



[Home](#) / [News](#) / [Court And Crime](#)

Exclusive

Education department sued over handling of paedophile teacher in Ballarat

AR

By [Amy Roulston](#)
October 15 2025 - 7:00pm

 Save

 Share

Several Ballarat schools are at the centre of a major lawsuit against the Department of Education, accused of failing in its duty to protect children from a known paedophile teacher who continued to teach after he was caught.

The department is being sued over allegations that it failed to prevent the sexual abuse of students by former primary school teacher [Rex Ryan](#), who was transferred between schools several times despite warnings from parents about his abuse.



📷 The Department of Education is being sued over its handling of a paedophile teacher in Ballarat. Picture by Lachlan Bence

Ryan sexually abused at least 12 young girls during his teaching career.

In July 2025, he was [sentenced](#) in the Ballarat County Court for the sexual assault of six girls between 1978 and 1980 at Redan Primary School (now Phoenix P-12) and Wendouree West Primary School (now Yuille Park P-8 Community College).

ADVERTISEMENT

Ad

Ryan taught at nine schools in the Ballarat area, and at least three of them were [made aware](#) that he had been molesting young girls.

×

The Department of Education was contacted for comment.

Rex Ryan's teaching record in Victoria

- Mount Pleasant Primary School: February 2, 1971 to January 31, 1972
- Ballarat East (Eureka Street) Primary School: February 1, 1972 to February 4, 1973
- Ballarat (Dana Street) Primary School: February 5, 1973 to February 2, 1975
- Windermere Primary School: February 3, 1975 to February 1, 1976
- Miners Rest Primary School: February 2, 1976 to January 31, 1977
- Golden Point Primary School: February 1, 1977 to February 5, 1978
- Redan Primary School: February 6, 1978 to July 16, 1978
- Tullamarine Primary School: July 17, 1978 to December 31, 1978
- Wendouree West Primary School: January 1, 1979 to December 31, 1981
- Black Hill Primary School: January 1, 1982 to January 3, 1983
- Central Highlands/Wimmera Regional Office: January 4, 1983 to March 6, 1983 (non-teaching role)

After parents raised concerns about Ryan abusing their children, he was repeatedly shifted between schools.

Earlier this year, the County Court was [told of one occasion](#) when a child and her mother attended the principal's office to report the

abuse, and the principal demanded the child apologise to Ryan.

[The court was told](#) that on another occasion, after his abuse was reported to the police, Ryan accused the child of lying because he had ruled against her when umpiring a ball game later in the afternoon. He was moved to Wendouree West Primary School the following year.

He would go on to assault at least four more children after transferring to Wendouree West.

"The legacy of child abuse in Ballarat is a tragic stain on a beautiful town. I hope the community will rally behind these survivors and share what they know to help correct that."

- Grace Wilson, partner at Rightside Legal

Rightside Legal, a Melbourne-based law firm representing several of the victims, is urging anyone in the community with information to come forward.

"I wish he'd been stopped in time to protect me when I was a little girl. He wasn't. But it's not too late for anyone who knew anything to help us," a victim survivor said.

"The criminal case was about standing up to him. This case is about standing up for myself. So please, if you know anything about him, I need your help."

Grace Wilson, partner at Rightside Legal and the lawyer representing the survivors, believes that there are former students, teachers, and parents in the Ballarat area with information.

"Rex Ryan's victims are calling on their community to share what they know. Every detail counts," Ms Wilson said.

"We can and will succeed in the compensation claims for the survivors. But other students, teachers, and parents from the schools he taught at can all help."

"The criminal case was about standing up to him. This case is about standing up for myself. So please, if you know anything about him, I need your help."

- Victim survivor

Ms Wilson suggested the department's treatment of Ryan mirrors the Catholic Church's history of transferring priests accused of child sexual abuse to different parishes instead of removing or reporting them.

"Ryan's history of moving from school to school looks all too familiar to people well-versed in the church's management of abusive priests. Except here it was the education department, moving him around at the expense of the safety of kids," she said.

"The legacy of child abuse in Ballarat is a tragic stain on a beautiful town. I hope the community will rally behind these survivors and share what they know to help correct that.

ADVERTISEMENT

Ad

"Ryan's victims are courageous. They have put him behind bars and are claiming what they are owed."

The firm has previously won cases for survivors of abuse involving government bodies, church institutions and private schools.



■ How to enjoy your favourite paper... without the paper.

During sentencing back in July for criminal charges, Judge Dalziel highlighted Ryan's repeated offending and the "profound life-long impact" it had on his victims.

"Whether you were emboldened by not being charged or you thought you could brazen your way past any further allegations is not indicated on the evidence, but it is striking that you continued to act on your paedophilic urges again and again," Judge Dalziel said.

ADVERTISEMENT

Ad

"This case demonstrates how very serious sexual offending against children is.

"You repeatedly acted on your paedophilic desires, abusing your position of power and trust. You justified your actions to yourself at the time, and when challenged, you called the girls liars.

"You persisted in offending even after the police interview in 1978, and after [the] allegations were before the school ... in 1980. The victim impact statements describe the profound life-long impact of your offending."

A spokesperson for the Department of Education reiterated its commitment to survivors of abuse.

"We are deeply sorry to all victim-survivors affected by historical child sexual abuse perpetrated by former teachers at government schools," they said.

"No one should experience the devastating impacts of child sexual abuse – we reiterate our commitment to do everything we can to ensure that victim-survivors of historical abuse get the support they need to heal."

MORE COURT AND CRIME:

- [Paedophile teacher pleads guilty to nine counts of indecent assault](#)
- [Paedophile primary teacher jailed for years for sexual abuse of six girls](#)
- [Schools knew about predator teacher, he was moved, and young girls suffered](#)

Any person who has experienced any form of sexual abuse as a Victorian Government school student, either recently or in the past, can report the abuse via the department's [Report Abuse](#) webpage, which includes contacts for Victoria Police.

ADVERTISEMENT

Ad

Affected by this story? There is help available.

You can phone the Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault, in Sebastopol, on 5320 3933, or free-call the crisis care line 24 hours on 1800 806 292.

Or phone Lifeline on 13 11 14, or the Blue Knot Foundation on 1300 657 380

Read More:

'Incorrect reporting' allowed childcare educator to continue work despite assault allegations



Police probe copper theft that forced St Francis Xavier Primary School closure



 Save

 Share

AR

Amy Roulston
Journalist

Follow

Most viewed

Most Viewed

1 'Incorrect reporting' allowed childcare educator to continue



2 Ballarat school hit with fresh allegations of historical child



3 Man given good behaviour bond after spitting on



4 Police probe copper theft that forced St Francis Xavier



5 Ballarat News Team operator pleads guilty to Lake Wendouree



6 Ballarat News Team operator back in court after alleged lake



Newsletters & Alerts

[View all](#)



The Courier

DAILY

Your morning news

Today's top stories curated by our news team.

[+ Sign Up](#)



WEEKDAYS

The lunch break

Grab a quick bite of today's latest news from around the region and the nation.

[+ Sign Up](#)

For All Your Cabinetry
Needs, Drop In to the
Showroom for a Chat!

Services near you >

AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY MEDIA



THE COURIER



OUR SITES



SUBMIT

