

## VOLUNTEERS POLICY (Child Safety Standards 2,6,8)



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office on [ripponlea.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:ripponlea.ps@education.vic.gov.au) or 9527 5728.

### PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Ripponlea Primary School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

### DEFINITIONS

*Child-connected work:* work authorised by the school governing authority/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

*Child-related work:* As defined by the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic), child-related work is work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

*Closely related family member:* parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, including step or half siblings.

*Volunteer worker:* A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.

*School work:* School work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a school council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal or school council
- Providing assistance in the work of any school or kindergarten

- Attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions, are legally protected (i.e. indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

## **POLICY**

Ripponlea Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Ripponlea Primary School welcomes volunteers to support the building of strong partnerships between RPS and the RPS community. RPS also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers make to the RPS community and the work performed by volunteers to assist in the development of children.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Ripponlea Primary School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

### **Becoming a volunteer**

Members of the RPS community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to approach a classroom teacher. Class representative volunteers must complete the applicable section of the 'Class Lists and Family Communication' form distributed as part of the enrolment package.

### **COVID-19 vaccination information**

Our school follows Department of Education and Training policy with respect to the requirements relating to attendance on school sites and COVID-19 vaccinations.

For further information, refer to:

- [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers on School Sites](#)

### **Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances**

#### ***Working with students***

Ripponlea Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in RPS classrooms, with sports events, camps, excursions, school concerts and other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Ripponlea Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Ripponlea Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the school office for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is **not** participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/community School Council members** sitting on School Council with student School Council members, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not.

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, our school may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

### ***Non child-related work***

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, School Council, participating in sub-committees. Our vision is for the children of Ripponlea to be global and creative thinkers who are empowered with the skills and empathy to engage with an ever-changing world. They *care*, they *create*, they *connect*. of School Council, fete coordination, other fundraising groups that meet outside of school hours during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, RPS reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity or WWC Clearances, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of the School Council will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWC Clearance. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is a student sitting on the School Council, we believe that it is important that our volunteers who are involved in making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Clearance [and/or insert any other checks that you would like to require at your school].

### **Training and induction**

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing. The Principal (or their nominee) will determine what induction and/or training

is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in and will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

To support us to maintain a child safe environment, before engaging in any work where children are present or reasonably likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct referred to in our Child Safety Induction Pack and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to RPS's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. A 'Statement of Commitment to Child Safety' is located at the sign-in point for all volunteers to read prior to working in the school (see Appendix 1). RPS has Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and procedures which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

Volunteers undertaking coaching of RPS students outside school hours will be required to also agree to the 'Coach's Code of Conduct' (see Appendix 2).

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Ripponlea Primary School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

## **Management and supervision**

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and RPS – About Our School (Values, Vision, Philosophy & Learning).

Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's policies relating to [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#), [Sexual Harassment](#) and [Workplace Bullying](#).

The principal (or their nominee) will determine the level of school staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, and with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

The principal has the discretion to make a decision about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at Ripponlea Primary School.

## **Privacy and information-sharing**

Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#) and the Department's policy on [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant school staff to:

- support the student's education, wellbeing and health;

- reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student, other students, staff or visitors;
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student's disability; or
- provide a safe and secure workplace.

Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a member of staff to ensure appropriate action. There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be Ripponlea Primary School obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the school such as to Victoria Police. For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations refer to: *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures*.

## **Records management**

While it is unlikely volunteers will be responsible for any school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to the Principal to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: [Records Management – Schools](#).

## **Compensation**

### ***Personal injury***

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers' Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

### ***Property damage***

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the Department's Legal Division.

### ***Public liability insurance***

The Department of Education and Training's public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in school work is legally liable for:

- a claim for bodily injury to a third party
- damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

## **COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## **RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

Ripponlea Primary School policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety Policy,
- Child Safety Code of Conduct,
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Ripponlea Primary School Child Safety Induction Pack

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Privacy and Information Sharing](#)
- [Records Management – School Records](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)
- [Volunteer OHS Management](#)
- [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)

## APPROVAL AND REVIEW

<b>Created date</b>	30 August 2022
<b>Consultation</b>	School Council – 6/8/2022 Governance Committee – 19/10/22
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Ripponlea School Council
<b>Endorsed on</b>	25 October 2022
<b>Next review date</b>	October 2025

## APPENDIX 1

# STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Ripponlea Primary School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

Everyone in our community has a moral responsibility to keep children safe and to protect them from harm and abuse. This Statement of Commitment helps to raise awareness about the importance of child safety at Ripponlea Primary School (RPS) and affirms the council's commitment to a child-safe culture and expectations.

### Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

RPS is committed to the safety, rights and well-being of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. The participation and empowerment of children is fundamental to our work.

In recognition of the increased vulnerabilities of particular groups of children, we will pay particular attention to:

- the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- the safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- the cultural safety of international students
- the safety of children with a disability
- the safety of children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability
- the safety of children in out-of-home care or youth justice (those unable to live at home)

Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are **NOT** tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Ripponlea Primary School has **ZERO** tolerance for child abuse. We value diversity and will not tolerate discriminatory practices.

- We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
- Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students. Specific policies, procedures and supports in place enable us to meet all obligations.
- We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

- We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.
- Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.
- Every person involved in our 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 are at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.
- All staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors at Ripponlea Primary School must adhere to the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

### **Ripponlea Primary School's Principles for Child Safety**

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

- a) Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- b) Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- c) Recognise, respect and foster children's rights;
- d) Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
- e) Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- f) Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- g) Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- h) 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;
- i) Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- j) Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- k) Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

### **Definitions:**

**Child** – means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

#### **Child abuse -**

- a) any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming offences under section 49M (1) of the Crimes Act 1958
- b) the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm



- c) the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects

**Further links:**

[Conventions on the rights of the child](#) - UNICEF

[PROTECT](#) – Child Safe Standards

**Evaluation**

The Ripponlea Primary School Council and staff will regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and revise the statement tri-annually or as required by completing a review.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety updates and requirements will be made available to staff, families, volunteers and visitors.

This Statement of Commitment to Child Safety was endorsed by School Council in April 2022.

**Signed on behalf of all council members by:**

Natalie Rose

Natalie Rose  
Principal

T. Holland

Tarryn Holland  
School Council President

Suzete Ribeiro

Suzete Ribeiro  
Vice President

**APPENDIX 2**

**Coach's Code of Conduct Agreement  
outside school hours  
(before 8:45am and after 3:45pm)  
at Ripponlea Primary School**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_  
Full Name Address  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Address cont.

agree to the following terms:

1. I will attach a copy of my Working with Children Check to this agreement.
2. I will abide by Ripponlea Primary School's values and policies including the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
3. I will ensure the supervision of: a) students my charge; b) siblings waiting in a designated area away from the Out-of-School-Hours Care (OSHC).
4. I will refer any concerns about OSHC students to OSHC staff.

I understand that the Principal or the OSHC provider has the right to refuse my team's use of the school court if I breach this agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date