication between home and school.
- We aim to ensure that our physical environment will be conducive to our team approach to learning. Our new building will add further space which will enhance greater flexibility of learning spaces and assist in meeting the different learning styles of our students.
- Students have suggested, developed or implemented programs and activities,(with the assistance of staff) such as casual dress days, buddy activities, mixed age rotational lessons and sports competitions at lunch times. Our fortnightly Multi-age Tribes afternoons have also been very successful amongst the students.
- Our school regularly maintains the safety of playground areas and equipment. We have employed maintenance people to repair and maintain any occurring safety or maintenance concerns. A maintenance register is kept at the office for teachers to notify maintenance staff of recent concerns.
- Teachers regularly have the opportunity to discuss and voice their thoughts on playground management issues, such as individual student behaviours, group concerns or activities students are involved in. These discussions take place at weekly staff and team meetings. From these meetings and discussion we have determined that we would provide an abundance of sporting equipment, such as balls, skipping ropes and

general playground games equipment, for students to use at break times. Students are encouraged to be inclusive of others and to ask others to join in if they notice someone who appears to be alone or is sitting on the Better buddies "friendship" seat. All students are aware of how to approach someone sitting on that seat. We maintain high fencing around the school boundary and there is access to and from the school from the front and side entrances. Teachers have gate keys should the need arise for a gate to be opened. Students are aware and are reminded to keep away from the boundary fencing, as on occasions balls go over the fence from playing too close. We have at least two staff on playground duty at all times. The staff are clearly identified to all by wearing safety coloured vests while on duty.

- We believe that by offering all these programs at school to productively engage our students, we have embedded and continue to refine our successful Student Engagement culture.

Below is a list of the Restorative Questions used in the chat situations:

When things go wrong	When someone has been hurt
<p>What happened?</p> <p>What were you thinking at the time?</p> <p>What have you thought of since?</p> <p>Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?</p> <p>What do you think you need to do to make things right?</p>	<p>What did you think when you realised what had happened?</p> <p>What impact has this had on you and others?</p> <p>What has been the hardest thing for you?</p> <p>What do you think needs to happen to make things right?</p>

Section 3: Rights and Responsibilities

Our students, their parents/carers and our staff will ***treat each other with dignity and respect at all times***. All members of our school community have ***the right to feel safe and welcomed in our school***. These basic philosophies are part of our imbedded culture since the inception of ***Restorative Practices 10 years ago***. We have further supported these values with the use of ***Tribes and Circle Time*** across the school. All 3 approaches are

linked with the same core beliefs and are practiced on a daily basis across the whole school. The Staff, Students and Parent Community have embraced this joint philosophy and we have been pleased with the changes it has made to all parts of our school culture.

Teachers have the right to expect ***cooperative and appropriate behaviour*** from all students. The management of behaviour is to be shared cooperatively between home and school. The school has outlined our Student Code of Conduct in which school behaviours are listed.

Our united school wide approach is committed to:

- 1 Developing and ***displaying mutual respect for all.***
- 2 ***Developing proactive social skills*** and Leadership potential.
- 3 Encouraging ***sharing, tolerance and compassion.***
- 4 ***Respect others*** through ***attentive listening and manners.***
- 5 Resolve problems ***calmly, sensibly and fairly.***
- 6 Care for yourself, others and property.
- 7 Improving self esteem by promoting ***self-discipline and acceptance of one's own responsibility.***
- 8 Enhancing parent/teacher relationships through ***open communication.***

All members of the Southern Cross Primary School community have a right to -

- fully participate in ***an environment free of discriminatory behaviour - including racist, sexist, ability-based, class based and homophobic forms of harassment, bullying, vilification, violence, intimidation, abuse and exclusion.***
- be treated with ***mutual respect and dignity*** and display this in return to all community members.
- feel ***valued, safe and supported*** in an environment that encourages ***freedom of thought and expression.***

All members of the Southern Cross Primary School community have a responsibility to-

- acknowledge their obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and communicate these obligations to all members of the school community.
- participate and contribute to a learning environment which supports the learning of self and others.
- Ensure their *actions and views do not impact on the health and wellbeing of other members* of the school community.
- treat all members of the school community with *empathy and mutual respect*.
- support *school rules, codes of practice, programs and decisions* made by the school.
- enhance the cohesiveness of the school community through the development of *positive community involvement and citizenship*.

All students of Southern Cross Primary School have a right to-

- *learn and socialise without interference or intimidation in a safe and secure environment.*
- Be treated with *mutual respect and fairness* as individuals.
- Be *supported and encouraged* by school staff, parents and their peers to *understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.*
- *To give support and assistance in the disclosure of child safety matters.*
- Expect a learning program that meets their *individual needs*.

All students of the Southern Cross Primary School have a responsibility to-

- be prepared to learn and display *attentive listening* in all situations.
- explore their full potential and allow others to do the same.
- show *mutual respect towards all* and observe the *rights of others*.

All teachers of Southern Cross Primary School have a responsibility to-

- manage student behaviour and welfare in strict accordance within the school's stated policy and practice and the Department Code of Conduct.
- ensure that the classroom and school *environment is safe, caring and purposeful*, correlating to staff supervision and *Duty of Care expectations*.
- aim to *prevent discriminatory practices and harassment* of students within the school community.
- build *positive relationships* with students as a basis for engagement and learning.
- use and manage the resources of the school to create *stimulating, safe and meaningful* learning.
- treat all members of the school community with *respect, fairness and dignity*.
- present as a *positive role model*.

All teachers of Southern Cross Primary School have a right to-

- expect to be able to work in an *atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation*.
- use discretion in the application of *rules and consequences*.
- receive *mutual respect and support* from the wider school community.

All parents of Southern Cross Primary School have a responsibility to-

- build *positive relationships* with members of the school community.
- ensure students attend school and have the appropriate learning materials.
- promote *mutually respectful relationships* with other parents, staff and students.
- abide by the school's *social justice procedures*.

All parents of Southern Cross Primary School have a right to-

- know that their children are in a *safe, positive learning environment* where they are treated *fairness and mutual respect*.
- expect a *positive and supportive approach* to their child's learning.
- expect communication and participation in their child's education and learning.

The School Council of Southern Cross Primary School have a responsibility to -

- ensure the educational needs of the students will be the primary consideration for decision making.
- ensure *diversity* within the school will be *recognised and utilised*.
- undertake that they will develop policy directions and observe the Principal's right to implement policy in the most appropriate manner.

Section 4: Shared Expectations

Southern Cross Primary School has developed shared expectations to ensure that the learning, safety and rights of all are respected. The expected and appropriate behaviours for our school community are set out and intended to support individual students and families that come here from a diversity of backgrounds, communities and experiences.

Each teacher will be responsible for developing classroom strategies consistent with the school's code of conduct. Students will be involved in the development of these strategies to encourage them to adopt appropriate behaviour in the classroom. This will include the *elimination of all forms of bullying, harassment and violence* which obstruct the educational progress of students and the general management of the school. The consequences for breaches of these rules will be well established and consistently applied in the classroom and throughout the school. It is important that students who are experiencing difficulties in relating positively with other students and staff are encouraged to discuss these difficulties with staff responsible for student welfare. These staff may include student welfare coordinators, grade teachers or year level coordinators. They can assist students to establish goals and plans which build their confidence and competence in social relationships and academic work. Where a student is beginning to build up a history of Restorative Chats, parents will be notified with a view to negotiating an agreed approach to solving the problem before it becomes a more serious matter.

In the case of *students with disabilities and impairments*, our school will develop *strategies*, (Individual Learning Plans) *to assist them to explore their potential*. We will also establish support groups for this purpose.

When a student violates rules under the school's code of conduct, teachers will invoke consequences that are consistent with the rules.(set out in our Restorative Justice process and following Department protocol) Rules are clearly explained so that students understand why they have been punished. The student ***should understand the connection between the behaviour and the consequence.*** Consequences should be ***graded in severity,*** with emphasis on ***students being accountable and learning to take responsibility for their behaviour.*** These disciplinary measures will be part of the teacher's classroom management plan and consistent with ***the whole school's approach to the implementation of the code of conduct.*** Care will be taken to ensure that the student's studies are not adversely affected by such disciplinary measures.

See attached the Student Behaviour Management Plan. A Behaviour Management Plan will be drawn up and suited to the particular case. This will also be discussed with the parents.

Accurate records are to be kept of significant disciplinary actions. The Principal will maintain a register of all suspensions and expulsions.

The school is continuing to consider the ongoing concern over absence levels at Southern Cross. It is acknowledged that there are two types of absence presenting a challenge. The first is absences due to travel overseas for family reunion or religious observance. Due to the nature of the population of the school, these absences are likely to continue. Withdrawal of children from school for these purposes is not necessarily an indication that families do not place great importance on their children's education. Because of the nature of refugee migration, in particular, many of our students have family members scattered in several countries. The occasion on which the family is secure enough in Australia (eg permanent residence or citizenship gained) and has saved enough to return home or to travel to another safe country to meet up with relatives is a major event in the life of the family. We work with the family to supply them with sufficient work for students travelling overseas so literacy and numeracy practice can still be maintained. They are also given a

work book so a daily diary can be kept and then shared on return to the classroom with fellow peers and teachers.

In working to lower absence rates it is important that we separate the above absences from those of our serial, chronic absentees. It is this second group that represents disengagement (often intergenerational disengagement).

It will be important for us to concentrate on intervention strategies for students with high absences and students who are chronically late.

Families of students with high absences will be made aware of the average absence of students from school, and the degree to which their children's absences exceed this average.

The Assistant Principal will liaise with SSO staff to remain informed of absence and lateness patterns. She will develop a time-efficient system of communication with families, and will seek involvement of SMR when appropriate. The Assistant Principal will continue to monitor and follow up the absences of particular re-offending students. In some instances the Assistant principal will need to work with outside agencies and the school Psychologist/Social Worker to support students and their families who are experiencing ongoing difficulties.

Expectations of Students include:

- positive participation
- ask for help/ask questions
- enjoy being in class
- treat classmates/teachers with mutual respect and dignity
- value school resources
- attendance is regular
- support classmates/teachers

Expectations of Teachers include:

- create an engaging curriculum

- provide a stimulating and enjoyable classroom
- make sure every student has an *equal opportunity to participate*
- ask for student input into the curriculum and class environment(negotiated curriculum)
- role model *attentive listening* to students and *value their contribution*
- *listen to parents insights* into their children's learning
- provide a wide range or resources to engage students
- *understand the needs of students* and accommodate those needs

Expectations of the Principal include:

- provide leadership, not only to school staff but to students as well
- ensure staff, students and the wider school community understand their and the school's expectations
- staff and students have the resources and equipment to assist them in the process of providing the best possible teaching and learning
- the curriculum of the school takes into account the needs of specific students where practicable (such as students with disabilities, ESL etc)
- encourages the participation of parents where practicable

Expectations of student wellbeing and support staff include:

- *support* at any time of the school day
- *accessibility and availability*
- *non-judgemental attitudes*
- *trust and confidentiality*
- *understanding and caring*
- *attentive listening and mutual respect*

Expectations of parents/carers include:

- support for their children attending the school

- cooperate with requests from the school
- promote positive educational outcomes for their children
- ensure their children are attending school on a regular basis
- communicate clearly with the school about the needs of their children
- demonstrate mutual respect for all within the school community

Section 5: School Actions and Consequences

Our school places significant emphasis upon issuing positive consequences for meeting high expectations. A focus on rewarding positive behaviour is equally as important as condoning inappropriate behaviour.

We have established a comprehensive policy which is familiar to all parties on the various aspects of student wellbeing and discipline practices.

Our Playground/Classroom Management Policy covers in detail such practices relating to:

- Playground Behaviour(Restorative Justice Chats)
- Restricted Play Areas
- Yard Supervision
- Student Leaders
- House System
- Buddy System
- Student Support Services
- School Medical Service
- School Dental Service
- Program for Students with disabilities.
- State School Relief & Uniform
- Mandatory Reporting of Child Physical or Emotional Abuse
- Kids Helpline

- School Psychologist

When a student does not meet the agreed expectations of the school, a staged response is implemented consistent with the Restorative Practice Policy outlined below.

- Talking to the student/s concerned and referring them to our Restorative Practice policy expectations.
- Discussing appropriate behaviours in the classroom or playground.
- Restorative Justice Chat(Leading Teacher and AP convene)
- Contact with parents, student behaviour management plan,(drawn up from Restorative Chat) sent home to be signed.
- Making changes to the student's learning program to better equip him/her to behave positively.
- Ask the student to undertake tasks designed to better equip him/her to behave positively in the future.
- Revisit Restorative Chat a week later to see if all is going well.
- Counselling, if the need arises.
- Appropriate behaviours taught and agreed to.
- Payment for damage sought.
- Withdrawal of privileges if necessary.
- Remove the student from class/playground if necessary, or restrict playtimes
- Negotiate alternative pathways or settings for student; or as a matter of last resort, suspension or expulsion following DET procedures.

If a student exhibits ongoing inappropriate behaviour patterns, and does not appear to be adhering to the agreed strategies discussed above, it may be deemed necessary to apply suspension and/or expulsion measures. The guidelines for such measures are listed below in the Quick Reference (See sections 4.3.6 and 4.4.4)

Actions and consequences for student absences.

- student attendance is monitored twice each day.
- attendance data is monitored for absences on a regular basis
- after 3 consecutive days of absence a phone call is made to the student's parent/carer to determine the reason for absence.
- wellbeing staff and teachers of student are informed of the reasons for absences.
- parent/carer meetings/discussions/counselling may follow on from the analysis of absence data.
- if the reason/s given for absence are deemed to be outside the shared expectations of school attendance, then further counselling and meetings may be sought by wellbeing staff.
- if prolonged absence is due to overseas travel, the school will endeavour to provide educational material for the student.
- there is a shared expectation that all absences should be explained by the parent/carer.
- further counselling may be deemed necessary for students who have consistent absence concerns to ensure students attend school.
- If the Principal continues to have concerns regarding student absence, he/she will implement the processes listed in the Quick reference guide below. (See Section 3.5 Attendance follow-up)

Quick Reference: Southern Metropolitan Region Processes relating to Student Engagement Policy Guidelines

3.5 Attendance follow-up

- Principal requests RD Attendance Letter 1 (Catherine Marie 9794 3552)
- Principal monitors attendance
- Principal requests RD Attendance Letter 2 if there has been no improvement (Catherine Marie 9794 3552)
- Principal monitors attendance, if still no improvement Principal initiates a 'Child First' referral or DHS notification.

3.6 Student attendance exemptions

- Principal contacts regional office to discuss student and request an exemption form (Kerry Winsor 9794 3563)

Note: Principals are responsible for approving Entertainment Industry exemptions.

4.3.6 Period of suspension

- 8 days suspension or 4 individual suspensions: Principals should inform their SSSO Network Coordinator Team Leader and the Regional Office (Kerry Winsor 9794 3563) of students who have reached 8 days suspension or 4 individual suspensions in one year, using the 'Regional Notification Form - 8 days suspension' provided with Edumail 7335 (sent 16/07/2009).
- A student cannot be suspended for more than 15 days: If a principal feels the need to suspend an individual for more than 15 days in one year, an application must be made using the 'Application for more than 15 days suspension' form provided with Edumail 7335 (sent 16/07/2009). The completed form should be emailed to the appropriate ARD. (Inner – Denise Ramus, Outer – Michael Small, Peninsula – Bob Stephens)

4.4.4 Procedures for expulsion

- Principal to inform Regional Director of impending expulsion (via email to ARD: Inner – Denise Ramus, Outer – Michael Small, Peninsula – Bob Stephens)
- ARD nominates most appropriate person to attend SSG to discuss expulsion.
- Principal sends Notice of Expulsion and Expulsion report to the Regional Office (Kerry Winsor P 9794 3563 F 9794 3500)
- Principal to broker pathway for the students' future educational placement, then inform Student Wellbeing Team of the outcome (Kerry Winsor 9794 3563)
- Principal of destination school to complete a 'Student Placement Progress Report' provided with Edumail 7335 (sent 16/07/2009) and send to Student Wellbeing Team (Kerry Winsor P 9794 3563 F 9794 3500) after 1 month and at the end of each Term for a 12 month period.

4.4.7 Appeal process

- Parent lodges the appeal with the principal, within 10 school days of the date of the expulsion.
- Principal informs the Regional Director Nominee (via email to ARD: Inner – Denise Ramus, Outer – Michael Small, Peninsula – Bob Stephens) within 24 hours of receiving the notice of appeal.
- The Regional Director Nominee will arrange an Expulsion Review Panel.
- If the expulsion is overturned by the appeal panel the student must be readmitted to school immediately and the record of expulsion must be removed from the students permanent record.



This policy was last ratified by School Council in....