



## Child Safety Policy

### Purpose

Roxburgh Park Primary School's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining 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.

### Background

*On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce seven child safe standards (the Standards) into law. The Standards apply to all organisations involved in child-related work in Victoria.*

*Ministerial Order No. 870 provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards.*

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. Roxburgh Park Primary School is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Safety Program designed to keep children safe.

The School has documented a Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. At Roxburgh Park Primary we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its Child Safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant Child Safety laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy also applies to school council members where indicated.

The policy will apply to the school environment (see Definitions section). The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours.

### Definitions

#### **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; or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

### **Child-connected work**

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training 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 for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

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

### **School staff**

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

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

## **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES**

Roxburgh Park 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.

“The school’s approach to creating and maintaining a child safe school environment is guided by our school philosophy and values. At Roxburgh Park Primary School our vision is *‘to ~~to~~ Achieve Excellence Together.*’ Roxburgh Park Primary School is committed to providing a safe and stimulating learning environment in which students can reach their full educational potential in a positive school culture that engages and supports them within our community.

We are committed to Achieving Excellence Together through our school values of Respect, Learning and Cooperation by:

- Challenging every student to achieve their full potential.
- Promoting creativity, innovation, teamwork and leadership in its students, staff and our community
- Developing within students their capacity to positively contribute to their community

At Roxburgh Park Primary School our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety:

#### **Respect**

- Yourself and others
- Listen to others with an open mind

- Respect others ideas
- Respect school property and property of others

#### **Learning**

- Be prepared and ready to learn
- Be Maintain a positive and curious mind
- Seek out new knowledge and ideas
- Seek to improve my knowledge and skills

#### **Cooperation**

- Willing to share ideas and resources, knowledge and skills
- Helpful and approachable
- Contribute positively to class, group and team discussions

Roxburgh Park Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

We are 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. Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies and practices will be inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

Every person involved in Roxburgh Park Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play, 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.

### **Child safety principles**

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Roxburgh Park Primary School will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Appoint a Child Safety Officer – Suzanne Trease – Assistant Principal Wellbeing and engagement;
3. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
4. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
5. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
6. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
7. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
8. Ensure children know who 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; and
11. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

## **POLICY**

### **Strategies to embed a child safe culture**

Roxburgh Park Primary School's culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community 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 Safety Code of Conduct](#), the school's [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations \(including Mandatory Reporting\) 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 (by request from Child safety officer for all staff and students to read at any time).

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

- Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Act in accordance with the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) where necessary
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, 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, registered psychologists, 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 all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
  - Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)
  - For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

As part of Roxburgh Park Primary School's child safe culture, **school leadership** (including the principal and assistant principals) will:

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when implementing the Child Safe Standards
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership 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 Roxburgh Park Primary School's child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year [Note that it is a DET requirement that mandatory reporters complete this training annually. It also helps with demonstrating compliance with the Child Safe Standards]
- Read the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document.

As part of Roxburgh Park Primary School's child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, **school councils and school council members** will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety, such as the [Child Safe Standards School Council Training PowerPoint](#).
- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members, and if updated, note the new document in its school council meeting minutes
- When hiring employees, ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe (unless delegated to the principal).

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

### Roles and responsibilities

School leaders 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 Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Specific child safety responsibilities:

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. At Roxburgh Park Primary all members of the School Council and staff, as well as direct and indirect volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

#### *School Council*

Each member of the School Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the School's Child Safety and Reporting Program and the Child Safe Policy to be effectively implemented within the School and are responsible for holding the Principal accountable for effective implementation.

#### *The Principal*

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that the Child Safe Policy and the School's Child Safety and Reporting Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safety culture is maintained within the School. Principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every year. Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.

#### *The School's Child Safety Officer*

The Principal, Assistant Principal as the Child Safety Officer receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child safety within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

### *Staff Members*

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safety and Reporting Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility 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 the School's Child Safety Officer.

### *Direct Contact Volunteers*

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

It is each individual's responsibility 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 the School's Child Safety Officer.

### *Indirect Contact Volunteers*

Indirect Contact Volunteers (or 'Indirect Volunteers') are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students. All Indirect Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All Indirect Volunteers are required by the School to be familiar with the Child Safe Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with School administrative functions or guest speakers.

### *Third Party Contractors*

All Third Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches, guest speakers, exam invigilators, any employees engaged by the Roxburgh Park Primary Parents Association and school cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

The School only uses Third Party Contractors that have undergone an extensive due diligence process that includes provision of our Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Direct Contact Contractors are:

- those who have direct contact\*\* with students during the normal course of their work
- those who may be in a position to establish a relationship of trust with a student notwithstanding that unsupervised access to students would be rare (for example full-time maintenance personnel)
- any contractors whom a school is legally required to screen

\*\*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
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication

Indirect Contact Contractors are:

Indirect Contact Contractors are those contractors who do not meet the definition of “Direct Contact Contractor”. Refer to Third Party Contractors’ Responsibilities for more information.

All service providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The School only uses third party contractors that have undergone an extensive due diligence process that includes provision of our Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

External Education Providers are:

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 to be familiar with our Child Safety Policy. Roxburgh Park Primary may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

## Recruitment

Roxburgh Park Primary School- follows the Department’s Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the [Department’s website](#).

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school’s [Volunteers Policy](#), including in relation to assessing the suitability of prospective volunteers and obtaining checks required under this policy. All prospective volunteers are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check

## 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 coming forward with any allegations or suspicions 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. This training occurs annually or more often as required.

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 and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability and vulnerable children.

New employees and volunteers will be inducted into the school, including by being referred to the Child Safety Policy (this document), the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on the school website, and displayed in various locations around the school including the front office foyer.

They will also be 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 by school staff to the Principal or Assistant Principal and will be managed in accordance with Roxburgh Park Primary School’s [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations \(including Mandatory Reporting\) Policy and Procedures](#) where required.

## 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 (including school council employees) must follow the school’s [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations \(including Mandatory Reporting\) Policy and](#)

[Procedures](#), including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/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.

Roxburgh Park Primary School will never prohibit or discourage school staff 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 Responding and Reporting Obligations \(including Mandatory Reporting\) Policy and Procedures](#). In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Roxburgh Park Primary School will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures can be found on our school Website.

### **Risk reduction and management**

Roxburgh Park Primary School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes, found in the school's risk assessment register. 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.

Roxburgh Park Primary School monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety, more information can be found in the school's risk assessment register.

### **Listening to, communicating with and empowering children**

Roxburgh Park Primary 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. Students can access information on how to report abuse at on the school website,

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 and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as 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 and parents at Roxburgh Park Primary School to read on the school website
- 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
- Through the respectful relationships program and student handbooks

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

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);

- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

The school is promoting this through Respectful Relationships, sexuality education, social groups, and play.

### Communications

This school is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure are available on the school website
- Once per term reminders in the school newsletter of our school’s commitment to child safety
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion

### 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 Department of Education and Training’s [Schools’ Privacy Policy](#).

### Related policies and documents

Related policies and documents include:

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations \(including Mandatory Reporting\) Policy and Procedures](#)
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)

### Policy evaluation and review cycle

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every year. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

School Council Approved on:	Signed by School Council President:	Scheduled for review:
18 <sup>th</sup> May 2020		May 2021