



Wodonga Federation of
Government Schools

Collectively the same, uniquely different

Working with Children Check Policy

Wodonga Primary School
Wodonga South Primary School
Wodonga West Primary School
Melrose Primary School
Baranduda Primary School
Wodonga Middle Years College
Wodonga Senior Secondary College
Belvoir Special School

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Introduction

Wodonga Federation of Government Schools (The Federation) and its member schools: Wodonga Primary School, Wodonga South Primary School, Wodonga West Primary School, Melrose Primary School, Baranduda Primary School, Wodonga Middle Years College, Wodonga Senior Secondary College, Belvoir Special School are committed to providing a safe environment for all staff, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors.

This policy enables member schools to maintain a high standard of professional conduct and meet the legislative requirements of the Working with Children Act 2005. The Act introduced a Working with Children Check WWCC, thereby creating minimum checking standards across Victoria for people who work or volunteer with children. The WWCC will ensure that people deemed unsuitable to engage in 'child related work' are unable to do so. A WWCC checks for serious sexual, violent and drug-related offences as well as disciplinary findings of professional agencies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Purpose:

- To ensure students under the school's care are protected from being exposed to people deemed unsuitable to engage in 'child related work'
- To ensure all people engaged in Federation and member schools 'child related work' and who are required to have a WWCC, do so
- To ensure that The Federation and its member schools comply with the relevant Acts and laws
- To provide an environment that is safe.

Implementation

Principal and Teachers

Members of the Principal and Teacher class employed by the department are exempt from the act and do not require a WWCC due to their Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

Casual Relief Teachers

Casual Relief Teachers are required to be registered with VIT. Accordingly, they qualify for an exemption as they undergo full Criminal Records Checks.

Volunteers (including Parents)

To be a volunteer at a member school a WWCC Card provided by the Department of Justice is required.

All volunteers must present their WWCC Card to the office where a list of registered volunteers will be established and kept up to date. A 'read only' copy of this register will be kept on the staff drive for ease of access.

Volunteers will be required to present a valid WWCC if they are engaged in contact with children in any capacity, such as:

- Participation in excursions, incursions and camps
- Classroom Helper programs
- Participation and Assistance in swimming or sporting programs
- Transportation and supervision at sporting or other events
- School Council or Parent Club membership duties
- Involvement in any other events or programs where it is deemed as appropriate by the Principal and/or School Council.

Student Teachers and Student Internships

Student teachers/interns must have a WWCC prior to commencing a practicum in a Victorian Government School. As student teachers/interns do not receive payment for undertaking a practicum, a volunteer WWCC is acceptable.

Education Support Staff

All ESS appointed staff will be required to undertake a police check. When appointed, an ESS member must produce their WWCC and a copy is kept on their personnel file.

Other Casual Employees

Casual employees in schools, other than casual relief teachers, are employed pursuant to the Education Act 1958 and therefore are required to demonstrate their suitability for employment by undergoing a WWCC or criminal records check conducted by the DET.

Contractors

A WWCC is not mandatory for all contractors working at DET schools. A WWCC may be required based on the nature of the work, and the type of contact the contractor will have with children. A WWCC may be required if the contracted work is child related, and involves, or is likely to involve, regular and direct contact with a child; where the contact is not directly supervised by another employee (e.g. music lessons, cooking demonstrations or sports coaching).

The Principal will assess the duties to be performed by contractors to determine whether they constitute 'child-related work' and will therefore require a WWCC. Contractors such as IT Technicians, gardeners, cleaners and maintenance staff require a WWCC as they are frequently in schools during normal school hours. The Principal will contact the Conduct and Ethics Branch on 9637-2594 for advice on whether the duties to be performed by a contractor meet the definition of 'child-related work' as contained in the Act if there is any doubt.

Visiting Professional (including DET representatives, Student Support Service Officers, Career Services, Allied Health Professionals)

To be a visiting professional at a member school a WWCC Card provided by the Department of Justice is required.

All visiting professionals must present their WWCC Card to the office where a list of registered volunteers will be established and kept up to date. A 'read only' copy of this register will be kept on the staff drive for ease of access.

Exemptions

The Working with Children Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWCC. Member schools reserves the right to nevertheless require a WWCC if the member school Principal considers it necessary in the circumstances.

Student volunteers

A student who is 18 or 19 years of age is exempt from the WWCC for volunteer work organised by or held at the school they attend.

Police Officers

Sworn Victorian Police officers or sworn Australian Federal Police officers are exempt from requiring a WWCC.

Maintaining records

A copy of all relevant and required WWCC will be kept on file at each member school.

Member schools will implement procedures to ensure those that require a WWCC hold a valid WWCC card; at a minimum, these will be checked annually at the commencement of the school year.

Privacy

Each member school will collect, use, retain or dispose of personal or health information in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* and the *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)*.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of those identified in this policy to:

- Provide a copy of a valid WWCC prior to engaging in child related work to the relevant member school
- Notify the relevant member school Principal if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, for example, if they have been charged or found guilty of a new relevant offence or if their WWCC has been suspended
- Apply for a new WWCC before their card expires.

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. Prior to employing a person, the Principal must be satisfied that the person meets the required Suitability for Employment Checks.

See Suitability for Employment Policy:

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Suitability_for_employment.pdf

To maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our member schools, Principals will ensure that the Department's procedures for criminal record checks are implemented.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.aspx>

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more often if necessary due to changes in legislation or circumstances.

Relevant Policies and guidance

- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools' Child Safety Policy
- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools' Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools' Mandatory Reporting Policy

Victorian Department of Education and Training

- School Policy Advisory Guide:
 - Volunteer Checks
 - Volunteer Workers
- DEECD Human Resources:
 - Suitability for Employment Checks

External Link:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching
- Department of Justice

Endorsed by Melrose Primary School (Paul Barker) School Council and effective as of: 3rd May 2017

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