



Rosehill Secondary College

Child Safe Code of Conduct

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1. Purpose

Rosehill Secondary College is committed to being a Child Safe organisation and embedding a Child Safe Culture into its practices to ensure that all students who attend the school are safe at all times. Our commitment reflects the College values of Respect, Initiative and Learning.

Under Ministerial Order 870, all members of the college community: Principals, teachers, ESS, volunteer staff and contractors, have obligations to make every effort to remove or mitigate the risk of child abuse and/or respond appropriately where abuse has, or may have, occurred.

This Code of Conduct exists to provide a framework to ensure that *Rosehill Secondary College* employees and volunteers observe child safe principles and demonstrate appropriate behavior towards, and in the company of, children. This policy outlines the process to be followed in cases of suspected or confirmed child abuse.

This Code of Conduct operates in conjunction with the ***Rosehill Secondary College Child Safe Policy***.

2. Scope

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers and members of School Council at Rosehill Secondary College.

3. Policy Statement

All staff, volunteers, contractors and School Council members of *Rosehill Secondary College* are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of young people by:

- Adhering to the *Rosehill Secondary College Child Safe Policy* at all times
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treating all college community members with respect
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of young people, particularly if they are telling you that they or another young person has been abused or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children or those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not left alone with a child
- Reporting any child safety concerns or allegations of child abuse (whether confirmed or suspected) as per the procedure outlined in Section 4.3 of this document
- Encouraging children to have a 'voice' and participate in relevant activities where possible
- Assessing the suitability of external providers (e.g. guest speakers) to work with students. This may entail checking the provider's social media posts and on-line profile
- Undertaking a Risk Assessment prior to taking students on camps, work experience etc.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- Develop any 'special' relationships with young people that could be seen as favouritism (e.g. the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- Exhibit behaviours with young people which may be seen as unnecessarily physical
- Put children at risk of abuse, or yourself at risk of an allegation of abuse, (for example by locking doors)
- Do things of a personal nature that children can do themselves (e.g. adjusting clothing) unless under exceptional circumstances (e.g. child is ill or injured). Ask for the child's consent in this case.
- Engage in discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students (e.g. personal social activities, personal relationships etc.)
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of young people
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminate against any child, including on the grounds of culture, race, ethnicity, religion or disability
- Have contact with a young person or their family outside of Rosehill Secondary College without the knowledge and consent of a Child Safety Officer (e.g. engaging in social activities, watching a child play sport etc.)
- Have any on-line contact with a young person or their family outside of that deemed part of your role (e.g. emailing parents regarding work academic or behavioural concerns, emailing a student regarding work)
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse

Staff are required to immediately report any breach of this code to one of the Rosehill Secondary College Child Safety Officers or a member of the Principal team.

4. Mandatory Reporting of abuse

The information that follows will support staff to i) identify the indicators of a young person who may be in need of protection, and ii) make a report where there is a reasonable belief that a young person is in need of protection and/or that a criminal offence has been committed.

A child is defined by the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) as any person 17 years of age or younger. School personnel are mandated under this act, if they have formed a 'reasonable belief' that physical, emotional, psychological, developmental or sexual abuse is or has occurred, and that the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child, to make a report.

4.1 Types of child abuse and indicators of harm

There are many indicators of child abuse/neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert staff to the possibility of child abuse and neglect. While any indicators of possible child abuse or neglect are concerning, it is important to know which indicators **must** be reported.

It is **mandatory** to report concerns relating to:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse.

While not mandated, a 'Child in Need of Protection' report to DHHS Child Protection, Police or child First should also be made for:

- emotional abuse
- neglect
- medical neglect
- family violence
- human trafficking (including forced marriage)
- sexual exploitation (including pornography and prostitution)
- risk-taking behaviour
- female genital mutilation
- risk to an unborn child
- a child or young person exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours.

4.2 Forming a 'reasonable belief'

The process of considering all relevant information and observations with regard to the safety and wellbeing of a child is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'.


A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. A reasonable belief is set at a deliberately low threshold so that people are encouraged to report suspected abuse to the relevant authorities and agencies, enabling authorities to investigate the allegations and take further action to prevent or stop any further abuse.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a child states that they have been physically, sexually, verbally abused or neglected
- a child states that they know someone who has been abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused
- a child or young person exhibits sexually-abusive or age-inappropriate behaviours
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused
- signs of abuse (e.g. bruises/scratches/neglect) lead to a belief that the child has been abused

4.3 The procedure for responding to a report or suspicion of abuse



STEP	ACTION		
<p>1. Concern arises.</p> <p>RESPONDING</p> <p>Refer 'Rosehill Secondary College - Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template'</p>	<p>Young person makes disclosure of abuse/neglect of themselves or another young person, or signs are noticed by reporting adult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen to the child and allow them to speak. Make notes if possible. • stay calm and do not display expressions of panic or shock. Use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary • be patient and non-judgmental throughout • highlight to the child that they are doing the right thing in telling you about what has happened and that it is not their fault • do not ask leading questions, but instead, gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?" • be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words. Do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to • reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was the right thing to do • use verbal facilitators such as, "Okay, I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement and body language (e.g. nodding), designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way • tell the child you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate. • Make notes – preferably using the Rosehill Secondary College Responding to suspected Child Abuse Template (if possible), as the student is talking. Complete template as soon as possible thereafter. • Notes must be dated • Adult makes a decision as to whether there is 'reasonable belief' to substantiate the claims. 		
<p>2. Deciding when to report</p> <p>REPORTING</p>	<p>Reporting adult relays concerns to a Rosehill Child Safety Officer and /or member of Principal Class, irrespective of whether a 'reasonable belief' is formed by him/her. After discussion with CSO, a decision is made as to whether a report should be made or not</p> 		
<p>Both parties agree that there is 'reasonable belief':</p> <p>A report is immediately made to Police (Fawkner SOCIT) in the case of physical or sexual assault (including grooming), Police, DHHS or Child First</p>		<p>One party disagrees that there is reasonable belief:</p> <p>Either party can make a report to Police, DHHS or Child First and should do this even if the other party disagrees that there is reasonable belief. If one party is unhappy with the response of the other, they should go ahead and make a report regardless, or discuss with another CSO or Principal Class.</p>	<p>Both parties disagree that there is reasonable belief:</p> <p>The report is not made, but the 'Rosehill - Responding to child Abuse Template' should be completed, scanned & placed on the child's profile in Compass in case further concerns surface later.</p>

<p>3. Deciding to whom to report</p>	<p>If the report relates to Physical or Sexual abuse, a Mandatory Report must be made to the Police (Fawkner SOCIT 9355 6100 or Footscray SOCIT 8398 9860).</p> <p>If the report relates to other forms of abuse or neglect, although not mandatory, a report should be made to DHHS Footscray 1300 360 462 (Child Protection). A report can be made to Child First if: i) you have a significant concern about a child but that concern would have a low to moderate impact, ii) the child's safety is not immediately compromised and iii) you have discussed the referral with the family and you believe that they are supportive of it.</p>
<p>4. Gather any other relevant information to make the report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full 'Personal Details' of the student & family (cut & paste from Compass into 'Rosehill - Responding to Child Abuse Template'). • The details of the concerns and as much background as possible on the young person as per the 'Rosehill - Responding to Child Abuse Template'. • Details of any other agencies involved with the child (if known) • Your involvement with the child
<p>5. Decide who is going to make the report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reporting person should be either the adult who originally had the concern about the young person, a CSO or a delegate of a CSO (e.g. a Coordinator or Principal Class). It is preferable for the two parties to be together whilst the report is made.
<p>6. Make the report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the issue is life-threatening dial 000 • Where the issue is not life-threatening, dial either the Police, DHHS or Child First as outlined in Step 3 above. • For After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services, dial 13 12 78. • Make notes as the report is being made (e.g. date, time, your name, the name of the person you are speaking to, what action the Police or DHHS are proposing to take, any instructions given for the immediate well-being of the child etc. as per the 'Rosehill - Responding to Child Abuse Template'). • If this information is not already recorded on the above document, notes should be used to complete the 'Rosehill - Responding to child Abuse Template'. This will then be copied/printed. One copy to be placed in student's file, one copy to be given (if hard copy), or emailed, to Kerry McKay for uploading to student's Compass profile.
<p>7. Contacting Parents/ Carers</p>	<p>Parents/carers should be notified as soon as practicable once police or DHHS have given permission. Likely exceptions to this would be when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse • a disclosure to the parents/carers may subject the child to further abuse • the child is a mature minor (assessed to be sufficiently mature and intelligent to make such decisions on his or her own behalf) and has requested that the parents/carers not be notified (in these circumstances ideally the child will nominate another responsible adult be contacted) • the notification is likely to adversely affect the investigation of the incident by the relevant authorities. <p>Parental contact should ideally be made by the Principal or CSO, and the reporting staff member together.</p>

<p>8. Ensure the immediate well-being of the child.</p> <p>Provide ongoing support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement any instructions given regarding the well-being of the child. This may entail contacting other relatives and waiting while the young person is collected from school. • If a child has just been abused, or is at immediate risk of harm take reasonable steps to protect them. These include: separating the alleged victim and others involved, ensuring all parties are supervised by a staff member, arranging and providing urgent medical assistance where necessary by: administering first aid, calling 000 for an ambulance and following any instructions from emergency service officers/paramedics. • Where an incident of suspected child abuse occurs at the school, you may need to take action to preserve any items of evidence. You will need to preserve the environment (e.g. clothing, condoms) and separate any possible witnesses (including staff) to prevent collaboration. • Police or DHHS Child Protection may make a school visit to interview the young person at short notice. In this case a suitable space should be arranged and a support person should remain with the child before and during the interview, unless the young person specifically opposes this. • A referral may need to be made for counselling (of either student or reporting staff member) by the SWC, college Psychologist, SSSO or CASA. • Where appropriate, invite the parents/carers to attend a Student Support Group meeting where a Student Support Plan can be prepared to ensure that appropriate support can be provided for their child.
<p>9. Inform other relevant staff that a report has been made on a 'need to know' basis. Confidentiality is critical.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal and Kerry McKay (if she is not the CSO making the report) should be informed of the report and any ensuing action. • The Sub-School Leader should also be informed • If the student is an international student, Arthur Soumalias and Dimitra Adams should be informed. The International Education Division of DET must then be informed (9637 2990) to ensure that appropriate support is arranged for the student. • If Police or Child Protection indicate that they plan to visit the school at once, office staff should be informed to expect this visit and which staff member to page when they arrive, but do not need to know the circumstances of it.

**10.
If the alleged perpetrator is an adult associated with the school, the Principal must immediately act to remove him/her from the school**

- The Principal may stand the person down or remove their access to students (if an employee, volunteer or contractor)
- If the alleged perpetrator is a student he/she should be immediately suspended and removed from the school pending an investigation.
- Relevant authorities to be informed.

Child Safety Officers

1. Kerry McKay
2. Dora Bouras
3. Peter Rouse

If none of the CSOs are available, support from other Principal Class, Sub School Leader, Year Level Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator should be sought (in that order). In any case where a report is made, Kerry McKay and Peter Rouse are to be informed, and as soon as practicable. A CSO may delegate the making of a report to another member of the Student Management Team if that person is best placed to make the report.

Protocols for Police or DHHS interviews

DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police may conduct interviews of children and young people at Rosehill Secondary College without the parent's knowledge or consent.

Interviewing children and young people at school should only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the best interests of the child to proceed in this manner. DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police will notify the Principal or an Assistant Principal of their intention to interview the child or young person on the school premises.

When DHHS Child Protection practitioners/Victoria Police officers come to Rosehill Secondary College, the Principal/Assistant Principal should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the child or young person.

When a young person is being interviewed by DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, the Principal/Assistant Principal must arrange to have a supportive adult present with the child or young person unless the young person specifically wishes that this not occur.

The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting children who are involved with DHHS Child Protection may include the following:

Supporting the young person by:

- Acting as a support person for the child or young person.
- Attending DHHS Child Protection case planning meetings.
- Observing and monitoring the child's behaviour.

Liaising with professionals:

DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police and/or Child FIRST may request information about the child or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the child or young person. The college must comply with any *written* requests made by DHHS Child Protection to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the child.



Rosehill Secondary College

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Acceptance of code of Conduct

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct and to report any Child Safety Concerns to the Principal or a nominated Child Safety Officer:

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Breach of Policy

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, Rosehill Secondary College may commence a process under Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance guidelines for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

If staff are aware of any breaches of this policy they are advised to speak to either the Principal or a member of the Principal Team.

Responsibility

All Rosehill Secondary College staff, volunteers and members of School Council must abide by the College's Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Please discuss the policy or related policies with a member of Principal Class if clarification is required.

Compliance Requirements

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Amendment Act 2015 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)