



Ruskin Park Primary School

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Rationale

Ruskin Park Primary School has zero tolerance to child abuse and is committed to the protection and wellbeing of all students whilst participating in school activities both during and outside school hours. This includes online school environments (eg. email and intranet systems). Staff have responsibility for building and maintaining a child safe environment. This responsibility extends to the identification and timely response to concerns regarding the possible sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child.

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving
 - a sexual offence or
 - an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
- the infliction, on a child, of
 - physical violence; or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

Purpose

- To embed a culture of child safety within the school community.
- To raise awareness within the school community of the importance of child safety.
- To raise awareness of the needs of all children.
- To increase awareness of the need for sensitive and diverse approaches to child safety issues due to Indigenous, cultural or linguistic background or disability.
- To define the roles and responsibilities of the school and staff in protecting the safety and wellbeing of students.
- To increase awareness of the processes for reporting child abuse.
- To define the rights and responsibilities of students.

Implementation

- Ruskin Park Primary School is committed to child safety.
- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff, volunteers and the parent community.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children if applicable, to the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Any staff member who believes that a child is at immediate risk of abuse must notify the Principal immediately.
- Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- The school's child safe policy will be publicly available to help raise awareness about the importance of child safety in our organisation and demonstrate our commitment to protecting children from abuse. It will be published on the school's website and provided to new families on enrolment.



Ruskin Park Primary School

CHILD SAFE POLICY

- New staff will be provided with a copy and briefed on the school's attitude to child safety as part of the induction process.
- We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute to the development and review of this policy.

Our Children

- have the right to be treated with respect and to be protected from harm.
- have the right to feel and be safe in their interactions with staff, contractors, volunteers or visitors.
- need to understand what is meant by 'feeling and being safe'
- will have the support of designated staff whose role includes being an advocate for their safety and wellbeing.
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally in all aspects of school life

Our Staff and Volunteers

- This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with the children in our school.
- All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Leadership Statement

- Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities.
- Leaders must act to protect children from abuse in your organisation, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.
- This requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout Ruskin Park Primary School, so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice.
- Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of an organisation.
- A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives.
- Ruskin Park Primary School will foster a culture of Openness, Inclusiveness and Awareness
- Children and adults should know what to do if they observe, or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.
- All staff and volunteers must consider the safety of all children at Ruskin Park Primary School; and recognise the importance and cultural safety for:
 - Aboriginal children
 - children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - children with a disability.

Training and Supervision

- Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
 - We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse, to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.
 - New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our philosophy and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through the Principal or Assistant Principal.
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CHILD SAFE POLICY

Recruitment

- The school takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

Related Legislation:

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Crimes Act 1958*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001*
- *Ministerial Order No. 870*

Department Resources:

- *A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST (PDF - 270Kb)*
- *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people*
- *Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations*

Evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle or as required.

This Policy was ratified by School Council on 17 October 2016