



**BURWOOD EAST
WORK EXPERIENCE INFORMATION
FOR TEACHERS AND COORDINATORS**



About the RSPCA

The RSPCA is an independent; non-government community based animal welfare charity that has helped millions of animals since 1871. It has fought relentlessly against animal cruelty giving protection, shelter and food to many needy creatures. Without the communities' support, the RSPCA would not function and the welfare of animals would be in jeopardy.

Objectives:

The RSPCA's objectives to prevent cruelty to animals are as follows:

- Educating the Victorian community and increasing public awareness.
- Enforcing the existing laws to prevent cruelty to animals.
- Influencing the amendment or development of animal welfare legislation and standards.
- Encouraging and providing animal welfare services across the state.
- Providing relief programs to assist people within the community who are experiencing adverse circumstances.

The Five Freedoms:

The RSPCA believes that an animal's welfare should be considered in terms of five freedoms:

1. **Freedom from hunger and thirst;**
by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. **Freedom from discomfort;**
by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. **Freedom from pain, injury and disease;**
by prevention through rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. **Freedom to express normal behaviour;**
by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
5. **Freedom from fear and distress;**
by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

To obtain a copy of our Annual General Report or Policy and Position Papers please visit our website at www.rspcavic.org



State-wide Presence

The RSPCA has both a strong metropolitan and regional presence in Victoria. The state office is located in Burwood East and there are 15 regional district operations, which include shelters and opportunity shops.



The RSPCA currently runs a work experience program at its Burwood East Office and at all other RSPCA shelters across the state.

Organisational Structure

The RSPCA is organised into five executive departments and currently secondary and tertiary students may be involved in activities in the animal welfare department through the work experience program. Tertiary students at the state office can undertake internships in all executive departments. For more information on the internship program refer to www.rspcavic.org.au.

Animal Welfare

The Animal Welfare Department oversees all state-wide shelter operations, veterinary services and deals with local government contracts such as running the pound services. The RSPCA work experience students can participate in activities in their local shelter.

Shelter

The Animal Welfare Shelter is responsible for the daily operations of the kennels, cattery, puppies, wildlife and adoption. It is a daily requirement that the animals in the Shelter are clean, fed and as comfortable as can be expected. The Shelter also runs an ambulance service where the driver collects a variety of injured animals. These animals are usually too sick to be treated and the majority are humanely euthanised. Working in the Animal Welfare Shelter is highly emotional and challenging. The RSPCA helps find homes for numerous abandoned animals, but unfortunately, many are euthanised.

Veterinary Clinic

The Veterinary Clinic is responsible for all surgical procedures performed on the animals. Not only does the clinic de-sex and rectify many health problems on shelter animals, it also practices as a private clinic for the community to bring in their own pets. The Veterinary Clinic is also responsible for making the decision on whether an animal is suitable for adoption.

Education

The Education department is responsible for providing education programs to the public from kindergarten children through to university students. Education Centre staff attend schools regularly ensuring that students are made aware of RSPCA day-to-day activities. Work Experience students may have an opportunity to participate in activities in our education office, barn and paddock area.

Marketing & Development

Marketing and Development is responsible for fundraising, telemarketing, events, communications, media and volunteer resources. As the RSPCA receives minimal government funding, the marketing department ensures the organisation's financial stability through community fundraising, while disseminating important messages about RSPCA campaigns, events and welfare issues. Work experience placements are possible for tertiary students only and students would be required to be located at our head office in Burwood East, Melbourne.



Corporate Affairs

Corporate affairs provide legal services and regulate corporate governance within the RSPCA. It also oversees the inspectorate, which is perhaps the RSPCA's most visible and unique service. The inspectorate deals with cruelty complaints and abandoned animals. The RSPCA has nine inspectors based at Burwood and six located in country Victoria. There are new complaints registered daily which the inspectors must attend. These can vary from a dog tied up to a clothesline with no shelter, to an emaciated horse abandoned in a paddock. Unfortunately, due to the nature of work, we are unable to place work experience students in with the inspectorate.

Finance and Major Projects

This department conducts all of the organisation's financial administration and provides planning services for new projects within the organisation such as the building of new regional shelters.

RSPCA Work Experience Program

Program Aims

The RSPCA Work Experience Program purpose is to provide secondary and tertiary students with an understanding of the role of Animal Welfare in the community. The program is designed to meet the needs of students and the organisation and attempts to achieve the highest standard of delivery and content in accordance with the Department of Education and Training guidelines. We aim to develop students' participation and communication skills through involvement in a variety of activities.

The program will usually run for five days, however, we can organise a ten-day program if the school curriculum requires it. The supervisor allocates the students to a particular area, where they are required to complete various tasks.

Four Key Learning Competencies for Students

1. Dealing with Animal Husbandry

- This includes the ability to apply the practical hands on skills necessary to be able to perform routine animal care.
- This includes demonstrating the ability to capture, handle and care for animals.

2. Working with Others

- The student needs to show the ability to interact with staff effectively both in-group situations and on a one-to-one basis.
- Demonstrate the ability to understand and follow instructions effectively and efficiently and complete various tasks as requested by supervisors.

3. Safe Work Practices

- Students should understand the knowledge and be aware of risks in the workplace.
- Demonstrate the ability to follow safe work practices as instructed and communicate information relevant to their responsibilities with O H & S.

4. Communicating and Sharing Ideas and Information

- Students should be able to communicate effectively with others, including staff and volunteers.
- They should show initiative by expressing concerns or queries and sharing new ideas.



Standards of Behaviours

The student will receive a copy of the *RSPCA Standards of Behaviour*, which they are required to read and observe. The *Standards of Behaviour* articulates the organisation's professional expectations on customer service, animal welfare and staff relations. In addition, the below eight general responsibilities are to be understood and adhered to by students at all times.

- There will be no smoking under any circumstances.
- Leaving the property during working hours is prohibited unless approved by the supervisor.
- Students must follow the instructions given to them by their supervisor. **If the student finds any of the instructions unclear, they are encouraged to raise their concerns or queries with their supervisor.**
- Respect workplace diversity.
- Duties need to be completed to a reasonable standard.
- If a policy is breached, the school will be notified and the student's Work Experience tenure will be terminated.
- Punctuality is essential.
- Mobile phones will be off during work activities.

Dress Code

- Students are provided with a name badge and must wear it at all times while on site.
- Students need to be aware there is a high possibility that clothes may become soiled when working in the Shelter or Clinic.
- Clothes must be comfortable yet neat.
- RSPCA recommends Jeans or track pants.
- Non-slip rubber based shoes or work boots are required.
- The RSPCA will not permit any student to begin their placement if they arrive in shorts, singlet tops or open toed shoes.
- Wet weather gear and gumboots are supplied for hosing out the kennels.

Supervision

The RSPCA acknowledges its duty of care and provides ongoing supervision and to ensure clear lines of reporting and instruction for the student. Supervisors will work with and oversee the students' experience and progress. Students must bring to the supervisors' attention any issues or problems about their work experience during their time at the RSPCA.

Grievance

A student can report a grievance issue to their department supervisor or to the Volunteer Resource Department. The RSPCA will endeavour to seek a speedy resolution to any grievances voiced by the student, parents or school. This may involve consultation with the student's work experience coordinator, teacher or parents.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

- Student must be 15 years or older to be eligible.
- Secondary school students
- TAFE and University Students

Application Process

Every student must apply to participate in the RSPCA work experience program. The RSPCA will not accept a student based on interest alone. A student must show a combination of maturity, willingness to learn, a degree of confidence working in an environment where animals are present, good communication skills and an ability to follow instruction and procedure.

A “*Burwood East Work Experience Application form*” and “*Burwood East Work Experience Information for Students*” booklet can be downloaded from our website at www.rspcavic.org. Students need to read all information and consider whether they can participate under the RSPCA’s guidelines and procedures. A student must have a current tetanus vaccination and have no significant medical issues that would put them at risk while participating in activities at the RSPCA. They must also answer all questions thoroughly and sign off on the ‘Understanding the RSPCA’ section along with their parents.

Once an application form is received and assessed, a student will be contacted to conduct a phone interview. If the application is unsuccessful the applicant will be notified via email. The phone interview is intended to further establish a student’s capabilities and ensure the student is taking responsibility and is accountable for the application process.

We will endeavour to place successful applicants in their first preference, however, sometimes this is not possible, and we will offer a placement in another area. A confirmation email stating the dates, times and area of work experience will be sent to the student along with *Animal Handling Training Manual* for the student’s reference. The student must study the content of the *Animal Training Manual*, as they will be tested on their comprehension of the content during their induction. The test is designed to identify any area where the supervisor may need to give additional information to the student to ensure they possess a competent level of understanding prior to commencing their tasks.

The RSPCA will forward the *Work Experience Arrangement Form* to the School for a signature only if the student and their parent or guardian has completed it.



Donation of Payment

As a not-for-profit charity organisation, the RSPCA believes that understanding community giving and concepts of voluntary work is important for the student’s work experience. Under Department of Education guidelines, not-for-profit charities are exempt from making the \$5 per day payment indicated on the *Work Experience Arrangement Form*.

Where Can A Student Work?

There are two areas from which students can choose, however students can only work in the one area for the whole week. At this stage, we do not alternate, for example three days in the shelter and two days in the clinic.

- Veterinary Clinic:** Assisting nurses in the daily care of animals and any other duties as required.
- Animal Welfare Shelter:** Rotating between kennels, cattery, rabbits/guinea pigs, barn and storeroom.

Animal Welfare Shelter

Cattery tasks can include:

- Assist with cleaning the cat adoption area as requested
- Wash and dry dirty litter trays and food bowls
- Feed the cats in adoption
- Wash and dry dirty dishes
- Prepare empty cages for new cats and kittens to arrive
- Ensure every cat and kitten has food and water
- Check in adoption and ensure all cats have food and water and that litter trays are clean.
- Observe animal behaviour as instructed by the Supervisor
- Socialising and grooming cats and kittens
- Re-stocking of bedding and food supplies
- Removal of rubbish and moving of donations
- Change toys in adoptions
- Stock up toys from Storeroom for kittens
- Make up new kitten toys
- Open doors on cat adoption sheds
- Put out clean trays and reline litter trays
- Remove rubbish
- Sweep path down to lost cats gate
- Restock blankets and newspapers
- Any other duties suitable for work experience students

Kennels tasks can include:

- Walk temperament tested dogs as required
- Pooper scoop dirty kennels and walking track
- Assist with disinfecting the vacant kennels as required
- Check all water bowls are full
- Observe animal behaviour as instructed by the Supervisor
- Socialising and grooming dogs and puppies
- Re-stocking of bedding and food supplies
- Removal of rubbish and moving of donations
- Sweep/clean/tidy empty outdoor kennels
- Ensure empty kennels have bed/water bowl/food bowl
- Restock kennel blanket bins
- Clean kennels kitchens (upstairs and food prep)

- Change toys in adoptions
- Tidy/sweep shipping containers
- Restock cardboard adoption boxes
- Remove rubbish
- Sweep blue concrete area near adoption
- Pick up/empty dirty plates, bowls and litter trays (adoptions mornings)
- Stack dirty trays and dishes in kitchen (adoption mornings)
- Any other duties suitable for work experience students

Barn tasks can include:

- Cleaning of barn and paddock
- Feeding of animals
- Collect sticks from paddocks
- Removing manure from paddocks
- Mucking out stables and livestock pens
- Moving hay bales/cleaning hayshed
- Transporting rubbish to the dumpster
- Any other duties suitable for work experience students

Guinea Pigs and Rabbits tasks can include:

- Cleaning out cages and relining with newspaper
- Socialising rabbits
- Collect grass for rabbits
- Assisting in the preparation of animals and barn for education purposes
- Make up salads for rabbits
- Make up toys (manual in adoption)
- Refill container of rabbit/guinea pig mix

Admissions tasks can include:

- Restock cardboard adoption boxes

Storeroom tasks can include:

- Sort donations in Storeroom
- Cut up blankets
- Sort food donations (bins upstairs in AWC foyer), check for fussy food.
- Move donations downstairs
- Check storeroom/donations/recycling for material that could be used for kitten toys (socks, boxes, craft material, plastic bottles etc)
- Take blankets to kennels

Animal Welfare Clinic

Task Description

Duties involve providing assistance to the Veterinary Nursing staff in the daily care and maintenance of sick and convalescing animals.

1. Students are responsible to the Veterinary Nurse Supervisor.
2. Skills and qualities required for participants:
 - Ability to handle and previous experience with looking after animals
 - Reasonable confidence with animals
 - Good communication skills Initiative and common sense
 - Initiative and common sense
 - Physical ability to carry out manual work
 - No allergies to animals.

Clinic tasks can include:

- Cleaning of dirty hospital cages.
- Feeding of animals.
- Sweep and mop wards.
- Wash and dry food bowls.
- Wash and prepare litter trays.
- Maintain washing and drying of towels and surgery linen.
- Removal of rubbish.
- Wash surgery instruments from the morning's surgery.
- Assisting with grooming of animals when required.
- Clean prep tables and observe (optional) some non-sterile surgery.
- Pack dog biscuits or milk powder or prepare syringes for consult Veterinarians.
- Final checks on cages in wards and clean as required.
- Walk hospital patients as instructed by the hospital nurse before end of the day.
- Observe operations (optional) and animal behaviour as instructed by the Supervisor.
- Folding vaccination reminders.
- Making up samples of pet food.
- Stock food shelves in reception area.
- Stock food shelves with food from donation bins.
- Any other duties suitable for work experience students.

Student Induction

All students undertake an induction and briefing session on their first day so they understand the RSPCA's policies and processes related to their work. Relevant information on facilities, O H & S practices and responsibility, Standards of Behaviour and their set tasks will be discussed. Upon arrival, students will also be tested on their knowledge and understanding of the Animal Handling Manual. Students will be encouraged to answer further questions so they understand clearly the work activities and actions required during their time at the RSPCA.

Occupational Health and Safety

(This section is included in the student work experience application form)

The RSPCA recognises its responsibility to provide a healthy and safe workplace and has a vigorous O H & S system in place in order to minimise risk as much as is reasonably practicable. It should be acknowledged that students are likely to come into contact with a number of animals in a range of settings whilst working at the RSPCA.

Whilst we cannot absolutely guarantee that students will be free from accident or injury when working with animals, risk assessments on work experience student activities have been conducted and necessary control measures have been put in place to ensure student safety. Students will be provided with a comprehensive induction and relevant training on each activity assigned by their Supervisor. Students may have varying contact with animals depending on their experience, confidence, responsiveness to training and enthusiasm to learn. Supervisors will determine a student's activities depending on these points. In some cases, a student may not be permitted to work with animals if deemed unsuitable by their Supervisor or until basic skills and awareness of animal handling and behaviour has been achieved.

A work experience student is responsible to report any accident or incident to their supervisor, undertake training and use O H & S tools as instructed.

For more information on the Occupational Health & Safety Act, please go to - www.worksafe.vic.gov.au



Site Visits

The RSPCA encourages School Work Experience Course Coordinators to visit the work experience students. Given the size of the site, visits should to be pre-arranged between the student and teacher prior to commencement. Students can meet the teacher in the foyer of the Animal Welfare Centre during their lunch hour, between 12 noon and 1 pm on any day. Feedback from the Supervisors will be in the form of the written evaluation sheet only.

Work Experience Hours

Working hours are Monday 9.00 am to 3.00pm and Tuesday - Friday 8.00am - 3.00pm. Students report to the Administration Building at 9.00 on their first day where they will meet the Work Experience Co-ordinator and receive their first briefing. They will then be shown to the department they will be working in for the week.

Students will have morning tea break of 15 minutes each and a lunch break of 1 hour. All students are required to stay on the property during these breaks unless they need to purchase their lunch, in which case, they must receive permission from their supervisor to leave the property. Tea and coffee making facilities and a microwave are supplied. There is a strict **no smoking** policy for Work Experience students.

We hope that all students find their time here interesting and enjoyable. The more students put in, the more rewarding it will be. Students are encouraged to ask as many questions as they wish and we look forward to receiving feedback on their experience here.

Evaluation

At the completion of the week, students will meet with the Volunteer Resources Co-ordinator in the Administration Building to review and evaluate their time at the RSPCA. This also includes career advice regarding working in animal related fields. The students can also register as an ongoing volunteer and will receive a Certificate to signify their time with us. Any feedback or questions regarding the program are welcomed at this meeting.

The RSPCA has a workplace evaluation sheet, or the school can provide one, which is completed by the senior staff members in the area of placement. This will be given to the student or sent out to the school after completion.

