



CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

Purpose

Child safety and wellbeing is a priority at Ruyton Girls' School (Ruyton or the School). This policy aims to ensure that we prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children through our expectations and practices of our staff, volunteers and the broader Ruyton community.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Ruyton has zero tolerance of child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of our children to always keep them safe. The School regards its child protection responsibilities of the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant protection laws, regulations and standards to maintain a child safe culture.

Scope

Ruyton's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* applies to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, the School in a paid or unpaid capacity. This includes Board Members, Executive Team, staff, visitors (including parents and guardians), students over the age of 18, volunteers, trainees, contractors and consultants.

Ruyton's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* applies to all activities conducted by the School which involves, results in, or relates to contact with children.

Responsibilities

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

The Ruyton Board

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

The Principal

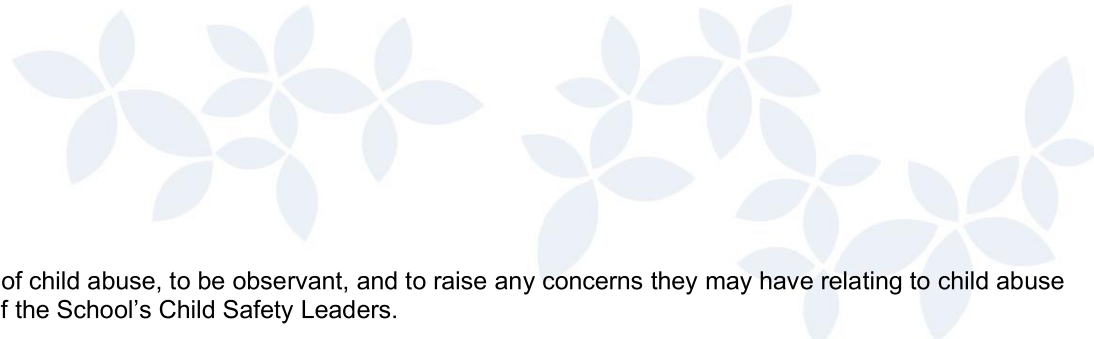
The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and the School's Child Protection program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the School.

The School's Child Safety Leaders

The School appoints Child Safety Leaders who undertake specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School.

Staff members

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and our Child Protection program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. All staff are required to undertake Child Safety training. It is the responsibility of each individual 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.

Volunteers

All volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*, our Child Protection program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is the responsibility of each individual 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.

Contractors

All contractors working for the School and in contact with students are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment. All contractors providing services on site are required by the School to be familiar with our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and our Child Protection program. The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the contractor

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 Safety and Wellbeing 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, 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.

Oversight of Policy

- This policy will be overseen by the Ruyton Board in conjunction with the School Executive team
- Recruitment and screening practices are overseen by the HR Manager
- Staff induction, training, supervision, and support is overseen by the School's Deputy Principals, Heads of Schools and Managers in conjunction with the Risk and Compliance Coordinator and HR Manager
- Procedures for receiving and responding to reports is overseen by members of the School's Executive team in conjunction with the School's Child Safety Leaders
- Risk assessment and management process in relation to Child Safety is overseen by members of the School Executive team, Director of Early Learning, Property Manager and the Risk and Compliance Coordinator
- Procedures on external reporting, record keeping, and information sharing is managed by the Heads of Junior and Senior School and overseen by the Principal



Child Safe Standards

Child Safe Standard 1

Ruyton strives to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued. This is demonstrated by but not limited to:

- Leadership structures, procedures, and policies support child safety
- The development of a Reconciliation Action Plan
- Commemoration of the annual Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week
- Early Learning and Junior School experiences explicitly value and celebrate Aboriginal culture

Child Safe Standard 2

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in Ruyton's leadership, governance and culture. This is evident through but not limited to:

- Child Safe Standards are on all Board and Executive meeting agendas and staff briefings and meetings
- Ruyton's website publicly displays our Code of Conduct
- Staff receive annual briefings on Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting
- Child Safety Leaders are trained and/or updated annually
- School publications regularly address child safety and wellbeing matters
- Daily dismissal procedures ensure safety of Junior School students

Child Safe Standard 3

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. This is enabled through but not limited to:

- Student diaries outline the rights of children
- Ruyton has a bespoke wellbeing program across Junior and Senior School that addresses the rights of children
- Students have direct access to support from school counsellors and nurses
- SRC and co-curricular committees provide a forum for children to voice their opinions
- The School uses a restorative practice approach involving the child/children when dealing with conflict matters
- Ruyton's Restorative Philosophy is clearly articulated
- Ruyton's *Behaviour Management and Development Policy* is clearly articulated and followed by staff
- Students sign an *Acceptable Use of IT Agreement*

Child Safe Standard 4

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. Some examples of this are:

- Publications regularly address child safety and wellbeing matters
- Formal restorative practices require family and guardian support and agreement
- *The Parent Handbook* outlines procedures for handling a complaint or concern

Child Safe Standard 5

Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice. Examples of this are, but not limited to:

- A *Student Gender Diversity Policy* has been implemented
- The student uniform accommodates the needs of individual students
- Diverse student committees and student clubs
- The student Culture and Diversity Committee explicitly focuses on respect for diversity
- The annual celebration of IDAHOBIT and PRIDE Week
- Ensuring accessibility for students with particular physical needs eg elevators



Child Safe Standard 6

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. This is supported through the following examples:

- Ruyton's recruitment process
- Ruyton's staff induction process
- Our Child Safety Leaders receive annual training

Child Safe Standard 7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused:

- Child Safety Leaders and Child Safety information is displayed and understood by staff
- Staff and parents have clear guidelines regarding the handling of complaints or concerns
- Student wellbeing structures support children. All children have a mentor or class teacher to report concerns to

Child Safe Standard 8

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training. This is evidenced through but not limited to:

- Annual updates on mandatory reporting
- Annual updating on the Child Safe Standards
- *The Staff Handbook* is regularly updated to include best practice procedures
- All volunteers are required to complete a Child Safety induction

Child Safe Standard 9

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed. This is supported through but not limited to:

- Yard duty rosters ensure students are supervised
- Ruyton is an accredited eSafety School
- The school has an *Acceptable Use of IT Agreement*
- The wellbeing programs in the Junior and Senior Schools explicitly focus on physical and online safety

Child Safe Standard 10

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved. This is done on an annual basis

- The Office of eSafety Commission evaluation template is used to review and evaluate approaches to complaints and concerns

Child Safe Standard 11

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

- All policies are accessible and compliant with the new Child Safe Standards (2022)
- Our policies and procedures can be accessed by all community members
- Statement of commitment to child safety

Definitions

Child

Anyone under the age of 18 years or who is enrolled as a student at Ruyton

Child abuse

- Any act committed against a child involving - (i) a sexual offence; or (ii) the offence of grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of - (i) physical violence; or (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- 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:

- physical contact; or 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

Ruyton Girls' School (Ruyton or the School)

The Ruyton Girls' School environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the School for use by a child during or outside school hours and includes:

- Our main campus at 12 Selbourne Road, Kew
- Online school environments including email and intranet systems
- 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.

Relevant legislation and standards

- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Reportable Conduct Scheme Child Safe Standards.*
- *Ministerial Order 1359*
- *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (2010)*

Related organisational policies and procedures

Ruyton Girls' School (internal policies)

- *Child Safety Code of Conduct* (currently under review)
- *Code of Ethical Conduct* (currently under review)
- *Mandatory Reporting Policy*
- *Acceptable Use of Information Technology and Communications Policy*
- *Student Behaviour Development and Management Policy*
- *Student Gender Diversity Policy*
- *Induction Policy and Procedure*
- *Concerns and Complaints Policy*
- Risk Management Plans (e.g., excursions, *Acceptable use of ICT Agreement*)

Access to this policy

- This policy can be accessed on the School website and School intranet

Policy status and review

- Approved by the Ruyton Board:
 - Date: July 2022
- Review period: Annually
- Review Lead: Director of Wellbeing

