

YARRA ROAD PS

Working With Children

POLICY

Yarra Road Primary School is committed to implementing a culture of child safety, inclusive of all school environments, in and outside of school hours and practices zero tolerance of child abuse.

Rationale:

The Working with Children (WWC) Check affects many people in the Victorian community. People who work or volunteer with children, and employers, agencies and volunteer organisations that employ people in child-related work are most affected. This includes people working in schools.

The WWC Check was developed through extensive public consultation, and aims to strike a balance between protecting children, promoting volunteering and safeguarding individual rights. Volunteers add significantly to the human resources available to the school, and are encouraged, supported and recognised.

We are complying with legislation by ensuring that all who are working on behalf of the school, in a voluntary or paid capacity, have a current Working With Children Check from 2008. Voluntary work may include support in the classroom or assistance on excursions or camps.

Goals:

- 1.1 To take every step possible to ensure the safety of our students.
- 1.2 To ensure all volunteers/employees/tradespeople working at Yarra Road Primary School who fall within the guidelines determined by the Working With Children Act are compliant with the Act and DET Policy.

Guidelines:

- 2.1 The *Working with Children Act 2005* has introduced a Working with Children Check (WWC Check) and minimum suitability standards for certain people who work or volunteer with children.
- 2.2 The Department of Education and school councils will have legislative obligations under the Act with respect to ensuring certain volunteers and employees have applied for, and receive a WWC Check.
- 2.3 The WWC Check has the unique benefit of providing ongoing monitoring for offences. Checks are also valid for five years and are transferable between jobs or volunteer organisations.
- 2.4 Further information on the WWC Check and the Act can be obtained at <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren>

Definitions:

Child Related Work:

- Involves contact with a child that is direct and part of the person's duties
- An activity undertaken in any of the occupational fields referred to as 'services, bodies or places or activities in the Act. This includes educational institutions.

Direct Contact is any contact with a child that involves

- Face-to-face contact
- Contact by post or other written communication
- Contact by telephone or other oral communication
- Contact by email or other electronic communication

For example: John is employed as a counsellor with a phone counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 18. Because John's role involves direct contact with children by telephone, he is required to hold a WWC Check.

Implementation/Procedure:

- Applications for Working with Children Checks can be made on line at <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren>
- At the start of each year, the school's WWC Check policy will be communicated to the school community through the Parent Handbook.
- The school will keep a register of all volunteers/employees who have obtained a WWC Check. A signed Child Safe Code of Conduct must also be kept on file for all volunteers/employees.
- WWC Checks for contractors/tradespeople will be kept in the Contractor Management Folder, with OHS induction documents and a signed Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- When signing in via Passtab at the school office, all volunteers/employees/tradespeople will be required to key in their WWC Check number. A link to the Department of Justice will verify if the WWC Check is valid and if so will permit the sign in process to be completed.
- All Education Support staff members must have undertaken a Working with Children Check and ensure it is kept up to date.
- Edupay alerts the school Business Manager when the WWC Check of an ES staff member is close to expiry and will communicate this to the staff member.
- All teaching staff must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and are therefore exempt from requiring a Working with Children Check as Police Checks are part of the VIT registration process.
- Any person registered with the VIT seeking casual or contract employment must provide a copy of a current registration before commencing. Employment agencies used by the school require the same for Casual Relief Teaching.

Evaluation:

- 5.1 An accurate register in the School Office of WWC Check holders.
- 5.2 Maintaining volunteer numbers through communication of this issue.
- 5.3 Regular and systematic checks of visitors to the school to ensure this policy is adhered to.
- 5.4 This policy will be reviewed annually or more often in necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

A person needs a WWC Check if they meet ALL 5 Criteria listed below:

1. **They engage, or intend to engage, in child-related work as an employee or volunteer.**
2. **They are an adult working with under 18 year olds.**
3. **They are working in any of the occupational fields listed in the ACT (includes educational institutions).**
4. **Their work involves direct contact with children. Direct contact means physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electron contact.**
5. **Your contact with children is part of your duties and not incidental to your work.**

Employer and Volunteer Organisation Obligations

As an employer or volunteer organisation, you have certain obligations under the *Working with Children Act 2005*. Agencies that list people for 'child-related work' also have these obligations. If you do not comply with these obligations, you may be subject to criminal penalties. You must:

- Ensure everyone with direct contact with children has a WWC Check, unless they are exempt under the Act ensure that all employees or volunteers who are required to apply for a Working with Children (WWC) Check do so by the required deadline. If your organisation wishes to facilitate the applications of all relevant employees/volunteers, a bulk application process can be arranged through your local participating Australia Post outlet. Phone 13 13 18 to speak to the manager of your local outlet
- ensure that you do not engage a person in 'child-related work' if they are required to apply for a WWC Check and have not done so by the due date □ ensure that employees or volunteers who are given a Negative Notice do not undertake 'child-related work', even if they are exempt Not engage or continue to engage anyone is child-related work who is subject to obligations or orders under Schedule 3 of the Act.
- Do not allow people who are charged with, convicted or found guilty of sexual, violent or drug offences specified in clause 2 of Schedule 3 of the Act to with or care for children while their application is processed or their Check reassessed.
- ensure that your employees are not undertaking 'child-related work' with a 'volunteer' Assessment Notice and WWC Check Card; employees must apply for an 'employee' Assessment Notice and WWC Check Card
- ensure you comply with obligations to keep employees' and volunteers' information confidential as required under the *Working with Children Act 2005* and by any other relevant laws.
- Ensure that any self-employed person has a valid Check and is not prohibited from working with children.
- Ensure you respect and protect workers' privacy

Additionally, you should:

- record your employees' and volunteers' unique Application Receipt Number (received when they lodge their application)
- confirm that your employees and volunteers have passed the WWC Check
- sight your employees' and volunteers' WWC Check card as evidence that they have passed the WWC Check

- record your employees' and volunteers' WWC Check Number, expiry date and card type ('E' for paid employees or 'V' for volunteers) which is different from their Application Receipt Number
- Retain and secure all correspondence the department sends you about your workers
- Ensure workers notify the department within 21 days of commencing child-related work with your organisation and whenever their personal and contact details change.
- develop internal processes in the event of an existing employee or volunteer being given an Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice.

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Check Status

- You can verify whether your employees' or volunteers' WWC Check cards or applications are valid, either on this website or by calling the WWC Check Information Line.
- It is recommended that you confirm this for new employees, volunteers or any self-employed person you engage, but you can verify a WWC Check Assessment Notice or card at any other time you think it is necessary.

Exemptions from Applying for a check.

- People under the age of 18
- 18 or 19 year old student volunteers where the volunteers work is at or has been organised by the student's educational institution
- Sworn Police officers who are not suspended or released from duty.
- Teachers who are currently registered.
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This Policy was last ratified by School Council in 2017