



CHILD SAFE POLICY (Including Environments)

This policy has been developed by members of School Council.

Date written: March 2019

School Council Ratified:

Date reviewed: May 2019

Next review: TBC

School Council President signature:

Principal Signature:

PURPOSE

The Rosanna Primary Child Safe Policy (Including Environments) Policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors at the school, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.

The policy will apply to the school environment, including:

- the campus of the school,
- online school environments (including email, Compass, Seesaw and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events).

The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT AND PRINCIPLES

Rosanna Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Rosanna Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Rosanna Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Rosanna Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Rosanna Primary School will;

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children.
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
5. Provide a written Code of Conduct that guides expected conduct and behaviour towards children. (Appendix 1)
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children.
7. Provide high quality supervision and professional development for staff and volunteers as required.
8. Ensure children know whom to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues.
9. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
10. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.
11. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

IMPLEMENTATION

Policies and procedures outlining Rosanna Primary's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below.

1. A Child Safe Culture

Rosanna Primary's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct (above), Child Safe Code of Conduct (Appendix), the school's Child Safe Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools and the Four Critical Actions for Schools are readily available online and in hard copy at the school office for all staff and students to read at any time.

As part of Rosanna Primary's child safe culture, school leadership will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings and staff meetings
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.

As part of Rosanna Primary's child safe culture, school teaching and leadership staff are required to:

- Complete the Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations online module every year
- Read the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document

- Read the school's Child Safe Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safe Policy on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- School leadership will maintain records of the above processes

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. All school staff are required to:

- Act in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Act in accordance with the Child Safe Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the Four Critical Actions for Schools where necessary
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations (more information at https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf), including:
 - Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
 - Duty of care (applies to all school staff)
 - Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, and registered doctors and nurses)
 - Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
 - Reportable conduct obligations (applies to school leadership roles)
 - Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)

2. Roles and Responsibilities

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

A Child Safe Officer is appointed by the Principal each year. The Child Safety Officer roles include:

- reviewing and updating the Child Safe Policy every year.
- monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safe Policy.
- informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- annually reviewing and updating the Rosanna Primary Child Safe Risk Register

Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in Rosanna Primary's other child safety policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct, Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.

3. Human Resources Practices and Training

Rosanna Primary applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children, including:

- Rosanna Primary will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse
- All prospective staff are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and volunteers maintain a valid Working with Children Check
- All position descriptions for jobs that involve child-connected work with our school include the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities with respect to child safety and the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety
- We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety. Job advertisements for child-connected work include a link to the school's Code of Conduct, which is publicly available on our website
- We carry out verbal reference checks with at least two referees to verify job applicants' history of and suitability for working with children. Our school also requires applicants for child-connected jobs to provide proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- The school's approach to human resources practices that ensure child safety can be found on the website at <http://rosannaps.vic.edu.au/child-safe.html> or on Compass

Further information on Departmental recruitment actions can be found at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/cssfour.aspx>

4. Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

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 and Torres Strait Islander 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 inducted into the school and supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. All employees of our school will be monitored and

assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through the Principal or Assistant Principal or directly to DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

5. Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff must follow the school's Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions must include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection/Victoria Police or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Rosanna Primary will never prohibit or discourage school staff or volunteers from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Rosanna Primary will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures can be found on the Rosanna Primary Website at <http://rosannaps.vic.edu.au/school-policies.html>

6. Risk reduction and management

Rosanna Primary believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Rosanna Primary will ensure that it keeps, reviews and continually updates a risk assessment register, including the actions the school will take to reduce or remove the identified risks. The risk assessment register can be found at <http://rosannaps.vic.edu.au/child-safe.html>

7. Listening to, communicating with and empowering children

The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parents/carers, where appropriate) informed about progress.

The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students at Rosanna Primary to read
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention

8. Confidentiality and privacy

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Privacy Policy at <http://rosannaps.vic.edu.au/school-policies.html>.

DEFINITIONS

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence, or
 - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a 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

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email, Compass, Seesaw and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events)

School staff

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by the school governing authority
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- a minister of religion

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The Rosanna Primary School Child Safe Policy (including Environments), will be reviewed every year as well as following significant incidents if they occur.

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

The Principal or the Principal's nominee is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy.

REFERENCES

VRQA

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafepages/schools.html>

DHS

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards-resources>

DET Protect

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx>

RELATED POLICY DOCUMENTS

- Student WellBeing and Engagement Policy

CHILD SAFE POLICY (Including Environments)

- Volunteers Policy
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Onsite Supervision Policy
- Information and Communication (ICT) Policy
- Critical Incident Reporting Policy
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide - Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide - Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)
- [DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework](#)
- [School Privacy Policy](#)

Appendix 1: Child Safety Code of Conduct

Rosanna Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment, which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage high risk behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, DET policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Rosanna Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Rosanna Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps, excursions/incursions and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Expected Behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other members of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or child safety officer

- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- ensuring that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm, as quickly as possible, if child abuse is suspected

Unacceptable Behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours, engage in activities or make physical contact, with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults or students towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, spirituality or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes

This Code of Conduct was endorsed/approved by the Rosanna Primary School Council for review if legislative or other changes require in the interim or no later than December 2020.

Appendix 2: Key Responsibilities of the School Child Safe Officer

A school leader for child safety will be given sufficient status and authority, including leadership support and the ability to direct other staff (where appropriate), to undertake the role effectively.

Responsibilities of the role are to:

Provide Authoritative Advice

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety
- liaise with the principal and school leaders to maintain the visibility of child safety
- lead the development of the school's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety

Raise Awareness

- ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately
- ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this
- be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers
- encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them

Education

Being authoritative in providing advice by:

- keeping their skills up to date with appropriate training carried out every two years
- having a working knowledge of how the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Community Service Organisations conduct a child protection case conference, to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- keeping detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff
- ensure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance