



Child Safety at Ruyton

REPORTING PROCEDURES

If you have a belief or suspicion that a child is being, or has been, subjected to any form of abuse you must contact the [Victorian Child Protection Service](#) or, where you need guidance on making a report or have questions regarding child safety, contact one of the School's appointed Child Safety Leaders. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

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. All members of the Ruyton community share in this responsibility.

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 Protection and Safety Policy*** and ***Child Safety Code of Conduct***.

Working with Children Checks

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

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

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

Ruyton cannot continue to employ a staff member or work with a volunteer whose card is expired.

Unless exempt, to work within the Ruyton community you must have a valid **Working with Children Check**.

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.

Members of the Ruyton Community 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 Police 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 co-ordinating responses to child protection issues and will consult with the Principal to address the concerns.

The **Child Safety Leaders** are:-

- Deputy Principal and Head of Senior School
- Deputy Principal and Director of Learning
- Director Wellbeing
- Head of Junior School
- Director of Early Learning
- School Counsellors
- Health Centre Nurse

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.

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>

March 2020