



WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS POLICY

PURPOSE:

This policy applies to the whole school community in supporting safe environments for all children and young people. It concerns the responsibilities of schools in complying with the provisions of the Victorian Working with Children Act 2005, which was enacted to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them are subject to a screening process. [Working With A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is required of most people involved in twenty occupational fields of child-related work as paid workers or volunteers - where that work is not directly supervised by someone with an appropriate check:

- Current members of the Victorian Institute of Teaching are exempt from requiring a WWCC as they already undergo a similar regular check.
- Sporting clubs also fall within these twenty occupational fields. Schools should consider how they will ensure management of associated sporting clubs and manage their responsibilities with regards to this.
- A check is required of people working in schools, including employees, volunteers and self-employed persons, as well as officers of a body corporate, members of committees of management, and persons involved in practical training, e.g. student teachers.

While staff are responsible for obtaining their own check, each School must ensure valid checks are held by all those requiring one.

This also means that each school must ensure all teaching staff maintain their registrations with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and makes it even more critical that the school maintains ongoing records of this.

Volunteers who work with children will also require a WWCC, unless they are exempt.

NOTE: A Working with Children Check is a minimum requirement of a school's Duty of Care – it provides evidence that a person has not been found guilty of sexual abuse. It does not endorse any person as being suitable to work with children.

Systematic and rigorous screening processes also need to be undertaken in every school to reduce as much as possible the risk of harm to any student.

PRINCIPLES:

- A safe environment is required to protect children and young people from harm and to prevent staff from abusing their position of authority
- The child and young person's ongoing safety and wellbeing must be our first priority
- School leaders and staff must be fully self-aware of, and comply with, their professional obligations and responsibilities
- The commitment to protecting children is embedded in the organisation's culture and responsibility for taking action is understood and accepted at all levels of the organisation.

DEFINITIONS:

For the purposes of the Working with Children Act 2005:

- Children are those under the age of 18 years
- Child related work is work involved in one of the occupational fields listed in the Act, and that "usually involves direct contact with a child and that contact is not directly supervised by another person."
- **Note:** "Work is not child-related work by reason only of occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work."
- Direct contact is any contact between a person and a child that involves:
 - a. Physical contact
 - b. face to face oral communication

- Direct supervision is supervision of a person's contact with children rather than of their work in general. Supervising another person's contact with children must be personal and immediate but can include a brief absence such as taking a telephone call in another room.

IMPLEMENTATION:

This policy applies to the whole school community in supporting safe environments for all children and young people.

- An up-to-date WWCC & VIT Register for teachers, other staff, contractors, and volunteers is kept at Principal's office and filing cabinet in Safe room (Administration building) and maintained by the business manager. Those who are exempt from a WWCC are included in this Register with appropriate notation.
- Selection and appointment processes for staff and volunteers require submission of evidence and active assurance of VIT registration or WWCC prior to engagement at Lockington Consolidated School.
- The VIT and Department of Justice websites are checked each year to ensure all registrations and WWCCs continue to be current. For VIT registrations, this is undertaken at the commencement of the school year and in early October each year (when VIT registrations are renewed).
- All staff are made aware each year (including during induction) of, understand and implement the school's procedures in regard to volunteers and other persons, including the need for prior approval of such work by the designated member of the school's leadership team.
- All workers or volunteers related in 'child related work' must undergo Working with Children checks prior to commencing work.
- You are considered to be performing 'child related work' if you work or volunteer at a school or school related activities, and you volunteer or do this work on a regular basis, and you have direct contact with children under 18yrs of age which is unsupervised, and you do not qualify for an exemption.
- Parents who volunteer in relation to an activity in which his or her child ordinarily participates (eg: classroom reading) is also exempt. If the same parent volunteers in a class or activity that his or her child does not ordinarily participate in, then a check is required.
- Parents attending camps/excursions must hold a current Working with Children Check Card. Copy to be provided to the school office.
- School Council does not pay for Working with Children checks. WWC Checks last for 5 years.
- All people required to have Working with Children checks are issued a WWC Check Card which School Council expects them to display on their person at all practicable times when working or volunteering at the school or during school related activities.
- School Council requires that all volunteers directly involved in school camps, excursions, sleep-overs, teaching of swimming lessons, transport of students without staff members present, extra-curricular activities such as school sporting teams etc all have Working with Children Checks.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Chrissy Drummond
PRINCIPAL

Rebecca Steele
SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT