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WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK POLICY

PREAMBLE

Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), are exempt from the Working with Children (WWC) Check. This is because registered teachers are subject to extensive criminal history screening and weekly monitoring similar to the WWC Check. In addition to this, registration is only granted by the VIT to teachers who are appropriately qualified and assessed by the VIT as 'suitable to teach'.

However, if a VIT registration is suspended or cancelled, the exemption no longer applies and candidates must apply for a Check. You must, in writing, notify every organisation that engages you in child-related work within seven days of the suspension or cancellation of your VIT registration. The VIT will notify the WWC Check Unit of the cancellation of your registration.

Non-VIT registered staff who work with the school every day are required to have a Working with Children Check. The Working with Children (WWC) check aims to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm. It is designed to complement good selection, supervision and training practices (including rigorous reference checking).

Consistent with changes to the Victorian Working with Children Act 2005 (the Act) that commenced on 1 August 2017, it is now a **legal requirement** that all VCE written examination supervisors, clarifiers, scribes and readers obtain a Working with Children Check before commencing work, unless they are eligible for an exemption under the Act. For information about applying for Working with Children Checks and the changes to the Act, visit the Department of Justice and Regulation page: <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/>

Please contact vcaa.exam.logistics@edumail.vic.gov.au if you have any queries.

This procedure applies to all positions at Wellington Secondary College including volunteer, honorary, consultant and contractor* positions. (*Clarification from the Employee Conduct Branch in February 2018 PH: 9637 2594 was that if a contractor comes and quotes then the staff member would go around the school with them and they do not need to have a WWC. Once a contractor has accepted work then they need to supply a WWC to come on site and complete work.) Any reference to 'candidates' also extends to staff currently occupying a position.

DEFINITIONS

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Student: any child who is enrolled at the School

The intent of this procedure is to outline which positions at the School require a WWC check and the process to be followed.

WHAT IS THE WWC CHECK?

The WWC check verifies a person's history to make sure they do not have any relevant criminal offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time, the cardholder continues to be checked for new relevant offences or findings. The WWC check is administered by the Department of Justice.

WHEN IS A WWC CHECK REQUIRED?

A WWC check is required for positions that meet all of the following criteria:

- involve contact with children in connection with our school
- the contact happens on a regular (everyday) basis;
- involve direct contact with children and this contact is not directly supervised; and
- the position does not qualify for an exemption as listed under the act.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

The candidate must complete a Working with Children Check application form. The forms are available online or at Australia Post outlets in Victoria.

Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', candidates should ensure they state The School

If the applicant passes the check, they will be sent a successful Assessment Notice, followed by a WWC check card 2-3 weeks later.

Further information about the application process is available on the [Department of Justice webpage](#).

WHAT IF THE APPLICANT DOES NOT PASS THE CHECK?

If the applicant does not pass the check, they will be given an Interim Negative Notice. The applicant can then make a submission to the Department of Justice to explain why they believe they should pass. If this submission is not successful, the applicant will be issued with a Negative Notice. This means they have failed the WWC Check and cannot undertake 'child-related work' or work in The School

WHEN CAN THE CANDIDATE COMMENCE?

Commencement in The School is conditional upon receipt of a successful Assessment Notice or WWC check card. Any queries should be directed to the Principal.

CAN I WORK IF MY WWC CHECK HAS EXPIRED?

No. From 26 October 2014 changes to the Working with Children Act 2005 mean that people must stop child related work until they have renewed their WWC Check. It is an offence to continue working in child-related work if your WWC check has expired. A WWC Check can be renewed anytime during the 3 month post-expiry period.

WHO PAYS FOR THE WWC CHECK?

Candidates who are required to undergo a WWC check as a condition of working in the School will not be able to receive reimbursement for the cost from The School.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The School must:

- identify all staff who require a Working with Children check;
- ensure existing staff and volunteers are informed of the requirement to undergo the check;
- ensure prospective staff and volunteers 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 (if individual is a staff member, 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 or volunteer must:

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

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.

WWC CHECK (VOLUNTEER)

To be a volunteer at Wellington Secondary College a Working with Children Card (V) provided by the Department of Justice is required. This card is:

- valid for 5 years
- transferable between volunteer organisations
- free of charge for volunteers, **but cannot be used for paid employment.**

Note: WWC cards (E) for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – HOME STAY

On behalf of DET, Wellington Secondary College will carefully select your homestay family and therefore your accommodation, conduct Working with Children checks on all members of the homestay family over 18 years of age and ensure the school meets rigorous government standards.

You can stay in Victoria with a close family friend or a relative who is not on the list approved by DIBP. With this option, Wellington Secondary College takes responsibility for your wellbeing on behalf of DET.

For this option you need to be 13 years of age or older. Your nominated family friend or relative must:

- have a Working with Children Check
- provide suitable accommodation, which meets our homestay criteria.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [Working with Children Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)

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

SCHOOL REGISTER

Wellington Secondary College will take a copy of each WWCC and file in School Business Manager's Office or for employees keep a copy on their staff file. A College database register is available on the admin network.

This policy was reviewed in March 2020 and will be reviewed annually.

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Council Approval	April 17, 2018
To be reviewed	Annually
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