



# Working with Children Check

Information Sheet

Schools

September 2007

## Do you work or volunteer in a school?

The Working with Children (WWC) Check is a checking system that was introduced in 2006 and helps to protect children from sexual and physical harm. Certain occupational fields are being phased in over a five year period. This means around 650,000 Victorians who work or volunteer in some types of "child-related work" will be required to apply for a WWC Check during this time. To date, over 100,000 Victorians working or volunteering with children have already applied.

People who work or volunteer in **schools, including Outside School Hours Care and Overnight Camps for children** where they are arranged by or located at schools, need to apply by **30 December 2007**. Please note, those who are currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) are exempt.

This information will help you understand how the WWC Check relates to you.

### Do I need a WWC Check?

The *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act) requires a person who works or volunteers in connection with certain types of "child-related work" to pass a WWC Check. You are undertaking "child-related work" if you are:

- doing paid or unpaid (volunteer) work, *and*
- your work involves contact with children and is in connection with one of the 20 occupational fields listed in the Act, *and*
- your work usually involves, or is likely to usually involve, regular and direct contact with a child, where that contact is not directly supervised by another person

One of the 20 occupational fields is "educational institutions" (including schools). All occupational fields are listed in the phasing in plan available in the Application Guide, on the WWC Check website or by calling the Information Line.

There are some exemptions that may apply even if you are undertaking "child-related work". The Application Guide and WWC Check website lists these exemptions.

### When do I need to apply?

The WWC Check is currently being phased in over a five year period, with schools commencing in "Year 2". People who work or volunteer in schools and who are required to apply for a WWC Check need to do so by **30 December 2007**.

### What if I don't apply?

If you are required to apply for a WWC Check and have not submitted your application by **30 December 2007**, it will be an offence for you to undertake this "child-related work" in connection with a school. It will also be an offence for your school to engage you in this "child-related work".

### How do I apply?

1. Obtain an Application Guide and Form from a participating Australia Post outlet (visit [www.auspost.com.au](http://www.auspost.com.au) for your nearest outlet)
2. Complete the Application Form attached to the back of the Guide
3. Submit your application, together with your proof of identity documents, a passport sized photo, and the application fee (if required) to a participating Australia Post outlet

An application for a WWC Check is free for volunteers and \$71.70 for paid workers. A Volunteer WWC Check **cannot** be used for paid "child-related work". An Employee WWC Check can be used for both paid and volunteer "child-related work".

The Act allows you to start or continue "child-related work" once you have lodged your application. You will need to show your receipt to your employer as proof you have applied for a WWC Check.

### How is the WWC Check different from a police records check?

The WWC Check only considers some offences and is valid for five years (unless revoked). During this period, cardholders continue to be checked for new relevant offences or relevant disciplinary findings by the VIT.

A new WWC Check Card is not needed when you change your employer or volunteer organisations.

You will still need to apply for a WWC Check even if you have already had a police records check.



## What is checked?

Not all criminal offences are relevant under the Act.

- Broadly, applications will be checked for serious sexual, serious violent and serious drug-related offences. A list of [relevant offences](#) is available on the website, or by calling the Information Line.
- Professional disciplinary findings will also be considered. Currently, only findings from the VIT are included.

If you do not have a relevant criminal offence, and there have not been any relevant findings made against you by VIT, you will pass the WWC Check.

## How will I know that I have passed the WWC Check?

People who pass the WWC Check are sent an Assessment Notice and WWC Check Card in the mail. You can use your WWC Check Card to prove you have passed a WWC Check.

Under the Act, your employer must make sure you have passed the WWC Check, and will ask to see your WWC Check Card as proof.

An example WWC Check Card is shown below:



## Can I still pass the WWC Check if I have a criminal history or a finding by VIT?

As detailed above, only certain offences and findings by VIT are considered relevant when assessing a WWC Check application, so you may still pass the WWC Check if you have a criminal record or finding. You may wish to contact the Information Line to discuss your personal circumstances.

People who are subject to reporting requirements under the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*, or an extended supervision order under the *Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005* are not able to work with children and will not pass the WWC Check.

## What happens if someone does not pass the WWC Check?

In all cases, if the Department of Justice believes an applicant should not pass the WWC Check, the applicant will first be given an opportunity to explain why they believe they should pass the Check.

If, after the applicant's submission is considered, the applicant does not pass the WWC Check, they will be issued with a "Negative Notice". A person who is issued with a Negative Notice cannot undertake child-related work. The issuing of a Negative Notice can be appealed at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

## How will my privacy be protected?

The Department of Justice, employers and volunteer organisations are bound by Victorian Privacy laws. In addition, the Act makes it an offence for a person to release any information they have acquired through the WWC Check except in very limited circumstances allowed by the law. Refer to the website or contact the Information Line for further details.

Where known, your employer or volunteer organisation will be notified of whether or not you pass the WWC Check, if the status of your WWC Check is reviewed and if you are no longer eligible to undertake "child-related work".

Details of any criminal records or findings from the VIT you may have will not be provided to your employer or volunteer organisation.

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## Further information?

This information sheet should be read with the Application Guide, which is attached to the Application Form.

Information is also available from:

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

**Email** [workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au)

**Information Line** 1300 652 879

9am–5pm, Monday–Friday (excluding Public Holidays)

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*This Information Sheet is a guide only and is not a substitute for legal advice or the relevant legislation*