

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS – VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Rationale

- Schools must establish and implement policies to assess and verify the suitability of all persons who will work with children including requiring all volunteers to provide evidence of their suitability. This evidence is generally a Working with Children Check (WWC Check); however if a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to also have a WWC check e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption.
- In addition to a WWC Check a school may also consider it necessary that a criminal record check is conducted through the Department of Education and Training (DET). This may occur when possible offences are relevant to the duties of the volunteer, for example dishonesty offences, which are not part of the WWC Check.
- As the Executive Officer of School Council, a principal retains the authority to require a potential volunteer to undergo a criminal record check irrespective if the volunteer is exempt from the Act. For instance a parent attending an overnight camp with their child may be exempt from requiring a WWC Check, however a School Council may determine that any person attending an excursion or camp must have either a WWC Check or have undergone a criminal record check conducted by DET. School Councils should ensure their criminal record check policy reflects this authority.

Applying for the WWC Check

The WWC Check is conducted by the Department of Justice. Applications must be lodged at one of the participating Australia Post outlets in Victoria. For a list of Australia Post outlets where a WWC Check application may be made see: www.auspost.com.au.

WWC Check applicants need to complete an online 'Application for WWC Check' form at www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren before going to a participating Australia Post outlet with proof of identity documents to lodge the application.

If the employee passes the WWC Check s/he will be issued a WWC Card which also acts as an 'Assessment Notice'. An Assessment Notice means the employee has passed the WWC Check and may work in 'child-related work'.

A WWC Check applicant who is issued with an Interim Negative Notice or a Negative Notice should contact the Working with Children Unit within the Department of Justice, telephone 1300 652 879 to discuss any right of appeal that may exist or visit their website for further information at: www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren

Purpose

- To ensure volunteers approved to work with children at Tarneit West Primary School (Interim Name) meet the legal requirements of the Working with Children Act 2005.
- To ensure children under our care are protected from being exposed to inappropriate people.
- To ensure all people engaged in 'child related work' with our students have Working with Children Checks.
- To provide an environment that is safe and secure.
- To ensure the school has strategies to enhance compliance with the Child Safe Standards 2 and 4.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

Definitions

The Working with Children (WWC) Check is a background check provided by the Victoria Police.

For the definition of “volunteer”, please refer to the school’s Volunteer Workers Policy. The WWC Check is a minimum checking standard set by the Working with Children Act 2005 for those who work with children, either on a paid or voluntary basis.

To be a volunteer at a school a Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is required. This card is:

- valid for 5 years
- transferable between volunteer organisations
- free of charge for volunteers, but cannot be used for paid employment.

Note: WWC Checks for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work.

Implementation

- The safety and wellbeing of every child at the school is our highest priority.
- The school will inform volunteers of the need to have a WWC Check and the need to have Tarneit West Primary School (interim name) listed as a volunteer organisation.
- A volunteer can commence work in the school when the school has received a copy of their WWC Check from the Department of Justice.
- The WWC Check provided by the Department of Justice is valid for five years, transferable between organisations and will be free of charge for unpaid work.
- All people required to have WWC checks are issued a WWC Check Card, a copy of which will be photocopied by school staff and that person’s name added to the school’s register of ‘approved volunteers.’ Only volunteers on the school register are able to work or volunteer at the school or during school related activities.
- School Council requires that all volunteers must have WWC Checks.
- School Council requires that adults running incursions have a WWC Check and present this when signing in on the day.
- Please refer also to the school’s Volunteer Workers Policy, Visitors to the School Policy, the Incursions (Safety of Children Working with External Providers) Policy and the Child Safe Standards.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update early July 2017).

<u>Ratification Date</u>	<u>Review Date</u>	<u>Policy Number</u>	<u>Version Number</u>	<u>Date Produced</u>
October 2017	2020	91	1	September 2017

Reference:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx