



## Working with Children Policy

### Rationale

Any person whose duties usually involves or is likely to involve work in a school (paid or unpaid) is considered to be engage in 'child related work' and must be compliant with the Working With Children Act. Individuals who engage in 'child-related work' must have a Working with Children Check (WWC Check). 'Child-related work' is any work that involves 'direct contact' with a child that is part of the person's work including oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to face and physical contact. It does not include occasional direct contact with a child that is incidental to the work the person is performing at the school (whether or not that work is paid).

### Aims

To ensure teaching staff, non-teaching staff and volunteers approved to work with children meet legal requirements in accordance with the Working With Children Act. Non-teaching staff generally refers to Education Support Staff and a volunteer at Vermont Primary School is a person who, without payment or reward, voluntarily engages in activities such as swimming, camps, excursions, incursions, production helpers and assisting in classrooms.

### Guidelines

A WWCC verifies a person's history to ensure they do not have any relevant criminal offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. The check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked) and during this time, the cardholder continues to be monitored for new offences or findings. The WWCC is administered by the Department of Justice. It is the responsibility of each Staff member, and other workers and volunteers to ensure that their registration is current. This information can be accessed by visiting:

<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu>

- Any staff member registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is exempt from requiring a Working with Children Check.
- All non-teaching staff and volunteers at Vermont Primary School are required to have, or have applied for, a Working with Children Check (WWC Check) to provide evidence of their suitability.
- 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. The school covers the cost of the criminal record check.
- Non-teaching staff cannot commence work until they provide evidence of an 'active' WWCC, though 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 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 considered as non-teaching staff or a volunteer at a school, a Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is required. This card is:
  - valid for 5 years
  - transferable between volunteer organisations
  - free of charge for volunteer, (applicants need to provide a passport size photograph) but cannot be used for paid employment.
  - WWC Checks for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work
- A WWC Check is now required for anyone engaging in 'child-related work' regardless of whether contact with a child is supervised by another person or not. This means that a volunteer or visitor who is supervised by a teacher must have a WWC Check if they engage in 'child related work'.

## **Implementation**

1. Vermont Primary School will keep an electronic and hard copy register to record WWCC information and VIT registration.
2. Any staff member registered with VIT must provide a current copy of registration on renewal to the Business Manager. A register of 'active' VIT card holders will be kept in a folder and on a digital file in the office. This folder is updated annually in September when all VIT registrations are paid.
3. Any staff member registered with VIT seeking, permanent, contract or casual employment must provide a current registration before commencing.
4. At the beginning of each school year, the administration officer will check all current volunteer and staff WWCC expiry dates and contact any volunteers or staff who's expiry fall within the current school year. Updated WWC check information will then be recorded in the register and copies filed in the WWC Check folder.
5. The Business Manager is responsible for keeping an up to date register of all non-teaching staff's WWC Checks. An audit of all non-teaching staff's WWC Checks will take place in Term 4 each year. This will ensure that any WWC Checks expiring the following year can be attended to well before expiry and the commencement of the new school year. This register will be kept in the folder, and photocopies of current WWC Checks for non-teaching staff will be stored in their personal file.
6. A current WWC Check will be included as part of the DET employment checklist.

**Parents of and visitors to Vermont Primary School are expected to wear their WWC card at all times when involved in school activities.**

### **This Policy works in conjunction with:**

1. VPS Child Safety Policy
2. VPS Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Duty of Care Policy