



St Francis of Assisi
PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICY

Rationale

On 3 April 2006 the Working with Children Act 2005 (the Act) became operational and introduced a Working with Children Check (WWC Check), thereby creating minimum checking standards across Victoria for people who work or volunteer with children in certain capacities. The WWC Check will ensure that people who are unsuitable to engage in 'child-related work' do not do so.

Guidelines

The Act defines 'child-related work' as work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) regular, direct contact with a child where that contact is not directly supervised, and in any of twenty child-related occupational fields listed in the Act. 'Child-related work' may be either paid or unpaid (voluntary). Principal will consult all relevant government legislation and implement policy as required.

Employees

Principals and Teacher

Members of the principal and teacher class are employed pursuant to the Teaching Service Act 1981 and are required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching as a condition of employment. Teachers and principals who are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching are exempt from the Working with Children Act 2005 and do not require a WWC Check.

School Service Officers and Student Support Service Officers

On 3 April 2006, the Victorian Working with Children Act 2005 (the Act) became operational. The Department, School Councils, and employees and volunteers to whom the Act applies including School Service Officers (SSO) and Student Support Service Officers (SSSO), will be required to be compliant with its provisions by 30 December 2007. As from 30 December 2007 it will be an offence under the Act to engage in 'child-related work' without having applied for a WWC Check. Penalties will apply to both the employer and employee. The Principal / Deputy Principal will sign and retain a record of employee's WWC Check unique number. This number will be recorded on a future version of HRMS.

Casual Relief Teachers

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.

Other Casual Employees

Casual employees in schools, other than casual relief teachers, are employed pursuant to the Education Act 1958 and therefore are required to demonstrate their suitability for employment by undergoing a WWC Check or a criminal records check conducted by the Department.

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.

Contractors

Principals will assess the duties to be performed by contractors to determine whether they constitute 'child-related work' and will therefore require a WWC Check.

Volunteers

The Act will require certain volunteers who engage in 'child-related work' 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.

Volunteers will be required to present a WWC check for:

- participation in overnight excursions, incursions and camps.
- participation in swimming programs.
- involvement with the supervision of students who are not closely related to them as defined by Crimes(Family Violence) Act 1987, including the LEAP program and other mentoring/ welfare programs.
- membership of School Council and Parents Club
- involvement in any other events where it is deemed by the Principal and/or School Council as appropriate.

Volunteers upon arrival at the school must sign in at the School Office. The sign in register requires volunteers to enter their WWC details. Copies of volunteers WWC check are maintained by the administration for reference, including a list of volunteers' names, WWC numbers and expiry dates. This will be maintained by the Deputy Principal.

Preference for participation in all school events will be given to volunteers with a valid WWCC.

Principals / Deputy Principal may enquire on the status of a WWC card at any time by visiting www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren and entering a WWC Check unique number, alternatively telephone 1300 652 879.

The Principals will periodically verify the status of WWC Checks held by people engaged in 'child-related work' at their school as WWC Checks are subject to ongoing monitoring and it is possible that if an individual has a relevant change in circumstances, their WWC Check may cease to be valid.

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

Student Teachers and Student Internships

Student teachers/interns must have applied for a WWC Check prior to commencing a practicum in a Victorian Government School. As student teachers/interns do not receive payment for undertaking a practicum, a volunteer WWC Check may be accepted.

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