



## 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 Protection 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 Protection Program* is the **Child Protection and Safety Policy** and **Child Safety Code of Conduct** (available on [Ruyton website](#)). You must read and understand both of these documents.

#### Working with Children Checks

In accordance with Ruyton's Child Protection and Safety Policy, all staff, Board members and volunteers 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 WWC check.

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**.

### Reportable Conduct

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (the Act) requires Ruyton to investigate and report to the Commission for Children and Young People allegations of 'employee' reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct.

Reportable conduct is defined in the Act to include:

- a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child;
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of, a child;
- physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child;
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or
- significant neglect of a child.

Contract staff, casual staff and direct contact volunteers are subject to the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

### **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
- Deputy Principal & Director Learning
- Head of Junior School
- Director Wellbeing
- Director Early Learning
- School Counsellors (Senior & Junior)
- Health Centre Nurses

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;
- persons in religious ministry;
- 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 1 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 1

## 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>

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

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## Child Protection 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 Protection and Safety 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](mailto:compliance@ruyton.vic.edu.au)

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and understood:

- The Ruyton Child Protection and Safety 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: \_\_\_\_\_