

Child Safety at Ruyton

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR CONTRACT STAFF, CASUAL STAFF & SELECTED VOLUNTEERS

[ICS101]

Introduction

Ruyton has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse.

The safety of children is best safeguarded when all individuals accept responsibility, work together and play their part in keeping children and young people safe from harm and abuse.

This booklet provides child safety information and reporting procedures for contract staff, casual staff and selected volunteers. Casual staff includes teaching and non-teaching staff employed by Ruyton Girls' School. This covers sessional music staff, sports coaches and assistants, and swimming instructors. It is also intended for selected volunteers that by the nature of their work, duration and extent of guidance and supervision provided to students, have been deemed by the Principal to be subject to additional screening, induction and supervision.

Understanding Your Responsibilities

Individuals working or volunteering within a child connected environment have responsibilities under Victoria's Child Protection Framework. This framework includes the Victorian Child Safe Standards and a number of prescriptive legal and regulatory requirements as detailed below.

Child Safe Standards

Ruyton has a *Child Safety Program* which is made up of work systems, practices, policies and procedures designed to maintain a child safe environment and to embed an organisational culture of child safety within the School community. The Program deals specifically with child protection issues and is designed to ensure compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and related child protection laws.

A key component of Ruyton's *Child Safety Program* is the **Child Safe Policy** and **Child Safety Code of Conduct** (see Attachment 1 & 2). You must read and understand both of these documents.

Working with Children Checks

In accordance with Ruyton's Child Safe Policy, all staff, Board members and volunteers' providers must undergo a Working with Children Check (WWC Check). Teachers registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) are not required to have a WWC Check.

A record of an individual's WWCC card will be kept on file by the Payroll office.

Each individual must notify the Department of Justice that they have commenced work at Ruyton within 21 days of commencing work.

It is the responsibility of the individual employee or volunteer to renew their WWWC.

Ruyton cannot continue to employ a staff member whose card is expired.

Unless exempt, to work within the Ruyton community you must have a valid **Working with Children Check**. Evidence of your WWC Card must be provided to the Payroll Office.

Criminal Law

The Crimes Act 1958 sets out a number of child protection related offences including those relating to indecent acts and persistent sexual abuse. Of key relevance to the Victorian child protection framework are the offences of:

- **Grooming** – Members of the Ruyton community need to be aware that predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child is a criminal offence and must be reported to the Police.
- **Failure to Protect a Child** - Requires people in authority within a school to take action to protect children where they know that a person associated with the school poses a substantial risk of sexually abusing a child.
- **Failure to Disclose** - Applies to all adults (a person aged 18 or over), not just professionals who work with children, and requires them to report to the Police where they hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child (under 16) in Victoria.

You should be aware of the criminal offences associated with grooming and failure to report under the **Crimes Act 1958**.

Reporting Procedures

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Policy should be called on 000. In this case, the Principal should be notified immediately.

If you have concerns that a child may be experiencing abuse, whether or not you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the abuse has occurred, you should:

1. Clearly document your concerns and any observations you have made. Be specific about the words used (if the matter has been brought to your attention by the child or any other person). If the child has spoken to you directly do not promise them that you will keep the matter confidential.
2. Immediately raise your concerns with one of the **Child Safety Leaders**. They have received additional training and assist Ruyton in coordinating responses to child protection issues and will consult with the Principal to address the concerns.

The **Child Safety Leaders** are: -

- Deputy Principal & Head of Senior School – Glenis Gumley
- Deputy Principal & Director Learning – Cathryn Furey
- Head of Junior School – Kate Giles
- Director Wellbeing – Trish Hatzis
- Director Early Learning – Sarah Denholm
- School Counsellors (Senior & Junior) – Elise Conabere, Kylie Downs & Monique Alexander
- Health Centre Nurses – Anita Pearson & Michelle Gurney

In response to your report Ruyton will:

1. Take all reasonable steps to remove the risk of further harm to the child.
2. Ensure accurate records of discussions are kept.
3. Ensure the matter is handled sensitively and in a confidential manner.

4. Ensure any required mandatory and legislative reports required by the School are made.
5. Conduct a review of the Child Safe Risks in the Ruyton risk register and corresponding controls to address any further risks identified.

If you believe a child is in immediate danger **call the Police on 000** and notify the Principal. If you have concerns, contact a **Child Safety Leader**.

Additional information for Mandatory Reporters

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYFA) requires that mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection when they believe that a child (aged under 17) is in need of protection from significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse.

Mandatory reporters are defined by the CYFA and include:

- Teachers and early childhood workers;
- the Principal;
- medical practitioners;
- registered psychologists; and
- nurses.

The CYFA states that any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is at risk of harm should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection.

All School staff who have concerns that a student may be in need of protection or may have been the victim of a sexual offence, should notify a School **Child Safety Leader** as soon as possible to discuss their concerns.

Important points:

- A professional does not have to prove that abuse has taken place – they only need to have reasonable grounds for their belief.
- Permission is not needed from parents to make a notification nor do they need to be informed that a notification is being made.
- If a professional makes a notification in good faith they cannot be held legally liable regardless of the outcome of the notification.
- Notification shall not be held to constitute a breach of professional etiquette or ethics.
- The name of the notifier is not disclosed unless the notifier gives written permission.
- The Principal has ultimate duty of care.

Disclosure of Staff/Student Interactions

It is Ruyton's policy that all staff, contractors and casual staff are encouraged to declare any interactions or relationships with students that exist outside school hours or School premises. This includes where the staff member, contractor or casual staff member is related to the student; friends with the student's parents or family; or given parental consent to interact with the student for academic purposes outside of school hours. Declarations should be made in writing to the Principal.

Child Safety Declaration

Contract staff, casual staff and nominated volunteers must sign the **Child Safety Declaration** contained in Attachment 4 to confirm that they have read and understood the key elements contained in Ruyton's Child Safety Program.

You must sign the **Child Safety Declaration** contained in Attachment 3.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from:

VICTORIAN STATE GOVERNMENT (DEECD)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>

September 2019



Child Safety Policy

Introduction

The protection of children and young persons is the responsibility of everyone who works at Ruyton Girls' School, including its staff, contractors, parents and volunteers. We all share responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children.

Ruyton has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children and to keeping them safe at all times.

Commitment

Ruyton and its Board are committed to:

- promoting child safety in its School environment
- ensuring the safety and best interests of the children in its care, taking into account children of cultural and linguistic diversity and those with disabilities
- a zero tolerance to child abuse
- actively working to empower the students in our care
- implementing and continuously improving procedures and systems that promote and influence an organisational culture of child safety and that provides a safe environment for our students

Ensuring child safety is about balancing expectations and complying with legal obligations. It is not about creating an atmosphere of suspicion.

It is the role of the Board and the Principal to monitor Ruyton's adherence to this policy. This will be done by:

- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings
- having the Principal and other responsible staff report regularly to the Board
- consideration by the Principal, responsible staff members and the Board of areas for continual improvement.

Roles and responsibilities

The Principal and the Board are responsible for developing strategies that embed an organisational culture of child safety at Ruyton. These strategies will give the highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education and wellbeing.

Everyone involved in Ruyton has a role to play and is responsible for protecting children and upholding the duty of care that Ruyton owes to all of its students.

Ruyton's policies and procedures will include the names and contact details of staff who have specific responsibilities in relation to child safety and for receiving reports of suspicion of child abuse.

Values and Principles

The following values and principles will guide Ruyton in implementing consistent policies and influence an organisational culture of child safety:

- Child safety policies and procedures will support ongoing assessment and identification and minimisation of the risk of child abuse in the School environment.
- Our culture will foster openness so that all persons, and particularly children, may feel safe to disclose concerns or risks of harm to children.
- Appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children will be expected at all times.
- Policies will support the processes that assist the School to engage the most appropriate personnel to work with children.
- Regular staff training will occur to ensure there is a full awareness and understanding of policies and processes.
- Suspected or actual abuse of children will be reported promptly to the appropriate authorities.
- Support and assistance will be provided to children who have suffered abuse and to their families.

Recruitment

Ruyton will implement recruitment processes that will assist in the effective selection of suitable personnel, including staff, volunteers and contractors.

These processes will ensure:

- new and existing staff, volunteers and contractors understand the importance of child safety and are aware of Ruyton's policies and procedures
- each job or category of job for School staff that involves child-connected work has a clear statement, which includes the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and the essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety
- compliance with School policy for recruitment and selection of staff for obtaining, verifying and recording information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work, including processes for screening and background checks
- induction of new staff, volunteers and contractors into the School's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work
- a staff member's continuing suitability for child-connected work is monitored and assessed.

All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for Ruyton must be informed about the School's child safety practices and its Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Ruyton will implement practices that enable the Principal and the Board to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work for the School perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Ruyton will implement and continually improve its procedures for responding to and reporting suspected abuse of a child whilst in its care currently or previously. Ruyton will also implement practices and programs that will support, encourage and enable School staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.

Our procedures will be based on the following:

- compliance with mandatory reporting laws and obligations imposed by the criminal law to report a belief that child abuse may have occurred
- ensuring any situation is handled appropriately
- concerns of child abuse are reported to the Victoria police and relevant authorities
- Ruyton provides support to the person/s making allegations of child abuse
- all parties involved in an allegation of child abuse are treated fairly and consistently
- providing clarity as to who should notify any concerns and who to notify within Ruyton
- what processes should be followed during and after an investigation
- ensuring that reviewing and improving our processes is continuous
- they will be easily accessible for all persons within Ruyton and they will be simple and easy to understand for children.

Ruyton will support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse, by:

- ensuring they have access to School support personnel, such as counsellors and School psychologists
- ensuring their situation is treated confidentially and with sensitivity
- ensuring they have all the necessary staff support around them and are given due consideration for and necessary adjustments in the curriculum and co-curriculum programmes
- providing such other support or assistance as may be reasonable.

Reducing or removing risks of child abuse

Ruyton will implement appropriate policies and practices for the early identification and response to risks of abuse in its physical and online environment. Such policies and practices will:

- promote understanding by all Ruyton personnel of its expectations in relation to behaviour and conduct when interacting with children and the consequences of failing to abide by those expectations
- seek to achieve ongoing risk assessment to identify and mitigate risk in the School's physical and online environment, taking into account the age and needs of the students, the nature of the activities undertaken at Ruyton and the particular risks they might present
- provide for ongoing training, education and support for all Ruyton personnel in relation to understanding child abuse, identifying risks and areas for improvement, the School's policies and practices for reporting concerns of child abuse and how to respond

- require appropriate human resource policies for appraisal and assessment of personnel in relation to compliance with their child safe obligations.

Ruyton will implement practices that increase the awareness within the School of the need for our internal systems to protect children.

Promoting child empowerment and participation

The Principal and the School Board are responsible for developing strategies to deliver appropriate education about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending Ruyton
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

Ruyton will ensure that the prevention approaches it adopts for its students will be focused on initiatives that build their awareness and encourage them to disclose behaviour that makes them feel unsafe.

Communication

The School community will be informed about this policy. It will be publicly available. It will be available on the School's website and communicated in the School's newsletters, personnel induction programs and during recruitment and enrolment processes for staff, contractors and volunteers.

All Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors of Ruyton will be made aware of this policy and Ruyton's commitment to child safety.

Definitions

Child	An individual who is under the age of 18 years or who is enrolled as a student at Ruyton.
Child abuse	Child abuse includes- (a) any act committed against a child involving- (i) a sexual offence; or (ii) the offence of grooming; and (b) the infliction, on a child, of- (i) physical violence; or (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and (c) serious neglect of a child.
Child-connected work	This is work that is authorised by Ruyton that is performed by an adult in the Ruyton School environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
Child safety	Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
School environment	The Ruyton School environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Ruyton for use by a child during or outside school hours, and includes: (a) our main campus at 12 Selbourne Road, Kew (b) online school environments including email and intranet systems (c) other locations provided by Ruyton for a child's use, including Trinity Grammar School and locations used for School camps, sporting events, tours, excursions, competitions and other events.

Related Documents

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Mandatory Reporting and Child Protection Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technology Policy

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often as circumstances require.



Child Safety

Introduction

The protection of children and young persons is the responsibility of everyone working at Ruyton Girls' School, including all staff, contractors, parents and volunteers. We all share responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children and must behave appropriately towards them when they are in our actual or virtual presence.

Purpose

The purpose of this code of conduct is to:

- promote child safety in the Ruyton School environment
- set standards about the ways in which individuals working in the Ruyton environment are expected to behave and conduct themselves when interacting with our students
- outline the possible consequences should this code of conduct be breached.

Scope

All individuals who are working in the Ruyton environment are required to comply with this code of conduct at all times. Such individuals include those who are:

- directly engaged or employed by Ruyton, such as its teachers, non-teaching staff, specialist coaches and music instructors
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider.

The Ruyton environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Ruyton for use by a child during or outside School hours, and includes:

- our main campus at 12 Selbourne Road, Kew
- online School environments, including our email and intranet systems
- Trinity Grammar School
- other locations provided by Ruyton for our student's use, including locations used for School camps, tours, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

Overarching Principles

- the adult/child relationship should be professional at all times
- an adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstances should be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child.

Standards of conduct

(a) All persons working in the Ruyton environment will:

- respect the privacy of children
- protect children from violence, abuse, bullying, torment, ridicule and neglect
- protect children from child abuse
- respect the language and customs of a child's family
- treat everyone in the School community with respect
- maintain a duty of care towards children
- avoid covert or overt sexual behaviours when interacting with children
- maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in their interactions with children
- refrain from possessing or using illegal drugs or alcohol when working with children
- behave as positive role models
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/safety of another child
- promote the culture of safety, participation and empowerment of all children, regardless of age, gender, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or ability
- report immediately to the Principal or Principal's delegate if they have a reasonable belief or suspicion that a child has been or is being abused or neglected
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) is (are) safe
- alert the Principal or another Executive member if a breach of this code is observed.

(b) The Principal or Principal's delegate will:

- report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher

(c) All persons working in the Ruyton environment will not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- behave in a discriminatory way towards children
- engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a child that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance because of the child's or another person's race, culture, religion, sex or disability
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example in appropriate sitting on laps)

- engage in prejudicial, oppressive or threatening behaviour towards a child
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- use offensive, profane, discriminatory or abusive language towards or in the presence of a child
- communicate privately with children outside the context of their professional or volunteer relationship
- be in the presence of a child in the Ruyton environment when under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as offering favouritism (for example, offering or receiving gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family (unless necessary for a legitimate School purpose, eg by providing families with School information or assisting students with their school work)
- take photos or videos of children in the School environment, or publish photos or videos (including online), that are not for authorised School purposes, or taken or published without the authorisation of the child or the child's parents or guardians.

(d) Teachers

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the *Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct* published by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interacting with students without displaying bias or preference
- not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.

(e) School Counsellors

In their dealings with students, School counsellors should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

- The Australian Psychological Society
- Australian Counselling Association.

(f) Sports and recreation and performing arts

Coaches, instructors, staff members and volunteers involved in teaching, coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities or performing arts activities should adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be 'good sports'

- if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sport or other recreational or performing arts activity then explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission
- ensuring music instruction rooms have a window so that students and staff can be observed from outside the room
- avoiding, where possible, situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, camp dormitory or other similar camp/trip accommodation, or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.

Breaches of this code

Employees of Ruyton who breach this code of conduct will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the School's disciplinary policies. Such disciplinary action may include counselling, receiving a written warning, loss of privileges, suspension from duties or the termination of their employment.

Contractors and volunteers of Ruyton who breach this code of conduct may face termination of their engagement with Ruyton. Employees of contractors or sub-contractors may also be refused permission to continue working in the Ruyton school environment.

When circumstances require, a breach may be referred to the Victoria Police and/or a regulatory body, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Related Documents

- Child Safety Policy
- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Mandatory Reporting and Child Protection Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technology Policy



Child Safety Declaration

Ruyton Girls' School is a Child Safe School. We have zero tolerance of child abuse and are committed to the protection of all children from all forms of abuse.

We are clear about the behavioral expectations of every person in our community.

We have developed a Child Safe Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct that detail our comprehensive approach to protecting children from abuse. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries and ethical behavior, as well as acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

Please complete the declaration below and return to the Compliance Officer at compliance@ruyton.vic.edu.au

I _____ have read and understood:

- The Ruyton Child Safe Policy; and
- The Ruyton Child Safety Code of Conduct

and I agree to abide by the requirements in these documents.

I am also aware that I must contact one of the school's Child Safety Leaders or the Principal (ph: 9819 2422), if I have any concerns about a student's safety or if I feel a child is in immediate danger I must call the Police on 000.

Signed: _____ Date: _____