



Child Safety Code of Conduct

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
- Responsible Online Behaviour Policy
- Responsible Use of Technology Policy
- School Tour Handbook