



MALVERN VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND SUITABILITY CHECK POLICY

RATIONALE

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

AIMS

- To assist in determining whether a person will be engaged in child-related or child-connected work, and thus what suitability checks may be appropriate – visit the Victorian Government Website <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/who+needs+a+check/>

IMPLEMENTATION

- MVPS 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.
- A WWC Check is now required for anyone engaging in 'child-related work' regardless of whether contact with a child is supervised by another person or not. This means that a volunteer or visitor who is supervised by a teacher must have a WWC Check if they engage in 'child related work'.
- The definition of 'direct contact' with children has been expanded to include oral, written, or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact.
- 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, MVPS will ensure that the Department's procedures for criminal record checks are implemented. <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.asp>
- MVPS adheres 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.
- In addition to a WWC Check, MVPS 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. Should this be a necessary requirement, costs incurred will be covered by the school. Criminal Record checks will be stored alongside WWC Checks in the administration office

1.1 Volunteers

1.1.1 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.

1.1.2 Commencing volunteering

A volunteer can commence work in MVPS 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.

1.2 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 MVPS a valid Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is required. This card is:

1.2.1 valid for 5 years

1.2.2 transferable between volunteer organisations

1.2.3 free of charge for volunteers, but cannot be used for paid employment

1.2.4 under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', candidates must ensure they state MVPS.

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

1.3 Maintaining records

Office Administration staff will copy the staff member or volunteer's WWC Check and keep a copy on file.

MVPS has procedures to ensure staff members and volunteers registered with the school hold a valid WWC Check card; at a minimum annually. All records will be maintained by office staff and kept on a centralised database.

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

1.3.1 Provide MVPS with the successful WWC Check card prior to commencement and have MVPS listed under Details of Organisation.

1.3.2 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.

1.3.3 Apply for a new WWC Check before their card expires.

1.4 Privacy

MVPS applies 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).

1.5 Exemptions

The Working with Children Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWC Check. MVPS reserves the right to nevertheless require a WWC Check if the Principal considers it necessary in the circumstances.

The exempt categories are:

1.5.1 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. However, every new parent will be encouraged to hold a current WWC check before volunteering in a child related activity.

1.5.2 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
- parent's spouse or domestic partner
- step-parent
- parent's 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.

1.5.3 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.

1.5.4 Police officers

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

1.5.5 Waiting for card

Employees waiting for a card having paid for their check are able to work, as long as the receipt has been sighted. For a full list of exemptions and examples refer to: [Working with Children Check – Exemptions](#)

CONTRACTORS

All contractors working in the school, either during or after school hours will be required to have a Working With Children Check. This must be shown before work commences.

REFEREES

School Policy Advisory Guide: DET Human Resources:

- [Volunteer Checks](#) [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [Volunteer Workers](#)

External Links:

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

[Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed on a three-year basis in line with other school policy review cycles, or earlier as required.

APPENDIX

Flowchart for Working With Children Checks

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: 2018

TO BE REVIEWED: 2021

FLOWCHART for WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

NB:

It is mandatory that all volunteers and locally employed staff hold current Working with Children Checks.

School Administration Staff have primary responsibility for checking and processing WWCCs.

