

Croydon Community School & OPTIONS

Working with Children (Suitability) Checks Staff Policy



PURPOSE

To ensure the safety of all children at Croydon Community School & OPTIONS.

To ensure the school has strategies in place to enhance compliance with the Child Safe Standards 2 and 4.

To ensure the school complies with DET policy and guidelines and legislative requirements in regard to the employment of teaching and non-teaching staff.

To ensure that, as part of the process for maintaining high standards of conduct and professionalism in the workplace, the school has a process for implementing and updating suitability and criminal record checks on an accessible 'Working with Children Checks Register' regularly.

SCOPE

Schools are required to exercise their legal obligations in regard to suitability checks, including Working with Children Checks for adults who work with children at schools, and for work undertaken by school visitors and volunteers.

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](#)

Schools and School Councils are bound by laws that require a Working with Children (Suitability) Check (WWC Check) for adults undertaking child-related work in a 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 to assess and verify the suitability of adults who engage in child-connected work.

Working with Children (Suitability) 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).

This policy is intended for School Leadership, all staff and School Council.

DEFINITION

Child-related work:

- involves an adult working with under 18 years old (both paid and unpaid work);
- having direct contact with children (physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact);
- is a usual part of the person's duties (and is not occasional or incidental to their work).

A WWC Check is not legally required if the person:

- qualifies for an exemption (e.g. Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher, police officer, is a parent whose child is participating or ordinarily participates in the relevant activity, or person working with a child who is closely related to them)
- is supervising a student in practical training organised by their educational institution
- takes part in an activity with a child in the same way that a child participates. e.g. as other players in a chess team.

For more guidance on when a WWC Check is legally required, see the [Working with Children Checks](#) website.

More broadly defined than child-related work, child-connected work is authorised by the Principal, School Council or Department and performed by an adult in a school environment (including online and school camps) when children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

POLICY

The safety and wellbeing of children is this school's highest priority.

The school will:

- ensure all staff are informed of the requirement to undergo the check
- ensure prospective staff 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 (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 must:

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

For information on how to apply for a WWC Check, please refer to Appendix A.

Education Support Class employees must demonstrate their suitability for employment by providing evidence of a WWC Check and Assessment Notice.

Casual relief teachers are required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Accordingly they qualify for an exemption from the *Working with Children Act 2005* and do not require a WWC Check.

Not all casual employees in schools will be required by the Act to undergo a WWC Check; it will depend on whether their duties meet the definition of 'child-related work' as defined in the Act.

If necessary, the Principal will contact the Employee Conduct Branch on 9637-2594 for advice on whether the duties to be performed by a casual employee meet the definition of 'child-related work'.

The Principal or nominee will sight and retain a record of the employee's WWC Check unique number. This number is recorded on eduPay.

The school will ensure WWC Checks are recorded in a Register, electronic and hard copy, established for the purpose.

If the school enters into an agreement with a Registered Training Organisation in which the Organisation provides a teacher or instructor to the school, the Principal or Coordinator must be satisfied that the teacher or instructor is suitable for employment by sighting either a criminal record check conducted by the Department, a WWC Check or provisional registration as evidence that a teacher or instructor is suitable for employment.

Where the Registered Training Organisation's teacher or instructor is not registered with Victorian Institute of Teaching, s/he will be required to demonstrate evidence of having applied for a WWC Check.

Eight weeks prior to the WWC Check expiring, a pre-populated renewal application form will be sent to the cardholder.

Employment may be terminated if an employee fails to provide the delegate with an Assessment Notice when required. Termination must not occur fewer than 14 days after the delegate has notified the employee, to provide the Assessment Notice.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Reference:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/hr/pages/hr.aspx

www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.aspx

[Suitability for Employment Policy \(Manual\) June 2018](#)

Please refer also to the school's:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Employment Policy
- Incursions (Safety Of Children Working with External Providers) Policy
- Procedures for Recording and Verifying WWC (Suitable) Checks and VIT Registration Policy
- Registers (Maintenance Of) Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct (General) Policy
- Working with Children (Suitability) Checks – Volunteers and Visitors Policy
- Child Safe Standards

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy, first developed in this format in February 2019 and endorsed/approved by School Council on 25th June, 2019 and will be reviewed part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update late January 2019).

APPENDIX A

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