

POLICY: WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK AND SUITABILITY CHECKS



If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the office at Brentwood Park on 9702 2022.

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 and Community Safety.

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 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.
- If the applicant does not pass the check, they will be given an Interim WWC Exclusion. The applicant can then make a submission to the Department of Justice and Community Safety to explain why they believe they should pass. If this submission is not successful, the applicant will be issued with a WWC Exclusion. 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 WWC check card.
- 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 and Community safety 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)
- At Brentwood Park parent volunteers who **require** a WWC are:
 - parent helpers who regularly support the classroom/specialist/library programs
 - parent helpers at swimming, sporting events excursions/incursions and camps
 - fundraising committee members
 - school council members
- At Brentwood Park parent volunteers who **do not** require a WWC are:
 - parents who listen to reading for the first fifteen minutes of the school and then leave
- 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. The register will be placed on the administration network.

Policy Review and approval

Policy last reviewed	28/6/2020
Consultation	Consultation with school council on 21/6/2022
Approved by	Approved by school council on 21/6/2022
Next scheduled review date	June 2024