



Working With Children & Criminal Records Check Policy

Rationale

As of the 1 January 2008, all schools are required to comply with the Working with Children Act 2005, and ensure that any person unsuitable to be involved in 'child related work' and/or 'direct contact' (oral, written or electronic communication, as well as face-to-face and physical contact) with children does not do so.

The Act requires all non-teaching school based employees to have Working With Children (WWC) checks. The Act will also require certain volunteers who engage in 'child-related work' or have 'direct contact' with students in schools to undergo a WWC Check. The Act exempts parents who are volunteering in activities in which his/her child ordinarily participates from requiring a WWC Check. 'Parent' includes the spouse or domestic partner of the father or mother of the child, or a person who has custody of the child.

As the Executive Officer of School Council, principals retain the authority to require a potential volunteer to undergo a WWC check irrespective of if the volunteer is exempt from the Act.

The School Council of Montrose Primary School has determined that ALL workers or volunteers are required to have WWC checks.

What is the difference between a WWC Check and a police records check?

A police records check gives information about a person's past criminal record and is only valid at the time of issue. The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time, cardholders continue to be checked for new relevant offences or disciplinary findings from professional bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching. In addition, not all criminal offences are relevant to the WWC check. Broadly, the WWC check considers serious sexual and violent drug offences.

A staff member or volunteer is required to undertake a WWC check even if they have already completed a police records check.

Aims

- To ensure children under our care are protected from being exposed to inappropriate people.
- To ensure all people engaged in 'child related work' or are in 'direct contact' with our students, and who are required to have Working with Children Checks, do so.
- To ensure that our school complies with the relevant Acts and laws.
- To provide an environment that is safe.

Implementation

- All employees, volunteers, visitors and contractors related in 'child related work' or have 'direct contact' with children must present a current WWC Check card and have it entered in to the school's WWC register prior to commencing work, regardless of whether they are being supervised by a teacher or another adult with a WWC Check. The school will take a copy of the card if one hasn't been received from the Department of Justice. The card's validity will be checked on the Department of Justice website before it is entered into the WWC register.

- All Working with Children cards must be linked to Montrose Primary School. The school then receives a working with children check assessment notice.
- You are considered to be performing 'child related work' and/or 'direct contact' with children if you work or volunteer at a school or school related activities.
- All teaching staff members are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, and undergo ongoing monitoring that satisfies Working with Children Check requirements, and are therefore exempt. Police officers are also exempt. If a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to also have a WWC check, they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption.
- All non-teaching staff – Education support staff, IT and library technicians, canteen supervisor and gardeners will be required to hold WWC checks.
- School Council does not pay for Working with Children checks. WWC Checks last for 5 years.
- School Council will maintain a record of volunteers with up to date WWC Checks. This register will be kept in a folder in the main office of the school. The register will be updated every term, or as new WWC check cards or assessment notices are received.
- Teachers are responsible for ensuring all their helpers have valid WWC check cards listed in the school's WWC register.

Responsibility: Principal and Education Committee

Ratified at School Council: 15th August 2017

Review Date: Due 2nd School Council Meeting of 2019 (March). This policy will be reviewed at the beginning of every even school year.

Further information is available from the [Department of Justice Working with Children webpage](#) or the Working with Children information line on 1300 652 879

FLOWCHART for WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

