



# WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## Rationale

Abbotsford Primary School will assess and verify the suitability of staff and volunteers who will work with children. Unless an exemption applies to a person, a valid Working With Children Check (WWC Check) is the minimum standard for all adults working with children. If a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to 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, Abbotsford Primary School may also require a criminal record check. This may be considered necessary when certain offences are relevant to the duties of the volunteer or staff member, for example checking for dishonesty offences may be required for a role that involves managing finances or petty cash.

## Purpose

To minimise risk of harm to students by requiring staff and volunteers of Abbotsford Primary School to provide evidence that they have appropriate approvals to work with children in accordance with legislation and Department policy.

## Implementation

It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. Prior to employing a person, the principal must be satisfied that the person meets the required Suitability for Employment Checks. See **Suitability for Employment Policy**: [http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Suitability\\_for\\_employment.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Suitability_for_employment.pdf)

To maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our school, Abbotsford Primary School will ensure that the Department's procedures for criminal record checks are implemented.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.aspx>

Abbotsford Primary School will adhere to the Department of Education and Training procedures for the conduct of criminal records checks for all school based employees, including arrangements that allow for the acceptance of the criminal records check conducted by the Victorian Institute of Teaching and WWC Checks to meet the Department's pre-employment suitability for employment requirements.

The Business Manager and Administration staff will maintain an up-to-date register of Working With Children Checks and this will be stored in the school office.

## **Volunteers**

### Definition

WWC Checks are required by all volunteers who will be working with students for school activities whether or not supervised by a teacher and whether or not the activity is on school grounds or during school hours.

For example, a volunteer who is assisting at a school camp or any other approved school activity outside of school grounds will require a WWC Check. See section 3.5 below for a list of exemptions.

### Commencing volunteering

A volunteer can commence work in Abbotsford Primary School when they provide a receipt as proof they have applied for a WWC Check with the Department of Justice and have otherwise been considered by the school to be suitable. See also, *Abbotsford Primary School Visitors and Volunteer's Policy, 2016*

## **Working with Children Check**

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. It checks for serious sexual, violent and drug-related offences as well as disciplinary findings of professional agencies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

To be a volunteer at Abbotsford Primary School a valid 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 volunteers, but cannot be used for paid employment.

Note: WWC Checks for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work.

## **Maintaining records**

A copy of the staff member or volunteer's WWC Check will be kept on the file at the school.

Abbotsford Primary School will implement procedures to ensure staff members and volunteers hold a valid WWC Check card; at a minimum annually at the commencement of the school year.

It is the responsibility of the staff member or volunteer to:

- provide Abbotsford Primary School with the successful WWC Check card prior to commencement
- notify the principal if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, for example, if they have been charged or found guilty of a new relevant offence or if their WWC Check has been suspended.
- apply for a new WWC Check before their card expires.

## Privacy

Abbotsford Primary School will apply privacy principles when collecting, using, retaining or disposing of personal or health information in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic).

## Exemptions

The Working with Children Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWC Check. Abbotsford Primary School reserves the right to nevertheless require a WWC Check if the principal considers it necessary in the circumstances. The exempt categories are:

### Teachers

Registered teachers or teachers who have permission to teach from the Victorian Institute of Teaching under Part 2.6 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* are exempt from requiring a WWC Check.

### Police officers

Sworn Victoria Police officers or sworn Australian Federal Police officers are exempt from requiring a WWC Check.

## Related Policies

*Abbotsford Primary School Visitors and Volunteer's Policy, 2016*  
*Appendix A: Flowchart for Working With Children Checks*

DEECD Human Resources:

- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)

External Links:

- [Victorian Institute of Teaching](#)
- [Working with Children Check](#)

## Evaluation

This policy was ratified by School Council in September 2016.

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