



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 programmes 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 programmes 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.