

Working With Children Check (WWC)



Policy

Rationale:

All schools are required to comply with the Working with Children Act 2005, whereby all people associated in 'Child Connected Work' have undertaken the necessary verification checks to be compliant with Child Safe Standards- Code of Conduct obligations.

Aim:

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

Implementation:

GWSC assesses and verifies the suitability of volunteers who will work with children including requiring all volunteers to provide evidence of their suitability. This evidence is generally a working with children check (WWC Check); however, if a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to also have a WWC check (e.g. police officers, teachers), they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption.

In addition to a WWC Check a 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 volunteer, for example dishonesty offences, which are not part of the WWC Check.

A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work, without payment or reward. School work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a school council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, any parent
- Club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal or school council

- Providing any assistance in the work of any school.

Volunteer expectations

- School Council requires that all parents / volunteers directly involved in College camps, excursions, sleep-overs, teaching of swimming lessons, transport of students without staff members present, extra-curricular activities such as College sporting teams etc. all have Working with Children checks.
- Where an international student stays in a home for an exchange visit, each adult over the age of 18 in the home must obtain a WWC check prior to the visitation.
- A volunteer can commence work in a school only when they provide a copy of a valid Working With Children Card.
- The WWC Check 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 volunteer at a school a Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is required.
- WWC Checks for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work
- As of 1 January 2008, all workers or volunteers related in '*child related work*' must undergo Working with Children checks prior to commencing work.
- A person is considered to be performing '*child related work*' if they work or volunteer at a school or school related activities and have direct contact with children under 18yrs of age which is unsupervised, and if that person doesn't qualify for an exemption.
- 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.
- All non-teaching staff will have the appropriate Working with Children registrations and will be registered with the appropriate bodies.
- School Council does not pay for Working with Children checks.
- Any person undertaking child-connected work will be provided with a College 'Child Safe- Code of Conduct' document, affirming our commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people at our College. The document will outlay the parameters of our commitment to child safety and list appropriate and inappropriate behaviours within this context. The person will need to sign a register annually, acknowledging their reading and understanding of requirements prior to commencing their child-connected work within GWSC.
- GWSC will ensure that volunteers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of current policies, procedures and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse.

Ministerial Order No. 870 provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards. Overall responsibility for ensuring compliance rests with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). Accountability to compliance rests with GWSC.

- GWSC will ensure that appropriate supervision, training and support arrangements are in place in relation to:

- The induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
- Monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.

The school will implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work (requiring a WWC check) perform appropriately in relation to child safety. In order to meet these obligations, GWSC commits to undertaking the following actions with these people:

- Establish the parameters with people requiring a Working with Children's Check if they intend to undertake child-connected work. **(Full list is available from Department of Justice website)**
 - Their understanding of children's physical, emotional needs
 - Their understanding of professional boundaries
 - Application of non-discriminatory attitudes or behaviours towards any child, for any reason
 - Required evidence of identity (e.g. driver's licence / passport)
 - Understanding of children's physical, emotional and diversity needs of children.
- Monitor and review provisions will be undertaken at the College, checking that the Working with Children Checks of relevant staff and volunteers are still valid. These have been linked to a register held at the College. The HR Manager systematically reviews the currency of all Working with Children Checks and VIT registrations. The HR Manager sends reminders to Educational Support staff in advance of the expiry of their Working with Children Check. The HR Manager flags expiring Working with Children Checks with relevant volunteers and staff who oversee the volunteers.
 - GWSC is committed to pro-actively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our entire school environment and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We will document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed as new risks arise. All risks to child safety will be listed on our **Risk Register** and reviewed annually.
 - The College will set up a registration log, illustrating an multi annual recorded database, listing checks against those possessing- Working with Children documentation, reading and acknowledgement of Child Safety Standards- Code of Conduct processes and protocols.

References:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/involve/Pages/parent.aspx>

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/who+needs+a+check/>

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle
- This policy was ratified in March 2018
- This policy will be reviewed in March 2021