



## WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

### Frequently Asked Questions Schools

2007

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provide general answers about the Working with Children (WWC) Check to those who work or volunteer in schools.

Please note, teachers who are currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) are not required to apply for a WWC Check.

#### **FAQ 1** *I work/volunteer at a school. Do I need a WWC Check?*

"Child-related work" is defined in the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act). You are considered to be performing "child-related work" if you:

- work or volunteer in connection with one of the 20 child-related occupational fields (e.g. a school), *and*
- volunteer or do this work on a regular basis, *and*
- have direct contact with children under 18 which is not directly supervised, *and*
- do not qualify for an exemption (e.g. VIT registration).

If all of the above statements apply to you, you need to submit a WWC Check application by the relevant due date (i.e. 30 December 2007 for schools).

#### **FAQ 2** *How can I find out who is exempt?*

A list is available on the Working with Children Check website. The web address is:

[www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren)

#### **FAQ 3** *Why are people registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) exempt?*

VIT registered teachers undergo ongoing monitoring and checking of a similar kind to that of the WWC Check. This is why those who are currently registered with VIT are exempt from applying.

#### **FAQ 4** *I've already had a police check. Why do I need a WWC Check?*

The WWC Check is different from a police check, as it only considers certain offences to be relevant. Broadly speaking, these are: serious sexual, serious violent and serious drug offences. WWC Check card-holders are also subject to ongoing monitoring for the five years in which the WWC Check card is valid (unless revoked).

#### **FAQ 5** *I am a teacher aide or work in the canteen/uniform shop/bookshop at a school. Do I require a WWC Check?*

If all 4 statements in FAQ 1 apply to you, the paid or volunteer work you do is considered "child-related work" and you need to apply for and pass a WWC Check.

#### **FAQ 6** *Do parents who volunteer at a school need to have a WWC Check – e.g. when they help out in reading classes, attend overnight camps or excursions with their child?*

Under the Act, a parent who volunteers in relation to an activity in which his or her child ordinarily participates (e.g. the child's reading class) is exempt from a WWC Check in respect of that work.

However, if a parent volunteers in a class or activity that his/her child does not ordinarily participate in, then he/she may need to apply for and pass a WWC Check. See FAQ 1 to determine if a WWC Check is required.

**FAQ 7** *How much does the WWC Check cost and who pays for it?*

The WWC Check is free for volunteers and \$71.70 for paid employees and self-employed. The Act does not specify who is responsible for the payment of the application fee for an employee WWC Check. Who bears the cost is a matter for the applicant and the employer.

**FAQ 8** *I am a student teacher doing my practicum rounds at a school. Do I need to get a WWC Check?*

FAQ 1 will assist you to determine if a WWC Check is required. If you believe that you are not legally required to have a WWC Check (e.g. you are always directly supervised), you may need to seek advice from your university and/or the school to see what their policy is. In some cases universities and schools require that all their student teachers apply for the WWC Check. Also refer to FAQ 11 below.

**FAQ 9** *I am contracted to do trade work (on site construction) at schools. Do I need a WWC Check?*

You may also be performing "child-related work". FAQ 1 will assist you in determining if you need to apply for and pass a WWC Check.

**FAQ 10** *Each day I go to the school to drop off and/or pick up my child. I have regular, direct and not directly supervised contact with children. Do I need a WWC Check?*

Parents who pick up or drop off their own children at school, or who have arranged for a relative or a friend to do this for them, are not working as defined by the Act and so do not require a WWC Check. The Act aims to help keep children safe from sexual or physical harm when parents entrust the care of their child/children to others outside of normal domestic arrangements.

**FAQ 11** *I don't require a WWC Check, but the school at which I volunteer still wants me to apply for one. Can the school make me do this?*

The Act creates a mandatory minimum standard for those who are performing "child-related work" in Victoria. It is a criminal offence for an employer to engage someone in, or for a person to perform, "child-related work" when a WWC Check is required and the employee/volunteer hasn't submitted their application by the due date.

However, an employer or volunteer organisation might implement its own policies over and above the minimum standard created by the Act.

**FAQ 12** *What if I don't apply by the 30 December 2007 deadline?*

If you are required to apply for a WWC Check and you have not done so by 30 December 2007, it will be an offence for you to commence or continue to perform "child-related work". It will also be an offence for the school to engage you in "child-related work". Offences include a substantial fine and/or up to 2 years' imprisonment.

**FAQ 13** *Can I apply for a WWC Check even if I don't need one?*

Yes.

**FAQ 14** *The WWC Check application process requires me to provide personal information. How is my privacy protected?*

The Department of Justice is bound by Victorian privacy laws. Information obtained to conduct the WWC Check will only be used as permitted by law. A copy of the Department of Justice's privacy statement is available on the Working with Children website.

**FAQ 15** *Where can I get more information?*

The WWC Check Information Line and website can provide you with detailed information.

**Website:** [www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren)

**Information Line:** 1300 652 879