

Policy **WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK**

Rationale:

- Our school encourages active participation in the life of the school by all members of the school community. The school is also committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of students.
- It is an offence for a school to engage a person in child-related work if the person requires a WWC check pursuant to the Working With Children Act 2005 (the Act) and has not applied for one.
- The school considers it particularly important that parents attending activities with high level student contact such as camps, sleep-overs and sporting programs should be required to have a WWC check irrespective of whether their own child is a participant. A policy which makes the same requirement of all volunteers is fair and reasonable. It removes the need for the school to continually interpret legislative requirements and also ensures compliance with those requirements.

Aims:

- To ensure all employees and those volunteers involved in activities with potentially high levels of student contact, are of sound character and have been deemed suitable to be employed or to volunteer in schools consistent with the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD) "Suitability for Employment" policy.
- To provide clear explanation of the school's requirements for teachers, other employees, parent volunteers and other volunteers in relation to the state government's Criminal Records Check procedures and Working with Children Check procedures.
- To provide a consistent policy that recognises the legislative requirements but sets a broader standard of probity at Echuca Primary School to inspire confidence and allow for the more flexible engagement of volunteers in the school.

Definitions: Some of the terms in this policy have specific meaning:

- **Child-Related Work** is defined as work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) regular, direct contact with a child where that contact is not directly supervised. This work may be either paid work or unpaid voluntary work.
- **Working With Children Checks (WWCC)** are the mandatory minimum checking standard for employees and volunteers who work with children in schools. Working With Children (WWC) Checks are free for volunteers. Application forms are available online. The WCC Check consists of a national criminal history check and also includes consideration of any relevant findings from professional disciplinary bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). Not all criminal offences will be taken into account, only serious sexual, violence or drug offences or pending charges. The WWC check is valid for up to five years, but is monitored on an ongoing basis. Teachers and Principals are exempt from requiring a WWC Check if they have current VIT registration. Teachers registered by the VIT undergo ongoing monitoring and checking of a similar kind to that of a WWC Check.
- **Criminal Records Checks (CRC)** are conducted by the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development to check suitability for employment in schools. The check also permits release to the Department of spent and non-spent criminal records and discloses findings of guilt where no conviction was recorded. This check is valid for up to three years and must be conducted by Department of Education & Early Childhood Development; a Criminal Records Check obtained directly from Victoria Police or other sources cannot be accepted as an equivalent check. A Criminal Records Check differs from a Working With Children Check.

Echuca Primary School

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Implementation:

In order to maintain high levels of safety for all students at Echuca Primary School and a commitment to maintaining high standards of professional conduct, the following shall apply:

- **Teachers employed by the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD)**
All teachers and Principals must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) which by definition will mean that a Criminal Records Check (CRC) will be completed. The letters 'NPHC' must appear on their registration card.
- **Education Support Staff (ESS) employed by DEECD and School Council** - All ESS must apply for a Working With Children (WWC) Check and subsequently be issued with an 'Assessment Notice' and a WWC Card stamped 'E'. The school will meet the cost of WWC Checks for current DEECD employees and long term School Council employees.
- Some ESS may also be required to undergo a Criminal Records Check (CRC) if they have responsibilities in activities such as handling finance (because a WWC check would not disclose some offences relevant to that job function). The school pays any fees incurred by ESS while obtaining a CRC. New employees obliged to obtain a CRC will be required to complete, sign and provide the Principal with a 'Consent to Check and Release Criminal Record' form accompanied by 100 point ID evidence.
- **Other Casual Employees** - Casual employees who perform 'child-related work' must apply for a Working With Children (WWC) Check and be issued with an 'Assessment Notice' and a WWC Card stamped 'E'. Casual employees will be required to meet the cost of their check.
- Some casual employees may also be required to undergo a Criminal Records Check (CRC) for the reasons described above. The school does not reimburse any fees incurred by Casual Employees while obtaining a CRC. New casual employees obliged to obtain a CRC will be required to follow the process described above.
- **Volunteers** – Under the Act, the Principal, as the Executive Officer of School Council, retains the authority to require casual employees and volunteers to undergo a WWC Check and/or a CRC irrespective of whether the person is exempt from the Act. At Echuca Primary School, to avoid any ambiguity, ALL volunteers must apply for a Working With Children (WWC) Check. This includes parents volunteering in activities in which their child ordinarily participates (even though under the Act this may be exempt from requiring a WWC Check). WWC checks for volunteers are free. Volunteers must apply for a WWC Check and be issued with an 'Assessment Notice' and a WWC Card stamped 'V'.
- Some volunteers may also be required to undergo a Criminal Records Check (CRC) for the reasons described above. The school pays any fees incurred by volunteers obtaining a CRC. New volunteers obliged to obtain a CRC will be required to follow the process described above.

Other processes

- The cost of photos for all WWC Checks will be met by the applicant.
- The applicant and the school will each retain copies of CRC's.
- The applicant will be issued with a WWC Check Assessment Notice and a WWC Card and the employer (where known) will be provided with a copy of the WWC Assessment Notice.
- The results of all CRC's and WWC Checks are strictly confidential.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council - 15th June 2015