



Working with Children Check

Policy and Procedures



1. POLICY STATEMENT

Merrijig 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, Merrijig PS 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.

2. POLICY PURPOSE

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

3. 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

To maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our school, Merrijig PS will ensure that the Department's procedures for criminal record checks are implemented.
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.aspx>

Merrijig Primary School will adhere to the Department 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.

3.1 Volunteers

3.1.1 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.

3.1.2 Commencing volunteering

A volunteer can commence work in Merrijig 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.

3.2 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 Merrijig 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.

3.3 Maintaining records

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

Merrijig 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 Merrijig 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.

3.4 Privacy

Merrijig 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)*.

3.5 Exemptions

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

3.5.1 Student volunteers

A student who is 18 or 19 years of age is exempt from the WWC Check for volunteer work organised by or held at the same educational institution they attend.

3.5.2 Parents volunteering in an activity with their child

Parents volunteering in an activity in which their child participates or normally participates, are exempt from needing a WWC Check.

3.5.3 Family members and people who are closely related to the child

Family members closely related to each child in the child-related work are exempt from the WWC Check.

'Closely related' to a child means:

- parent
- spouse or domestic partner
- step-parent
- mother-in-law or father-in-law
- grandparent
- uncle or aunt
- brother or sister, including half siblings, step siblings, brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

3.5.4 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.

3.5.5 Police officers

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

For a full list of exemptions and examples refer to: [Working with Children Check – Exemptions](#)

4. LINKS AND REFERENCES

School Policy Advisory Guide:

- [Volunteer Checks](#)
- [Volunteer Workers](#)

DEECD Human Resources:

- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)

External Links:

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

5. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or more often if necessary due to changes in legislation or circumstances.

Reviewed: 2018

Next Review: 2019

FLOWCHART for WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

NB:

**It is mandatory that
All volunteers and Locally
Employed staff hold current
Working with Children Checks.**

**Business Manager has primary
responsibility for checking and
processing WWCCs.**

**All Administration staff are also
responsible for fully implementing
this process in the event of the
Business Manager's absence or at
the instruction of the Business
Manager.**

