

WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICY

PURPOSE

To ensure all non-teaching employees and volunteers comply with Working with Children regulations and have a current Working With Children Check Card.

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

To ensure school based non-teaching employees and the engagement of volunteers' proceeds in accordance with Department of Education and Early Childhood Developments Policy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to **all positions at the school including:**

- ❖ Teachers including CRT
- ❖ Non-Teaching Employees
- ❖ Volunteers
- ❖ Student Teachers

Eltham Primary School implements a policy to assess and verify the suitability of non-teaching employees and volunteers who intend to work in 'child-related work' to provide evidence of their suitability. This evidence is generally a Working with Children Check (WWCC); however a volunteer or non-teaching employee's occupation may exempt them from the requirement to have a WWC Check e.g. police officers and teachers. Evidence to support their claim to an exemption must be provided to the school.

Eltham Primary School is responsible for the following:

- a. identifying all staff who require a Working with Children check;
- b. ensure existing staff and volunteers are informed of the requirement to undergo the check;
- c. ensure prospective staff and volunteers have passed a WWC check **before commencement**;
- d. check the card's validity on the [Department of Justice webpage](#);
- e. 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)
- f. ensure suitable monitoring procedures are in place to ensure staff members hold a valid WWC check card at all times.

In addition to a WWC check the school may also consider it necessary that a criminal record check is conducted through the Department. This may occur when possible offences are relevant to the duties of the non-teaching employee or volunteer, for example dishonesty offences, which are not part of the WWC Check. The payment of these criminal records checks are the responsibility of the applicant.

Candidates must complete a Working with Children Check application form. The forms are available online from the Department of Justice website or at Australia Post outlets in Victoria.

- a. Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', candidates should ensure they state "Eltham Primary School".
- b. If the applicant passes the check they will be sent a successful Assessment Notice, followed by a WWC check card 2-3 weeks later.
- c. 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* at Eltham Primary School.

The staff member or volunteer must:

- a. provide the successful WWC check card *prior to commencement* at Eltham Primary School.
- b. 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.
- c. apply for a new WWC check before their card expires.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The WWCC is a minimum checking standard set by the *Working with Children Act 2005* for those who work with children, either on a paid or voluntary basis.

To be a non-teaching employee or a volunteer at Eltham Primary School a Working with Children Check Card administered and provided by the Department of Justice is required.

This card is:

- valid for five years (unless revoked)
- WWC check to be paid personally by individual non-teaching staff and card valid to be transferable between paid employment with the school system
- free of charge for volunteers, but cannot be used for paid employment
- transferable between volunteer organisations

Note: WWC Checks for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work.

It is an offence under the Act to engage in 'child-related work' without having applied for a WWC Check. Penalties apply to both employer and employee if procedures are not followed.

A WWC check verifies a person's history to make sure they do not have any relevant criminal offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. During the five year term of the WWCC the cardholder will continue to be checked for new relevant offences or findings.

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

1. involve contact with children in connection with Eltham Primary School
2. the contact happens on a regular (everyday) basis;
3. involves [direct contact](#) with children and this contact is not [directly supervised](#); and
4. the position does not qualify for an [exemption](#) as listed under the act.

Commencement at Eltham Primary School is conditional upon receipt of a successful Assessment Notice or WWC check card. Any queries should be directed to the Principal or the Business manager. 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.

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

Volunteers - unpaid (will be expected to obtain a WWCC)

A volunteer school worker is a person who without payment or reward voluntarily engages in:

- school council functions
- activities for the welfare of the school at the requests of the principal or school council
- work within the school environment eg: help on excursions, within the classrooms or school grounds

Non-teaching employee:

Is a person who has paid employment within the school environment. This can be as a new employee, through promotion from within the school or transfers from other schools.

Student Teachers:

Must have applied for a WWC Check prior to commencing a practicum in a Victorian Government School. Student teachers do not receive payment for undertaking a practicum; therefore a volunteer WWC Check may be accepted.

Eltham Primary School will take a copy of each WWCC and all copies will be collated and kept in the general office as per the Staff Registers Policy. The register will be placed on the administration network and Dropbox.

A list of WWCC expiry dates will be kept so that office staff can follow up with non-teaching employees and volunteers to provide updated copies of WWCC cards to the office. The WWCC register will be updated with new card holders and expiry dates by administration staff as required.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Definition

NOTE: 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.

Related School Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Related DET Resources

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

Links which are connected with this policy:

- a. Department of Early Childhood and Development's Suitability for Employment Policy & Procedures
- b. Department of Justice website: www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren

Related Procedures: DET Police Records Check Procedures

Related Documents: Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

The following resources are available to assist people understand the Check.

Forms

- [Change of name form](#)
- [Complaints form](#)

Publications

- [General information guide](#)

- [List of exemptions](#)
- [List of occupational fields](#)
- [Applicant guide](#)
- [Interstate applicant information sheet](#)
- [Renewal information guide](#)
- [Ministers of religion information guide](#)
- [Proof of identity requirements](#)
- [Working across states and territories](#)
- [Record-keeping for organisations](#)
- [List of offences](#)
- [Legislative amendments](#)
- [Statement of expectations](#)
- [VCAT applications: factors for consideration](#)

REVIEW CYCLE

| THIS VERSION FIRST ISSUED | LAST UPDATED | STATUS | DUE FOR REVIEW |
|---------------------------|--------------|--|----------------|
| 2018 | 2018 | This policy will be reviewed annually or as necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances | 2021 |