



POLICY: WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

PURPOSE:

The Working With Children Check (WWC) 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.

A WWC check is required for individuals who engage in 'child related work' that involves direct contact with a child. 'Direct contact' with children has been expanded to include oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact.

A WWC Check is required for anyone engaging in 'child- related work' regardless of whether contact with a child is supervised by another person or not. This means that a volunteer or visitor who is supervised by a teacher must have a WWC Check if they engage in 'child related work.'

A parent, or immediate relative, who volunteers at their child's school as part of an activity that their child is participating in, (such as BPPS morning reading) is not required by law to have a WWC Check.

A police record check gives information about a person's past criminal record and is only valid at the time of issue. The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time, cardholders continue to be checked for new relevant offences or disciplinary findings from professional bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching. In addition, not all criminal offences are relevant to the WWC check. Broadly, the WWC check considers serious sexual and violent drug offences.

A staff member or volunteer is required to undertake a WWC check even if they have already completed a police records check.

AIMS:

The WWC check aims to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm. It is designed to complement good selection, supervision and training practices (including rigorous reference checking). The intent of this procedure is to outline which positions at the school require a WWC check and the process to be followed. This procedure applies to all positions at the school including volunteer, honorary, consultant and contractor positions. Any reference to 'candidates' also extends to staff currently occupying a position.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- The candidate must complete a Working With Children check application form. The forms are available online at www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au. The application needs to be lodged at a participating Australia Post outlet (www.auspost.com.au) with proof of identity documents. Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', candidates should ensure they state Brentwood Park Primary School. If the applicant passes the check they will be sent a successful Assessment Notice, followed by a WWC check card 2-3 weeks later. Further information about the application process is available on the Department of Justice webpage.
- If the applicant does not pass the check they will be given an Interim Negative Notice. The applicant can then make a submission to the Department of Justice to explain why they believe they should pass. If this submission is not successful, the applicant will be issued with a Negative Notice. This means they have failed the WWC check and cannot undertake 'child-related work' or work in the school
- Commencement is conditional upon receipt of a successful Assessment Notice or WWC check card. Any queries should be directed to the principal.

- Candidates who are required to undergo a WWC check as a condition of working in the school will not be able to receive reimbursement for the cost from the school.
- A 'volunteer' card cannot be used for paid 'child-related' work. You must re-apply, pass the check and receive an 'employee' WWC Check Card.
- The school must:
 - identify all staff who require a Working With Children check;
 - ensure prospective staff and volunteers have passed a WWC check before commencement;
 - check the card's validity on the Department of Justice webpage;
 - have a photocopy of the WWC card and with details updated on the school register (if individual is a staff member, copy to be kept on the staff member's personnel file)
- Ensure suitable monitoring procedures are in place to ensure staff members hold a valid WWC check card at all times.
- The principal and business manager may enquire on the status of a WWC card at any time by visiting www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren and entering a WWC check unique number, alternatively telephone 1300 652 879. It is recommended that the principal and business manager periodically verify the status of WWC checks held by people engaged in 'child-related work at their workplace as WWC checks are subject to ongoing monitoring and it is possible that if an individual has a relevant change in circumstances, their WWC check may cease to be valid.
- The staff member or volunteer must:
 - provide the successful WWC check card prior to commencement at the school
 - notify the office if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, for example, if they have been charged or found guilty of a new relevant offence.
- Apply for a new WWC check before their card expires.
- The school will take a copy of each WWC card and file the copy in the administration filing cabinet as per the Staff Registers Policy. The register will be placed on the administration network.

REVIEW:

This policy will be reviewed in 2022.

APPROVED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: 23/6/2020

CONDUCTING A DEPARTMENT CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

Where it is determined that a new employee or volunteer is required, or has elected, to undergo a criminal record check the principal or manager, or their authorised delegate, should arrange for the applicant to complete a [Consent to Check and Release National Police Record form](#).

The information provided by the applicant is to be entered online at: [PROCS \(www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/PROCS/\)](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/PROCS/). The procedures for processing such criminal record checks and a User Guide may be found on HRWeb at: [Suitability for Employment checks \(http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.aspx\)](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.aspx).

Where an employee or volunteer is not registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, and they do not require a WWC Check under the Act, only a criminal record check conducted by the Department can be accepted as an alternative to determine suitability for employment. A criminal record check obtained from another source cannot be accepted as the

Department cannot be assured that all relevant offences were considered and/or that identity validation was performed consistent with requirements of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

A criminal record check conducted by the Department is for 'child-related work' purposes and permit the release to the Department of both spent and non-spent criminal records and disclose findings of guilt where no conviction was recorded.

Principals or managers must consider if a criminal record check conducted by the Department should be required in addition to a WWC Check. Such circumstances include the need to consider whether any offences exist that may be relevant to the duties to be performed, such as dishonesty offences or driving offences, that are not considered by the WWC Check. In particular all employees with a financial delegation should undergo a criminal record check conducted by the Department.

Principals or managers should consult the Employee Conduct Branch on 7022 0005 in such circumstances prior to proceeding.

Criminal history information is received by authorised personnel in the Employee Conduct Branch and is not released outside of that Branch. All employees involved in the handling of criminal records are to ensure that confidentiality of records is maintained at all times, and that records are stored in a secure area. The records may only be used for assessing a person's suitability for employment with the Department.

The principal/manager is not provided with details of criminal history information, if any. The principal/manager is provided with a copy of the clearance or rejection letter only.

Criminal history information is not retained and is securely destroyed no later than three months after the criminal record check process has been completed.