

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

Rationale

- Newport Gardens Primary School takes a serious and positive view of child safety and is implementing a number of strategies to ensure children's safety.
- Schools must establish and implement policies to assess and verify the suitability of all persons 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 Newport Gardens Primary School may also consider it necessary that a criminal record check is conducted through the DET. 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. The school covers the cost of the criminal record check.
- As the Executive Officer of School Council, a Principal retains the authority to require a potential volunteer to undergo a criminal record check irrespective if the volunteer is exempt from the Act. For instance a parent/carer attending an overnight camp with their child may be exempt from requiring a WWC Check, however a School Council may determine that any person attending an excursion or camp must have either a WWC Check or have undergone a criminal record check conducted by the DET. School Councils should ensure their criminal record check policy reflects this authority.
- Although the Act exempts a parent whose child ordinarily participates in the activity this does not preclude schools from adopting a blanket policy requiring all volunteers to have a WWC check.

Applying for the WWC Check

The WWC Check is conducted by the Department of Justice. Applications must be lodged at one of the participating Australia Post outlets in Victoria. For a list of Australia Post outlets where a WWC Check application may be made see: www.auspost.com.au.

WWC Check applicants need to complete an online 'Application for WWC Check' form at www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren before going to a participating Australia Post outlet with proof of identity documents to lodge the application.

If the employee passes the WWC Check s/he will be issued a WWC Card which also acts as an 'Assessment Notice'. An Assessment Notice means the employee has passed the WWC Check and may work in 'child-related work'.

A WWC Check applicant who is issued with an Interim Negative Notice or a Negative Notice should contact the Working with Children Unit within the Department of Justice, telephone 1300 652 879 to discuss any right of appeal that may exist or visit their website for further information at: www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren

Purpose

- To ensure volunteers approved to work with children at Newport Gardens Primary School meet the legal requirements of the Working with Children Act 2005.
- To ensure children under our care are protected from being exposed to inappropriate people.
- To ensure all people engaged in 'child related work' with our children have Working with Children Checks.
- To provide an environment that is safe and secure.
- To ensure the school has strategies to enhance compliance with the Child Safe Standards 2 & 4.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

Definitions

The Working with Children (WWC) Check is a background check provided by the Victoria Police.

For the definition of "volunteer", please refer to the school's Volunteer Workers Policy.

You are considered to be performing 'child related work' if you work or volunteer at a school or school related activities, you volunteer or do this work on a regular basis and you have direct contact with children under 18 years of age which is unsupervised.

Implementation

- The safety and wellbeing of every child at the school is our highest priority.
- The school will inform volunteers of the need to have a Working with Children Check.
- A volunteer can commence work in a school when they provide a receipt as proof they have applied for a WWC Check with the Department of Justice.
- The Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is valid for five years, transferable between organisations and will be free of charge for unpaid work.
- All people required to have Working with Children checks are issued a WWC Check Card which will be photocopied by school staff and that person's name added to the school's register of 'approved volunteers.' Only volunteers on the school register are able to work or volunteer at the school or during school related activities.

- School Council has determined that all volunteers directly involved in school camps, excursions, teaching of swimming lessons, transport of children without staff members present (rare), extra-curricular activities such as school sporting teams etc. all must have WWC Checks.
- The School Council will consider other activities such as incursions on a case-by-case basis.
- The school will monitor the Working with Children Checks and will advise volunteers two months before the expiry date of the check.
- Please refer also to the school's Volunteer Workers Policy and the Child Safe Standards.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school's three-yearly review or if guidelines change (latest DET update early June 2016).

This **update** was ratified by School Council in

References

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.aspx

