



For all creatures great and small.

## Work Experience Information for School Coordinators and Teachers



1030 Robinsons Road  
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**The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Victoria) Incorporated**  
Registered Number A0024329X  
ABN 56 749 449 191

H:Work Experience/Dept of Education/2006

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## 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:

- Enforcing and promoting existing laws
- Ensuring any amendments or new legislation is obtained and updated
- Obtaining and utilising the public's opinion regarding animal welfare
- Educating the community about animal cruelty, by conducting seminars and circulating literature and general information
- Providing the appropriate shelter, care, maintenance and protection of a variety of animals and supporting this with an animal ambulance and rescue.

## 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 or 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.

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- To obtain a copy of our Annual General Report or Policy and Position Papers please visit our website at [www.rspcavic.org](http://www.rspcavic.org)

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## Statewide Presence

The RSCPA has both a strong metropolitan and regional presence in Victoria. Its State Office is based in Burwood and it has 15 regional district operations which include shelters and opportunity shops.



The RSPCA currently runs a full work experience program at its State Office although it is also possible for work experience students to participate in activities at our regional shelters.

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## **Organisational Structure**

The RSPCA is organised into five executive departments (At present students can get involved in activities in animal welfare and education).

### **Animal Welfare**

The Animal Welfare Department oversees all statewide shelter operations, veterinary services and deals with local government contracts such as running pound services. At the RSPCA State Office, work experience students can participate in activities in both the shelter and clinic.

#### **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. Whilst many animals are adopted, many are unfortunately euthanised.

#### **Veterinary Clinic**

The Veterinary Clinic is responsible for all surgical procedures performed on the animals. Not only does the clinic desex and rectify many health problems on shelter animals, it also practises 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 re-housing.

### **Education**

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

### **Marketing & Development**

Marketing and Development is responsible for fundraising and telemarketing, events and communications, media and volunteer resources. As the RSPCA receives minimal government funding the marketing department ensures the organisation's financial stability through community fundraising, whilst disseminating important messages about RSPCA campaigns, events and welfare

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issues. Work experience coordination is also managed through this area although we do place students directly in marketing.

## **Corporate Affairs**

Corporate Affairs provides legal services and regulates corporate governance within the RSPCA. It also oversees the inspectorate – perhaps the RSPCA’s most visible and unique service. The Inspectorate deals with cruelty complaints and abandoned animals. The RSPCA has nine inspectors that are 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 the Inspectorate.

## **Finance and Major Projects**

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

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# **RSPCA Work Experience Program**

## **Program Aims:**

The RSPCA Work Experience Program has been designed to give secondary and tertiary students an understanding of the role of Animal Welfare. The program has been developed with consideration to the student's and organisation's needs 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 their 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. Students will be allocated to a particular area and will be required to complete various tasks.

## **Learning Competencies:**

The RSPCA Work Experience program aims to provide students with an understanding of the skills required to work in an Animal Welfare Organisation. There are four key competencies we require students to achieve:

### **1) Dealing with Animal Husbandry**

The capacity to apply the hands on and practical skills necessary to be able to perform routine animal maintenance. Obtaining the knowledge necessary to capture, handle, care and exhibit animals for educational purposes.

### **2) Working with Others**

The capacity to interact with staff effectively both in group situations and on a one-to-one basis. This includes understanding and following instructions effectively and efficiently and completing various tasks as requested by the student's supervisors.

### **3) Safe Work Practices**

The capacity to be aware of risk in the workplace, follow safe work practices as instructed and communicate information relevant to their responsibilities with O H & S.

### **4) Communicating and Sharing Ideas and Information**

The capacity to communicate effectively with others, including employees and volunteers. The ability to show initiative by expressing concerns or queries and sharing new ideas.

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## Standards of Behaviour

Students will be sent a copy of the *RSPCA Standards of Behaviour* to read and observe. The *Standards of Behaviour* articulates the organisation's professional expectations on customer service, animal welfare and staff relations. In addition, there are eight general responsibilities that must be understood and adhered to by students at all times.

- 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
- Their 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 a must
- Mobile phones are not to be switched on during activities

## Dress Code

Students will be requested to wear appropriate attire. If a student is working in the Education Centre, Veterinary Clinic or Shelter, the clothes must be comfortable yet neat. There is a high possibility that clothes will become soiled when working in the above areas, so students must be prepared. Jeans or track pants are recommended. Rubber based shoes or work boots are required. The RSPCA will not allow any student to begin their placement if they arrive in a pair of shorts, singlet top or open toed shoes.

## Supervision

The RSPCA acknowledges its duty of care to provide ongoing supervision to ensure clear lines of reporting and instruction for the student. Supervisors may be area managers, supervisors or assigned buddies who will work with and oversee the students' experience and progress. Students must bring to the supervisor's 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 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.

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## Who is Eligible to Apply?

To be eligible a student must be 15 years or older.

- Secondary school students
- TAFE Students
- JPET participants

## 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.

An application form and *General Information Booklet* are sent to the student for consideration. Students need to read all information and consider whether they can participate under the RSCPA's guidelines and procedures. A student must at least be over 15 years old, have a current tetanus vaccination and no significant medical issues that would put them at risk whilst 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 either be notified in writing if they are unsuccessful or we will contact them directly to conduct a brief phone interview. 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.

If a student is successful in their application, we will endeavour to place the student in their first preference, however, sometimes this is not possible and we will offer a placement in another area. A confirmation letter stating the dates, times and area of work experience will be sent to the student along with *Animal Handling Training Manual* for the students' reference. The RSPCA will ask the student to study the content of the *Animal Handling 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 are at a competent level of understanding before they commence their tasks.

The RSPCA will also forward on the *Work Experience Arrangement Form* to the School for signing only if it has been completed by the student and their guardian.

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## 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*.

Although there is actually no money that changes hands, the RSPCA asks the student to donate the \$5 per day payment back to the organisation. Students will therefore be asked to tick a box on their application form indicating their willingness to donate and will not be able to continue with the application process should they choose not to do so.

## Where Can A Student Work?

There are three 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 and cattery. Assisting Animal Attendants in cleaning, feeding and socialising of stray and surrendered animals.

## Student Induction

All students must also go through 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 to be done during their time at the RSPCA.

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## **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 to minimise risk as far 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 such time as 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](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

## **Site Visits**

The RSPCA encourages School Work Experience Course Coordinators to visit the work experience site and meet with RSPCA staff to understand and inquire about our Occupational Health and Safety program. Site visits need to be made by appointment. Please contact the Volunteer Resource Department on 5978 6706 or email [mguillemain@rspcavic.org.au](mailto:mguillemain@rspcavic.org.au) to arrange a site visit.

## **Work Experience Hours**

A student's working hours will be from 8.30 am to 12.30pm. Students must report to the shelter office at 8:30 on their first day where they will meet the Volunteer Resources Coordinator and receive their first briefing. The students will then be shown to the department they will be working in for the week.

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Students will have a morning tea breaks of 15 minutes. All students are required to stay on the property during these breaks. 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 their feedback on their experience here.

## **Evaluation**

At the completion of the week, students will be evaluated on their time spent working at the RSPCA. The students can also register as an ongoing volunteer and will receive a memento to signify their time with us.

The RSPCA has their own workplace evaluation sheet that will be completed by the senior staff member in the area of placement. It will be sent out to the appropriate school after completion.

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# Animal Welfare Shelter

## Task Description

Duties description: providing assistance to the Animal Attendants in daily care of animals in the Shelter.

1. Main duties:

- Cleaning of animal enclosures
- Feeding of animals
- Grooming
- Socialising of animals
- Other general cleaning duties as required

2. Students are rotated to work in three different areas of the Shelter:

- Kennels (mature dogs – temperament tested only)
- Cattery (mature cats – temperament test only / kittens)

3. Students are responsible to the Senior Animal Attendant and will be overseen by the Shelter Supervisor.

4. Working hours are 8.00 am – 4.00 pm Monday to Friday with the possibility to arrange work on weekends.

5. Teachers are welcome to visit students during working hours. Appointments are necessary if they want to discuss Work Experience progress with the Shelter Supervisor.

6. Assessment forms are completed at the start of the following week after consultation with the Senior Animal Attendant and then sent to the schools. The RSPCA has its own assessment form which is completed by the Shelter Supervisor.

7. Students working in the Shelter are required to wear jeans or neat track pants. Work boots are recommended, however any rubber sole closed shoe is suitable. Students will not be able to begin their placement if they arrive in shorts, singlet tops or opened toe shoes. Clothes will become soiled when working in this area. Wet weather gear and gumboots are supplied for hosing out the kennels.

8. Skills and qualities required for participants:

- Ability to handle domestic animals, previous experience with looking after animals
- Reasonable confidence with animals
- Good communication skills
- Initiative and common sense
- Physical ability to handle manual work (some of the tasks eg. Hosing dog kennels, are quite physically demanding)
- No allergies to animals

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## **An average day as a Work Experience Student assisting in the Animal Welfare Shelter – Cattery.**

- Assist with cleaning the Cat Adoption or Kitten Adoption area as requested
- Wash and dry dirty litter trays and food bowls
- Complete any unfinished tasks from the adoption area
- Assist with cleaning in the quarantine area if required
- Wash and dry any 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 and kittens have food and water and that litter trays are clean
- Observe operations and animal behaviour as instructed by the Supervisor
- Socialising Adoption cats

## **An average day as a Work Experience Student assisting in the Animal Welfare Shelter – Kennels.**

- Clean pens in dog adoptions
- Hose out every kennel in that particular area
- Take out rubbish and reline bins
- Pooper scoop dirty kennels
- Assist with disinfecting the vacant kennels as required
- Check all water bowls are full
- Brush adoption dogs
- Complete any other tasks requested by the Supervisor
- Observe operations and animal behaviour as instructed by the Supervisor
- Socialising Adoption dogs

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# Clinic

## Task Description

Duty description: providing assistance to the Veterinary Nursing staff in the daily care and maintenance of sick and convalescing animals.

1. Main duties:

- Cleaning of animals in hospital cages and maintaining wards
- Feeding of animals
- Washing and folding of surgery linen
- Exercising hospital patients
- Assisting with grooming of animals when required
- Cleaning surgery equipment
- Any other duties suitable for students

2. Students are responsible to the Veterinary Nurse Supervisor

3. Working hours are 8.00 am – 3.00 pm Monday to Friday.

4. Teachers are welcome to visit students during working hours. Appointments are necessary if they want to discuss work experience student's progress with the Nurses.

5. Assessment forms are completed at the start of the following week after consultation with the nursing staff working with the student and then sent to the schools. The RSPCA has its own assessment form which is completed by the Nursing Supervisor

6. Students working in the Veterinary Clinic are required to wear the appropriate attire. Jeans or neat track pants are suitable and work boots or rubber sole shoes are required.

7. Skills and qualities required for participants:

- Reasonable confidence with animals
- Good communication skills
- Ability to handle domestic animals, previous experience with looking after animals
- Physical ability to handle manual work
- Initiative and common sense
- No allergies to animals.

**Note:** There will be opportunities to observe surgery. This is an optional extra.

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## **An Average Day as a Work Experience Student assisting in the Veterinary Clinic**

- Sweep and mop wards
- Wash and dry food bowls
- Wash and prepare litter trays
- Maintain washing and drying of towels and surgery linen
- Take rubbish out to the bin
- Wash surgery instruments from the morning's surgery
- Clean prep tables and observe 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 and animal behaviour as instructed by the Supervisor

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