

Working With Children Check Policy

Rationale

Sacred Heart College Geelong is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students, and the creation of a just and respectful environment that supports the health and wellbeing of the school community. All in our school have a duty of care, a moral obligation and a shared responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of the community.

The purpose to ensure children and young people are protected against sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility, and schools have particular responsibilities to ensure children and young people are safe in their care, and to actively and intentionally work to eliminate all forms of abusive behaviour towards children.

This policy support the Mercy values of justice and respect.

Scope

This policy applies to the whole school community in supporting safe environments for all children and young people.

It concerns the responsibilities of the College in complying with the provisions of the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic.), which was enacted 'to assist in protecting children from sexual and physical harm by providing for screening of persons who work with, or care for, children' (section 1(b)).

Teachers with current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration are exempt from obtaining a Working with Children Check (WWCC) as the VIT registration process includes screening for suitability for child-related work. Ministers of religion and those performing duties of a religious vocation are required to have a WWCC.

Definitions

For the purposes of the *Worker Screening Act 2020*, **children** are those under the age of 18 years.

Child-related work is work involved in one of the occupational fields listed in the Act, and usually involves direct contact with a child where that contact is not directly supervised by another person.

Note: Work is **not** child-related work by reason only of occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

Direct contact is any contact between a person and a child that involves:

- physical contact
- face-to-face oral communication.

Direct supervision is supervision of a person's contact with children, rather than of their work in general. Supervising another person's contact with children must be personal and immediate, but can include a brief absence such as taking a telephone call in another room.

Unsupervised child-related work is any type of activity where an adult has 'direct contact' with a student or students/young people that is not directly supervised by a member of staff.

Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is the registration body for teachers in Victoria.

Working with Children Check (WWCC) is required by persons doing child-related work in Victoria as paid workers or volunteers, where that work is not directly supervised by someone with an appropriate check. A WWCC is not required by teachers who hold current VIT registration.

Workplace participants refers to College employees, contractors, consultants, students on placement and volunteers (hereafter referred to as Workplace Participants), both inside and outside of the workplace.

Policy Statement

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety and wellbeing within the College:

- all students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect
- a safe environment is required to protect children and young people from harm, and to prevent workplace participants or other adults from abusing their position of authority and trust
- our College's commitment to the protection of children is embedded in the culture of our school, and our individual and collective responsibility to take action is understood and accepted
- each child and young person's ongoing safety and wellbeing must be the primary focus of all decision-making.

All workplace participants must be fully self-aware of, and comply with, their professional obligations and responsibilities with regard to the protection of children.

The College will ensure that a current WWCC is held by all persons involved at the College who are required to do so. The College will maintain accurate and up-to-date WWCC and VIT registers for all workplace participants. This duty is allocated to the People and Capability Team.

Each year, all staff are made aware of the College's procedures for volunteers, contractors and other persons, including the need for prior approval of such work by the People and Capability Team.

Who requires a WWCC?

Only people doing child-related work (and who aren't otherwise exempt under the Act) need a WWCC. This applies to both paid and volunteer workers. Not everyone who has contact with children needs a WWCC. More information about the occupations requiring a WWCC is included in the [list of occupational fields](#).

A WWCC is required:

- by adults engaged in child-related work within the meaning of the Act, which includes engaging in voluntary work and providing practical training as well as paid employment
- if the work usually involves direct contact with a child or children
- when the contact with children is not occasional direct contact and is not incidental to the work
- for clergy and those performing duties of a religious vocation who must show the principal or delegate their current WWCC
- by volunteers, including members of the College's Advisory Council members and subcommittee members, and those involved in practical training, such as student teachers.
- By SHC students aged 18 years of age or over who hold a leadership position (volunteer Working with Children Check)

Schools need to consider the range of people involved in direct child-related work and develop a process for ensuring that all necessary Working with Children Checks will be made and recorded. Schools must incorporate this into their procedures. This will include people from those occupations within the [list of occupational fields](#) identified in the Working with Children Check (WWCC) legislation.

Workplace participants are responsible for obtaining their own WWCC; however, the College must ensure that valid checks are held by all those requiring one by maintaining a current and up-to-date WWCC register. The currency of WWCCs by workplace participants is monitored by a member of the People and Capability Team whose role specifically includes maintenance of the WWCC register and related tasks.

The College will ensure that a register of all teaching staff, who, while having current registration with the VIT are exempt from obtaining a separate WWCC, is maintained in the College.

Each year, workplace participants are made aware of the WWCC requirements and that it is a condition of their tenure at the College to ensure currency is maintained.


References and Related Documents

- Victorian [Worker Screening Act 2020](#)
- Working with Children Check Victoria [website](#)
- Working with Children Check Register – Procedures for Maintaining Register
- Working with Children Check Procedures

Document Control

Date Approved: 22 June 2022

Name: Anna Negro, Principal

Signature: 

Date presented at Advisory Council Meeting:

Sponsor: People and Capability Leader

Person responsible for implementation: People and Capability Leader

Reviewed by:

- School Committee:
- Sub Committee of the College Council:
- Student Leadership House Focus Team:

Location checklist: Staff Handbook Student Space Parent Portal Website

VERSION HISTORY

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