



Child Protection and 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.

This policy forms the foundations of Ruyton's procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately the School's culture with respect to child safety.

The School's Child Protection and Safety Policy has been approved and endorsed by the School's Board and is subject to regular review.

Commitment

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.

Ruyton is committed to the protection of children from all forms of abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe.

The school regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Child Safe Values & Principles

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
3. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
4. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
5. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all School Board members, staff and volunteers who have direct contact with children.

10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support, including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.
13. Children who are gender diverse have the right to special care and support

Child Protection Program

Ruyton is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators;
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, third party contractors, external education providers, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters;
- procedures for recruiting and screening members of the School Board, staff, external education providers and volunteers;
- procedures for reporting reportable conduct and/or misconduct;
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
- policies with respect to cultural and gender diversity and students with disabilities;
- a child protection training program;
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children;
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards); and
- a system for continuous improvement and review.

As a part of Ruyton's induction process, all staff and volunteers are required to complete training on the content of our Child Protection Program.

All staff, volunteers and School Board members are provided with additional, ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers are supported and supervised by the School's Child Safety Leaders to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child protection.

Responsibilities

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Ruyton all members of the School Board and staff, as well as volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

i. School Board

Each member of the School Board is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the School and are responsible for holding the Principal and Executive team accountable for effective implementation.

ii. The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Protection and Safety Policy and the School's Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the School.

iii. The School's Child Safety Leaders

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the School's Child Safety Leaders. Our Child Safety Leaders receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

iv. Staff Members

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety Leaders.

v. Volunteers

All volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy, our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety Leaders.

All volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

vi. Third Party Contractors

All third party contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

Third party contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, some casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and school cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

All service providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the service provider.

vii. External Education Providers

An external education provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School.

The delivery of such a course may take place on School premises or elsewhere.

All external education providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All external education providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

Ruyton may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for the members of the School Board, staff and volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our School's nominated Child Safety Leaders. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, third party contractors, external education providers, volunteers, students, parents/guardians and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact one of the School's Senior Child Safety Leaders in person, or by phoning 9819 2422

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Policy & Program Review

Ruyton is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

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 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.
Direct contact	The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• physical contact; or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • face to face contact; or • contact by post or other written communication; or • contact by telephone or other oral communication; or • contact by email or other electronic communication.
School environment	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 Policies and Procedures

- Ruyton's Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Ruyton's Code of Ethical Conduct
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Ruyton's Acceptable Use of Information Technology and Communications Policy
- Ministerial Order No. 870: Child Safe Standards
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (2010)

APPROVED: Ruyton Board (February 2020)