



## Volunteers

### Working with Children's Check Card Policy

#### Rationale

Working with Children's Check cards assist in ensuring a safe environment of our students and are critical to maintaining high standards of professional personal conduct.

Any person whose duties usually involve or are likely to involve work in a school (paid or unpaid) is considered to be engaged in child-related work and must be compliant with the Working with Children's Card Act of 2005.

Changes to the act clarifies who needs to have a Working with Children's Check card. Those who meet all of the below criteria require a check.

- You engage, or intend to engage, in child-related work as an employee or volunteer.
- You are an adult working with under 18 year olds.
- You are working in any of the occupational fields listed in the Act. Go to [Occupational fields](#) for the full list.
- Your work involves direct contact with children. Direct contact means physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact.

In Victoria, a Working with Children Check card is an ongoing assessment by the Department of Justice of a person's eligibility to hold a Working with Children Check card. A Working with Children Check card is issued to a person after an assessment of their criminal history and a finding that they are suitable for child-related work has been made.

Working with Children Check cards are managed by the Department of Justice in accordance with the *Working with Children Act 2005*. Once a card has been issued, the cardholder will be subject to ongoing criminal history assessments while the card is valid.

A Working with Children Card Check is valid for five years and for any further extension of time specified in the *Working with Children Act 2005* (unless suspended or revoked sooner).

Persons who are registered as a teacher with the VIT in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* are not required to have a current Working with Children Check. The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is an independent statutory authority for the teaching profession, whose primary function is to regulate members of the teaching profession. Instead, the teacher registration must be confirmed as current via the VIT Register, available at: [Victorian Institute of Teaching](#). A record of the identifying number and the expiry date of that registration must be kept on their staff record and the nominated supervisor's staff record (regulation 147 and 146, respectively).

#### **Aims:**

To create a safe learning environment.

To maintain a set of protocols that will apply at school and off campus.

To ensure volunteers approved to work with children meet legal requirements.

### Implementation:

- All Casual Relief Teaching Staff must produce their VIT membership card as proof of having a current Working with Children's Check card. C.R.T's employed through agencies have already fulfilled this obligations.
- Employees, volunteers and visitors who participate in any program that involve student contact must have a Working with Children's Check Card. These checks and cards can be applied for through <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/>. Volunteers must list Berwick Chase Primary School on their application or if they are registered with another organisation they must register Berwick Chase Primary School as part of their list of organisations that they volunteer with.
- All volunteers at Berwick Chase Primary School who assist with camps, excursions, fundraising (including mother's day and father's day stalls) classroom activities etc. must have a Working with Children's Check card completed before the event. Proof of check being completed must be provided to the school administration as a letter or in card format. Changes to the reference to 'supervision' has been removed from the definition of child-related work and no longer applies.
  - *Previously, the element of supervision was used to determine whether a person required a Check. If a person's contact with children was directly supervised by another person, then they were not required to hold a Check. Now, a Check is required whether contact with children is supervised or not. This amendment responds to the Royal Commission's findings that perpetrators can often groom children in the presence of other people.*
  - *For example: A member of the community has volunteered to sell gifts at the father's day stall, under the new regulations even if the stall was to be supervised by a teacher or other Working with Children's Card holder they would still need to have a check completed.*
  - *Contractors going into **schools** (excluding school cleaners and grounds people) will not be required to obtain blue cards. Examples of school contractors that do not require blue cards include electricians, builders and other tradespeople where the individual is providing services to the school and not to children.*
  - *However, if the contractor provides services at an **education and care premises or child care centre** when children are present and the services are considered to be part of the contractor's usual business activities, then the individual requires a blue card (Equivalent to Working with Children's Card Check).*
- A data base of all volunteers with Working with Children's Cards will be kept by the office and updated regularly. It is the responsibility of the card holder to provide updated cards to office staff. Office staff will photocopy and add to data base.
- A data base of all education support staff will be updated regularly by administration staff.
- Upon renewal of VIT registration, teachers are required to provide a photocopy of both front and back of VIT cards which will be added to a teachers file annually.
- The Principal will be advised by V.I.T whenever a teachers' criminal record is not current or up to date.
- At the beginning of each term staff will be reminded to review their current helpers list.



- Volunteers with another organisations can add our school to their Working with Children's Card using the online application process.

Amendments to the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act) came into effect on 1 August 2017

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse made several recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection children receive through Working with Children Checks. The following amendments to the Act implement these recommendations:

- Expand the definition of '**direct contact**' in the Act. The definition of direct contact now includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact.
- Remove references to '**supervision**' from the Act. This means that even if a person's contact with children as part of their child-related work is supervised by another person, they will still need to apply for a Working with Children Check.
- Create a new occupational category of 'child-related work', known as 'kinship care'. Family members or other persons of significance caring for a child placed by Child Protection under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* are required to obtain a Check.
- Ensure that non-conviction charges (charges that have been finally dealt with other than by a conviction or finding of guilt) for serious sexual, violent or drug offences are considered as part of Check assessments and re-assessments.
- Enable the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation to compel the production of certain information for the purposes of compliance monitoring.

#### Related Legislation

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/>

Working with Children's Act 2005

Suitability for Employment Policy

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx>

Suitability for Employment Checks

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

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

*Suitability for Employment Policy (PDF - 322Kb)*

*Circular S053-2011 Working with Children (WWC) Check – Renewal Process*

<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/newsevents/schoolbull/Pages/S053-2011.aspx>

*Circular S377-2007 Working with Children Checks - requirements for Specialist Technicians*

[http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/S377-2007\\_wwcccards-clr.doc](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/S377-2007_wwcccards-clr.doc)

*Circular S319-2007 Working with Children Checks - Additional Information*

[http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/S319-2007\\_workwithchildcheck-clr.doc](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/S319-2007_workwithchildcheck-clr.doc)

*Circular C364-2011 New Price Structure for Criminal Record Checks*

<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/newsevents/corpmail/Pages/C364-2011.aspx>

#### Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year cycle.
- *This Policy was ratified at School Council on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2017*