



## Working with Children Check Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure schools understand requirements for suitability checks including Working with Children Checks for volunteers and visitors who work with children at Victorian government schools.

### **Purpose**

In order to adequately discharge their duty of care schools are legally required to take reasonable steps to minimise the risks of reasonable foreseeable harm to their students see

#### [Duty of Care Policy](#)

Schools and school councils are bound by laws that require a Working With Children's Check (WWC Check) for adults undertaking child-related work in school, and must adhere to Department policies regarding suitability checks for employees, visitors and volunteers.

Schools and school councils are also required to establish and implement school-level policies and procedures and assess and verify the suitability of adults who engage in child-connected work.

Working with Children Checks are required by law only for people who engage in child-related work, unless an exemption applies (e.g. parent supervising their own child, Victorian Institute of teaching (VIT) registered teacher, police officer.)

However, the law only sets out the minimum requirements for who must have a WWC check and schools can require, as school policy, that other people who attending the school as visitors, employees or contractors to have a WWC check.

To assist in determining whether a person (employee, visitor or volunteer) will be engaged in child related or child-connected work, and thus what suitability checks may be appropriate, see:

Attachment

- [Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#)

### **What is the WWC check?**

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.

### **When is a WWC check required?**

- Working with Children Checks are required by law only for people who engage in child-related work.
- Schools may also choose to require suitability checks (including Working with Children Checks) for visitors and volunteers engaging in child-connected work.
- Schools must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record information about a person who they are proposing to engage in child-related work and child-connected work.

### **What is the application process?**

The candidate must complete a Working with Children Check application form. The forms are available online or at Australia Post outlets in Victoria.

Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', candidates should ensure they state Queenscliff 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](#).

### **What if the applicant does not pass the check?**

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 Queenscliff Primary School.

### **When can the candidate commence?**

Commencement in Queenscliff Primary School is conditional upon receipt of a successful Assessment Notice or WWC check card. Any queries should be directed to the Principal.

### **Who pays for the WWC check?**

Candidates who are required to undergo a WWC check as a condition of working in Queenscliff Primary School will not be able to receive reimbursement for the cost from Queenscliff Primary School. At present if you are a volunteer there is no charge other than the cost of providing a passport photo.

## Responsibilities

Queenscliff Primary School must:

- identify all staff who require a Working with Children check;
- ensure existing staff and volunteers are informed of the requirement to undergo the 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 staff member or volunteer must:

- provide the successful WWC check card prior to commencement at Queenscliff Primary 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.

## What is the difference between a WWC Check and a police records check?

A police records 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.

Further information is available from the [Department of Justice Working with Children webpage](#) or the Working with Children information line on 1300 652 879

## School Register

Queenscliff Primary School will take a copy of each WWCC and filed in the Administration Filing Cabinet as per the Staff Registers Policy.

The register will be placed on the admin network.

## Details

Schools and school councils must:

- follow laws that require a Working With Children Check (WWC Check) for adults undertaking child-related work in a school
- adhere to Department policies regarding suitability checks for employees, visitors and volunteers
- establish and implement school-level policies and procedures to assess and verify the suitability of adults who engage in child-connected work through their Visitors in Schools policy and Volunteers in Schools policy

## Further information and resources

1. Visitors in School Policy
2. Volunteers Policy
3. Duty of Care

This policy was reviewed 14/5/2021 and is scheduled for review in May 2022

## Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools

