



Working with Children Check Policy

Statement:

The Department of Education and Training (DET) and school councils have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all children and employees, and maintain the security of assets by requiring and maintaining high standards of professional conduct from employees and volunteers. The Working with Children (WWC) check is a minimum checking standard set by the *Working With Children Act 2005 (including an amendment effective on August 1st 2017)* for those who work with children, either on a paid or voluntary basis. It aims to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm. The WWC check verifies a person's history to make sure they do not have any relevant criminal offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time the cardholder continues to be checked for new relevant offences or findings. The WWC check is administered by the Department of Justice.

Aims of this policy:

1. To create a mandatory minimum suitability standard for people who work or volunteer with children.
2. To provide ongoing monitoring of those who hold a Working With Children (WWC) check.
3. To review a person's suitability to hold a WWC Check card.
4. To protect children from harm by checking a person's criminal history for serious offences.

Guidelines (DET):

1. A Working With Children check is required for non-teaching school-based employees, and volunteers doing child-related work, who are in direct contact with a child.
2. Direct contact includes:
 - physical contact
 - face-to-face oral communication
 - contact by post or other written communication
 - contact by telephone or other oral communication
 - contact by email or other electronic communication.
3. There may be circumstances where a principal considers that a Criminal Record Check, conducted through the Department of Education and Training, is required in addition to a WWC Check.
4. An application is free for volunteers and has a fee for paid workers (currently \$71.70).
5. A volunteer WWC Check cannot be used for paid child-related work, but an Employee WWC Check can be used for both paid and volunteer work.
6. Exemptions are made for:
 - those under 18 years of age, or students aged 18 or 19 working as a volunteer in an educational institution
 - a parent who volunteers in the activity in which their own child ordinarily participates
 - a sworn police officer who is not suspended from duty
 - a teacher who has current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching
 - those closely related to each child they have contact with
 - a visitor to Victoria who does not ordinarily reside and perform child-related work in Victoria

A Check is not required if you are exempt or if your work involves only occasional direct contact with a child that is incidental to your duties.

Implementation:

1. Principals are responsible for ensuring that all staff have current, valid WWC checks.
2. All volunteers at the school must have a WWC if they are working with children, whether they are supervised by a teacher or not.
3. All adults attending any excursions, including camps, need a WWC Check.
4. A copy of all WWC checks will be filed at school.
5. A volunteer may commence work when they provide proof of application for a WWC check.

Resources:

- Working with Children website
www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren
- Australia Post online application lodgement
www.auspost.com.au/workingwithchildren

This Working With Children Check policy was endorsed by School Council in September 2017