



St Andrew's Parish

CORPUS CHRISTI PRIMARY SCHOOL

29 RUSSELL STREET, WERRIBEE VIC. 3030

Working with Children Check Policy

Rationale

Corpus Christi Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment and takes active steps to ensure any person authorised to conduct 'child related works' does not pose a risk to their safety or welfare. To achieve this, the school implements screening processes, including Working With Children Checks (WWCC), to assess and verify their suitability.

Corpus Christi Primary School ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors are of suitable character and do not have a relevant criminal record that poses an unjustifiable risk to children. A Working with Children Check does not endorse any person as being suitable to work with children. Systematic and rigorous screening processes are undertaken by the Principal team to reduce as much as possible the risk of harm to any student.

Key Principles

- A safe environment is required to protect children and young people from harm and to prevent staff or other adults from abusing their position of authority and trust;
- The child and young person's ongoing safety and wellbeing must be the primary focus of all decision making;
- School leaders and staff must be fully self-aware of, and comply with, their professional obligations and responsibilities;
- The school has an ongoing responsibility to screen, monitor and review the suitability of all adults employed or volunteering at the school and maintain up to date records;
- The commitment to protecting children is embedded in the organisation's culture and responsibility for taking action is understood and accepted at all levels of the organisation.

Definitions (according to the Working with Children Act 2005):

Children are those under the age of 18 years.

Child Related work involves contact with a child that is unsupervised, direct and a part of the person's duties in a particular occupational category (listed in the legislation)

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Note: “Work is not child-related work by reason only of occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.”

Child Connected work is work authorised by the school, and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Direct Contact is any contact between an adult and a child that can be either oral, written or in an electronic form including:

- physical contact
- face-to-face oral communication
- notes, letters, email, text message or via social media platforms.

Direct Supervision is any activity where an adult has ‘direct contact’ with a student that is under the supervision of a staff member. Supervising another person’s contact with children must be personal and immediate but can include a brief absence such as taking a telephone call in another room.

Working With Children Check (WWCC) screens an applicant or cardholder’s criminal record. If the ‘Check’ finds serious sexual, violence or drug offences, or adverse professional reports, the department assesses these to determine if the person will pass the ‘Check’.

Scope

This policy applies to the whole school community and includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, contractors, volunteers, visitors and any person who may have ‘direct contact’ with students, and who are authorised by the school to participate in child related works.

Schools are responsible for complying with the provisions of the Victorian *Working with Children Act 2005*, which was enacted to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them are subject to a screening process. [*Working With Children Act 2005*, s.1(1)]

- A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is required in occupational fields of child-related work; whether paid workers or volunteers.
- A WWCC is required of people working in schools including employees, volunteers and self-employed persons, as well as members of committees of management, and persons involved in practical training, e.g. student teachers.
- Current members of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) are exempt from requiring a WWCC as they undergo criminal record checks via their annual registration.

- Clergy and those performing duties of a religious vocation require a current WWCC.
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- Sporting clubs and external providers are required to produce a current WWCC.
- Volunteers who work with children will require a WWCC or proof of exemption.
- While staff, contractors and volunteers are responsible for obtaining their own WWCC, the school must ensure valid checks are held by all those requiring one.
- The school will ensure that all teaching staff maintain their registrations with the *Victorian Institute of Teaching* and maintain ongoing records of this.
- Persons exempt from requiring a WWCC include: VIT registered teachers, children under 18 years old, Victoria Police Officers and Australian Federal Police officers.

Implementation

This policy applies to the whole school community in supporting safe environments for all children and young people.

Any adult intending to participate in any ‘child-connected works’ must:

- Read and acknowledge via signature a copy of the School’s Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Provide photo identification and VIT registration card or WWCC to the school office, where a copy will be taken and stored on file
- Display their WWCC whilst working with students or on behalf of the school.

It is the responsibility of non-teaching staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors to:

- Apply for and receive a WWCC prior to expressing an interest to participate in ‘child connected work’;
- Provide Corpus Christi Primary School with the successful WWCC card and photo identification (such as a driver’s license) prior to commencement;
- Have Corpus Christi Primary School listed in the ‘Details of Organisation’;
- Notify the Principal immediately if there has been a change in circumstances; i.e. if they have been charged or found guilty of a relevant offence or if their WWCC has been suspended;
- Apply for a new WWCC before their card expires.

Volunteers and Visitors are eligible to apply for a ‘Volunteer WWCC’ which is free of charge.

Non-Teaching Staff & Contractors employed by the school must maintain an ‘Employee WWCC.’ WWCC applications are available via the Working with Children Check website.

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To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, the school does not permit any volunteer, contractor or visitor to work alone or in isolation with students. Where practical, all activities will be conducted in groups, in an open and visible environment, and in close proximity to a member of staff.

WWCC Exemptions

School Teachers must provide a copy of photo ID at the commencement of employment, and their VIT registration card upon renewal on 30th September each year.

Casual Relief Teachers engaged by the school must ensure they maintain current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Registration and provide a copy of their Registration Card upon entry to the school.

Other Teachers: Parents or other members of the school community who maintain current VIT Registration do not require a WWCC. They must, however, provide a copy of their Registration Card to the school prior to being authorised to participate in ‘child connected works’.

Victoria Police: Parents or other members of the school community who are acting members of Victoria Police or the Australian Federal Police (AFP) do not require a WWCC. They must, however, provide a copy of their identification prior to being authorised to participate in ‘child connected works’.

It is the responsibility of the School’s Leadership Team to:

- ensure that any person intending to work or participate in an activity where they may have ‘direct contact’ with a student/s possesses a current WWCC and has provided a copy of their check to the school;
- provide clear instructions and procedures for administration staff to maintain WWCC records
- promote child safe policies and procedures to the school community;
- make staff aware of school procedures in regard to volunteers and other persons, including the need for prior approval of such work by a member of the school’s Leadership team;
- identify and restrict persons who have not met WWCC and screening requirements from participating or working with Corpus Christi Primary School students.

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Maintaining Records

It's an organisation's responsibility to ensure that their workers doing child-related work hold a current WWCC, or the organisation may otherwise be committing an offence. These records must be monitored, reviewed and updated in an ongoing manner in line with the School's WWCC & VIT maintenance procedure.

Note: Non-teaching staff, contractors, volunteers or visitors are not permitted to participate in any activity where they have 'direct contact' with student/s where their WWCC has expired. They will only be permitted to recommence upon successfully reapplying for a WWCC and by providing a copy of their new WWCC to the school.

Privacy

Corpus Christi Primary School applies stringent practices to ensure the security and privacy of all information collected, used, retained or disposed of in accordance with requirements of the Victorian Government's *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

Related Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with CECV guidelines, along with Corpus Christi Primary School's Child Safety and Supervision policies, and the WWCC & VIT maintenance procedure.

References:

Ministerial Order No. 870 - Child Safe Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools

Victorian Government Working With Children's Act 2005

Victorian Government Privacy And Data Protection Act 2014

Working With Children Check Website <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

Policy review

This policy is to be reviewed within the school review cycle, or in line with prescribed changes as they may occur.

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Policy authorised by: Ms Linda Roynic, Principal

Date developed: 2020

Next review: 2024 or sooner if needed

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