

Policy Name:	Working with Children Check
Date Adopted:	16 th August 2017
Review Date:	16 th August 2019
Referred Documents:	

RATIONALE:

The Department of Education and Training 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.

In meeting these responsibilities the Department and School Councils must be satisfied that only those employees and volunteers who meet the highest standards of probity and suitability are employed. Verification of a criminal record is achieved by ensuring the employment of new school based employees proceeds in accordance with legislative obligations pursuant to the *Working with Children Act 2005* (for non-teaching employees and volunteers), and to the *Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001* (for principals and teachers).

BROAD GUIDELINES:

The *Working with Children Act 2005* is operational and includes a Working with Children Check (WWC Check), thereby creating minimum checking standards across Victoria for people who work or volunteer with children in certain capacities. The WWC Check will ensure that people who are unsuitable to engage in 'child-related work' do not do so.

The Act defines 'child-related work' as work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) regular, direct contact (**oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact**) with a child where that contact is not directly supervised, and in any of twenty child-related occupational fields listed in the Act. 'Child-related work' may be either paid or unpaid (voluntary).

Working With Children Check is now 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'.

The Department has developed procedures for the conduct of criminal record checks for all school based and non-school based employees, including arrangements that allow for the acceptance of the criminal record checks conducted by the Victorian Institute of Teaching and Working with Children Checks to meet the Department's pre-employment suitability for employment requirements.

These procedures apply to:

- persons employed under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- persons employed under the Public Administration Act 2004
- volunteers (in school and attending excursions/events as an official helper)
- casual employees including casual relief teachers
- student teachers and interns
- contractors

There are exemptions from the Act including: people under 18 years of age, sworn police officers, teachers currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), and visiting workers who do not ordinarily reside and perform child-related work in Victoria.

Further information relevant to a WWC Check can be found at the Department of Justice's internet site at www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren.

EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF (ES):

When appointed, an ES staff member must produce their WWC Check and a copy is kept on their personnel file. A list of registered staff is created and updated annually by the office staff. A copy of the register is kept by the HR manager.

CLASSROOM/SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

- All volunteers must present their WWC Card to the Office. If the card has not yet been issued, the stamped application form from the Post Office must be presented until the card arrives.
- Office staff photocopy WWC Card for every volunteer and keep it on file in the office.
- A list of registered volunteers is created and updated annually by the office staff. A copy of the register is kept in the office.
- Teachers are responsible for checking the register for the volunteers in their classrooms. Only people on the register can be invited into the classroom or on excursions.
- When in the school, all volunteers must comply with the WPPS Visitors Policy.
- Expiry dates for all WWC Cards should be checked at the beginning of each school year by the volunteer and the school office staff.

CONTRACTORS:

- All contractors and trades people must report to the school office. OHS staff must sight the WWC Card before work can commence on the school site within school hours.
- Regular contractors in the school (eg. cleaners and regularly used trades people) must present their WWC Card at the office. Office staff will copy the card and keep it on file in the office.
- If a trade person does not have a WWC Card and is working on school grounds within school hours, the OHS Rep / Maintenance Team will supervise their work and escort them off-site once the job is complete.
- When in the school, all contractors/trades people must comply with the WPPS Visitors Policy.