

# Working with Children and Suitability Check Policy



<b>Responsibility</b>	Business Manager, Administration Team
<b>Endorsed by Council</b>	June 2020
<b>Due for Review</b>	June 2023

<b>Purpose</b>	The Working with Children (WWC) check aims to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm. It is designed to complement good selection, supervision and training practices (including rigorous reference checking). The intent of this policy is to outline which positions at Berwick Fields Primary School require a WWC check and the process to be followed.
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to all positions at Berwick Fields Primary School other than teaching positions, including volunteer, consultant and contractor positions. Any reference to 'candidates' also extends to staff currently occupying a position.
<b>Definitions</b>	Student: any child who is enrolled at the school. Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years.
<b>Implementation</b>	<p><b>The WWC Check</b> The WWC check verifies a person's history to make sure they do not have any relevant criminal offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time the cardholder continues to be checked for new relevant offences or findings. The WWC check is administered by the Department of Justice. At Berwick Fields Primary School, a WWC check is required for any person, volunteer or paid, who engages with students in any school related/approved activity.</p> <p><b>The Application Process</b> The candidate must complete an online Working with Children Check application via the Department of Justice website <a href="http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/">http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/</a>. Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', candidates should ensure they state Berwick Fields Primary School. If the applicant passes the check they will be sent a successful Assessment Notice, followed by a WWC check card 2-3 weeks later. Further information about the application process is available on the Department of Justice webpage.</p> <p>If the applicant does not pass the check they will be given an Interim Negative Notice. The applicant can then make a submission to the Department of Justice to explain why they believe they should pass. If this submission is not successful the applicant will be issued with a Negative Notice. This means they have failed the WWC Check and cannot undertake 'child-related work' or work in the school.</p> <p><b>Commencement</b> Commencement at Berwick Fields Primary School is conditional upon possession of a successful Assessment Notice or WWC check card. Any queries should be directed to the Principal. Candidates who are required to undergo a WWC check as a condition of working or volunteering at Berwick Fields Primary School will not receive reimbursement for any costs associated with the WWC check. Berwick Fields Primary School will assess and verify the suitability of staff and volunteers who will work with children.</p> <p><b>Police Records Check</b> A police records check gives information about a person's past criminal record and is only valid at the time of issue. Berwick Fields Primary School may require a criminal record check in addition to a WWC check. The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time, cardholders continue to be checked for new relevant offences or disciplinary findings from professional bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching. In addition, not all criminal offences are relevant to the WWC check. Broadly, the WWC check considers serious sexual and violent drug offences. A staff member or</p>

	<p>volunteer is required to undertake a WWC check even if they have already completed a police records check.</p> <p><b>Responsibilities</b> It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. To maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our school, Berwick Fields Primary School will ensure that the Department's procedures for criminal record checks are implemented.</p> <p><b>The school will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess and verify the suitability of staff and volunteers who will work with children</li> <li>• identify all staff who require a WWC, this includes all non-teaching staff as all teaching staff must have a current VIT registration</li> <li>• ensure existing staff and volunteers are informed of the requirement to undergo the check</li> <li>• ensure prospective staff and volunteers have passed a WWC check before commencement at the school.</li> <li>• check each person's card validity on the Department of Justice webpage, during term 2 each year.</li> <li>• keep a photocopy of each WWC card and keep the details (name, card number, expiry date) updated on the school's WWC register. Staff members will have a hard copy on their personnel file</li> <li>• ensure suitable monitoring procedures are in place to ensure staff members hold a valid WWC check card at all times. This includes regularly checking the WWC register and card expiry dates upon entry into the school during the signing in process at the office.</li> </ul> <p><b>The staff member, volunteer or visitor will:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide the successful WWC check card prior to commencement at Berwick Fields Primary School</li> <li>• notify the office if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, for example, if they have been charged or found guilty of a new relevant offence</li> <li>• apply for a new WWC check before their card expires</li> </ul> <p><b>Exemptions</b> The Working with Children Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWC check. Berwick Fields Primary School reserves the right to nevertheless require a WWC check if the principal considers it necessary in the circumstances. The exempt categories are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student volunteers - students who are 18 or 19 years of age and engaging in volunteer work organised by the educational institution they attend</li> <li>• Teachers with Victorian Institute of Teaching permission to teach</li> <li>• Police Officers</li> </ul> <p><b>School Register</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff who require a WWC check will have a hard copy of their card on their personnel file and the details (name, card number and expiry date) recorded electronically in the Staff DET Training Register.</li> <li>• All other personnel, volunteers and paid workers, will have a hard copy of their WWC card kept in a central WWC folder, filed in the administration filing cabinet. The electronic register of these details (name, card number and expiry date) will be saved to the administration network.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Related Policies and Processes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers Policy</li> <li>• Visitors Policy</li> <li>• Child Safe Policy</li> <li>• DET – Volunteer <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Suitability_for_employment.pdf">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Suitability_for_employment.pdf</a></li> <li>• Department of Justice website <a href="http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au">http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au</a></li> </ul>