



rossbourne
school

Thrive on Diversity

PRINCIPAL

RECRUITMENT INFORMATION PACK

Position Description

PRINCIPAL

About Rossbourne

Rossbourne School is a specialist independent school supporting students with moderate learning and support needs, many of whom have not experienced success in mainstream education settings. At Rossbourne, students learn in an environment designed around their individual strengths, needs and potential.

Our educational approach is structured, individualised and highly relational. Learning is explicit, practical and purposeful with students provided the time, scaffolding and opportunities they need to develop and consolidate understanding, skills and build confidence. At the heart of Rossbourne's philosophy is that every student is known, valued and supported to flourish.

This is reflected in our strengths based approach to teaching, learning and wellbeing in a school culture where relationships, belonging and personal growth matter.

The school is governed by a volunteer Board and is entering a new chapter, with a strategic plan for 2026–2031 in development. This is a pivotal appointment for the next phase of Rossbourne's development.

Role Purpose

The Principal is the educational and operational leader of Rossbourne School, accountable to the Board for the safety and wellbeing of every student the quality of teaching and student outcomes, the culture and performance of staff and the responsible stewardship of the school's resources and reputation.

Child Safety

This position involves child-connected work. Rossbourne School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children and young people. All staff are expected to actively contribute to a child-safe culture and comply with the School's Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Student Safety and Wellbeing-Staff Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures.

Child Safety Policies are available at our website.

www.rossbourne.vic.edu.au/about/our-policies/child-safety-policy/



Reports to: Board, through the Chair

Direct reports: Deputy Principal, Director of Business Operations and the senior leadership team

Location: Rossbourne School campus in Hawthorn, Victoria

Employment basis: Full-time

Sector: Independent



Key Responsibilities

Governance & Child Safety

- Operate within appropriate governance boundaries and provide the Board with accurate, clear and timely reporting.
- Hold ultimate day-to-day accountability for child safety, mandatory reporting obligations and a strong compliance culture among staff.
- Support the Board and its committees with accurate, well-prepared information and recommendations.

Educational Leadership

- Demonstrated experience leading a school or school section focused on students with a moderate learning disability, including designing and delivering curriculum that is developmentally paced and pedagogically differentiated to suit a concrete operational learning style.
- Lead an educational program suited to neurodiverse learners which implements a strength-based model based on current research, including oversight of IEPs, pedagogy and individualised pathways.
- Maintain curriculum quality and compliance with VRQA registration requirements, NCCD reporting, and AISV standards.
- Champion continuous improvement in student outcomes, drawing on evidence and specialist practice.

Culture, Community & Belonging

- Build and sustain a relational, psychologically safe school culture for students and staff alike.
- Partner closely with families to build trust and shared purpose.
- Be a visible, present leader across the school community.
- Staff Leadership & Development
- Lead, develop and support the senior leadership team and wider staff body.
- Build workforce capability in specialist pedagogy, and foster staff wellbeing and retention.
- Model the standards of professional conduct and psychological safety expected across the school.

Strategic & Operational Capability

- Translate the Board's strategic direction into operational plans, budgets and resourcing decisions.
- Contribute substantively to the development and delivery of the School strategic plan.
- Oversee enrolment management, workforce planning and the responsible management of school finances.

Qualifications & Experience

- Relevant tertiary qualifications in education; postgraduate qualifications in special/inclusive education highly regarded.
- Current Victorian teaching registration (VIT) and eligibility for Principal registration.
- Significant senior leadership experience in a school setting, ideally within specialist, inclusive or alternative education.
- Current Working with Children Check and satisfactory police record check.

Key Relationships

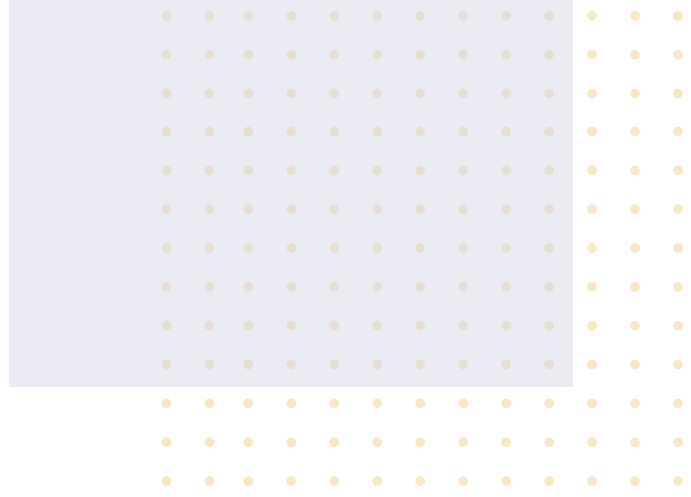
- Board and Chair — strategic direction, governance reporting
- Deputy Principal and senior leadership team — day-to-day school leadership
- Staff, students and families — culture, teaching quality, community trust
- AISV, VRQA and relevant regulatory bodies — compliance and sector engagement

This position description is approved by the Rossbourne School Board and will be reviewed periodically.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications and written enquiries should go to boardchair@rossbourne.vic.edu.au

Application Close Friday 25th September 2026 5pm AEST



PRINCIPAL SELECTION CRITERIA

In responding to the seven criteria, applicants are invited to document their knowledge and experience of these critical aspects of professional practice. Leadership requirements which underpin professional practice will be evaluated by the panel across all criteria. These requirements will be viewed in light of Rossbourne's purpose:

- the vision and values
- the depth of knowledge and understanding
- personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills

1. Creating Shared Vision and Values

Demonstrated capacity to cultivate a shared vision, align commitment to strategic school goals, and communicate expectations for excellence in teaching and learning.

2. Leading Student Safety and Wellbeing

Demonstrated ability to establish a child safe learning environment which fosters and supports the development of resilience, self-awareness, independence and social skills in neurodiverse students through the implementation of rigorous child safety policies.

3. Leading Teaching and learning

Demonstrated ability to drive instructional excellence informed by research based curriculum and pedagogy, foster a positive learning culture, and cultivate team collaboration and accountability for student learning outcomes evidenced by student progress through objective indicators.

4. Leading Improvement, innovation and change

Demonstrated capacity to design and implement evidence-based policies and actionable school improvement plans, lead school-wide improvement initiatives, and drive forward-thinking, data driven, sustainable innovation and change.

5. Leading the Management of the School

Demonstrated capacity to understand special school funding and oversee school finances; to develop an effective workforce profile meeting school needs, and manage physical assets efficiently; ensuring strategic resource allocation aligns directly with school improvement priorities and regulatory governance, actively delegating responsibilities.

6. Developing Self and Others

Demonstrated capacity to cultivate a professional learning community focused on pedagogical growth and curriculum improvement embedding continuous cycles of evidence-based school improvement, while systematically supporting staff development and well-being within a culture of continuous lifelong learning.

7. Engaging and working with the community

Demonstrated capacity to cultivate an inclusive, supportive school culture tailored to neurologically diverse learners, proactively collaborating with families, other schools and external agencies to establish community partnerships that facilitate positive post-school continuity, training, and civic participation.



Who We Are

Rossbourne School is a unique secondary school dedicated to supporting those students who face challenges in achieving social and academic success in mainstream education due to neurodevelopmental differences.

We are dedicated to enhancing the life opportunities of our students by placing them at the center of learning. We create pathways for independence, social connection, resilience, and respectful relationships.

Our culture and approach is strategically planned so students have the opportunity to thrive, educationally and socially.

We empower students to recognise their strengths, build strong foundations for personal achievements, and define their success by making meaningful contributions to the community.

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers to the concept that variations in brain function and behaviour are a natural part of human diversity. It emphasizes that there is no single "right" way of thinking, learning, or behaving, and that neurological differences should be recognised and respected as part of the normal variation in the human population.

Neurodiversity significantly impacts education by highlighting the need for inclusive and adaptable teaching methods that cater to the diverse ways students learn and process information.

At Rossbourne School, we are dedicated to providing an inclusive and supportive educational environment tailored to the unique needs of neurodivergent students. As a leading school, who specialise in the education of neurodiverse students, our mission is to empower every student as they strive to reach their academic and personal goals through personalised learning strategies, innovative teaching methods, and a nurturing community.

Rossbourne embraces an integrated approach to guiding student learning by creating an empathetic and encouraging environment for growth, learning and social development. Below are the essential elements that make for an enriched experience at Rossbourne.

Personalised Learning

Recognising that students have different learning styles and needs, educators create individualised learning plans. This approach helps in addressing the unique strengths and challenges of neurodivergent students.

Small Class Sizes

Small classes of 6-8 students give educators the opportunity to have a deep knowledge and understanding of their students. All students receive time and expertise so their programs can be personalised and move at the student's pace of learning. Our focus is on supporting students to develop confidence as learners and experience personal success so they are engaged and motivated to continue their learning pathway.

Strength-Based Approach

Instead of focusing solely on deficits, our educators identify and build on the strengths of neurodivergent students. This approach further boosts students' confidence and motivation.

Support Services

Rossbourne has dedicated support services. Students can easily access our Psychologists and Speech Pathologists.

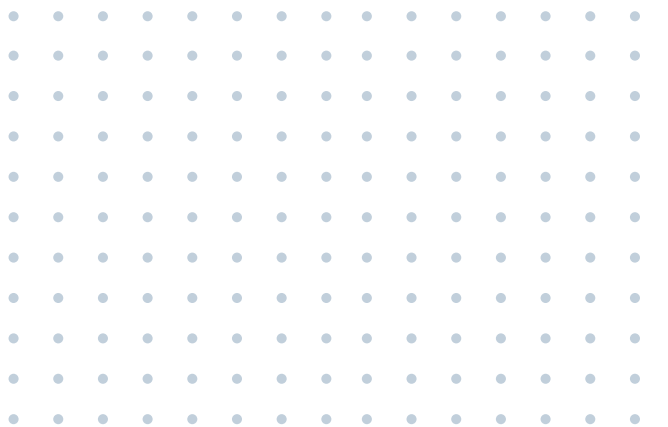
Flexible Teaching Methods

Our educators use a variety of teaching methods, implementing evidenced-based pedagogy such as explicit instruction, multi-sensory teaching practices, experiential learning modalities and multi-media technology, to accommodate different learning preferences.

Reducing Stigma

By embracing neurodiversity, Rossbourne School's approach helps to reduce the stigma associated with neurological differences, placing students at the heart of an accepting and supportive school culture.

Overall, Rossbourne has created an equitable and supportive learning environment where all students can thrive.



Our Facilities

Mansion House

Rossbourne is located in Melbourne's inner suburb of Hawthorn. The mansion is the prominent corner building that houses Administration, Student classrooms and our Food Technology area. It is surrounded by landscaped gardens that provide our students peaceful breakout spaces. The school is 300 meters from Hawthorn station and has the tram route 70 Waterfront City Docklands – Wattle Park that travels along Riversdale Road and route 75 Central Pier Docklands – Vermont South that travels along Power Street.

Living Skills House

The Living Skills house is a fully functional home, next to the school with a front and back garden.

This space allows hands on learning opportunities for our students to develop their skills in a real world environment. During their time in the house students learn about sustainability, daily home chores, home maintenance and garden cultivation.

Library Resource Hub

The library provides students a calm space to read, view movies or further develop their research skills. There is always a staff member in the space to assist students and guide activities if required.

Food Technology

A modern purpose-built industrial space where our students learn about food handling, preparation and cooking. Safe and hygienic work practices are instilled for the use of all equipment and the handling and storage of food. Students learn how to present and serve their creations to visitors at school functions throughout the year.

Cook Centre

This multi-purpose building gives the school a space to gather for learning, performing and functions. It is used for school assemblies, musical productions and community gatherings. Visual Arts Studio

In the studio, students have the opportunity to explore a wide range of art materials and processes. Resources allow students to explore a range of creative endeavours through painting, drawing, print making, collage, photography, mix media, sculpture, set design and ceramics, which are fired in our onsite kiln.

Digital Media Lab

In the Digital Media Lab students develop a range of skills exploring software applications and hardware functions. Equipped with a 3D printer and a laser cutter, students are encouraged to see where technology can take them.

Gym

Housing an indoor basketball court, the gym has a vast range of sporting and gymnastic equipment available for the physical education and the outdoor education programs on offer.

Design Technology Workshop

The workshop is set up with a wide range of equipment and materials that give students the space to explore working with media such as wood, metal, leather, fabrics, screen printing and learning about graphic design.

Wellbeing Hub

Rossbourne's Wellbeing Hub is a contemporary centre that supports the delivery of support services to our students by our Psychologists and Speech Pathologists.

Students can access a space that not only provides specialised professional help, but it is also a space where students can find calmness to compose their thoughts, quieten their anxiety and reset. This allows them to re-engage with their learning and social connections.

Further support is provided by way of a dedicated sensory room and the ability to provide service space for visiting therapists, so our students don't have to leave the school for therapeutic support.

Our Approach To Learning

Rossbourne School offers a coherent and comprehensive curriculum that ensures a continuum of learning for each student. Our curriculum encompasses specific learning areas and key dispositions, which are developed, practiced, and demonstrated by students and staff across all educational settings, including classrooms, co-curricular programs, families, and the wider community.

A whole-school approach to curriculum planning fosters a shared vision, common language, and aligned understanding among staff. We prioritize the quality implementation of evidence-based classroom programs and practices. Our goal is to create opportunities for students to build independence, social connections, resilience, and engage in respectful relationships. This approach nurtures student voice, agency, and engagement, which are vital for each student's growth and potential.

Rossbourne School's curriculum is designed to support each student's journey toward independence, resilience, and lifelong learning. By fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and interconnected learning environment, we empower students to achieve their full potential.

"The attraction to Rossbourne was the class sizes and individualised student programs."

– Megan, parent

Overview of Rossbourne's core subject offerings

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- English
- Mathematics
- Adolescent Health
- Physical Education
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Humanities
- Multimedia Literacy
- Design Technology
- Food Technology
- Living Skills
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- Work-Related Skills

Student Centred Curriculum

Rossbourne School fosters a holistic approach to learning, ensuring students develop academic, social, and emotional skills essential for their future success.

Key Focus Areas



- **Social & Emotional Learning**

Enhancing self-awareness, resilience, and relationships.



- **Applied Learning**

Practical experiences that connect learning to life skills.



- **Digital Literacy & ICT**

Developing responsible and informed digital citizens.



- **Health & Wellbeing**

Encouraging lifelong habits for physical and mental health.

At Rossbourne, we empower students with the confidence, knowledge, and skills to navigate their future with independence and purpose.



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