



## Strathmerton Primary

# WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK POLICY

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Strathmerton Primary School 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.

In addition to a WWC Check, Strathmerton Primary School 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.

### 2. POLICY PURPOSE

To minimise risk of harm to students by requiring staff and volunteers of Strathmerton Primary School to provide evidence that they have appropriate approvals to work with children in accordance with legislation and DET policy.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION

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](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Suitability_for_employment.pdf)

To maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our school, Strathmerton Primary School will ensure that DET's procedures for criminal record checks are implemented.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.aspx>

Strathmerton Primary School adheres to DET 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 DET's pre-employment suitability for employment requirements.

#### 3.1 Volunteers

##### 3.1.1 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.

##### 3.1.2 Commencing volunteering

A volunteer can commence work in Strathmerton Primary Schools 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.

#### 3.2 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 Strathmerton Primary School, a valid Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is required. This card is:

- valid for 5 years
- transferable between volunteer organisations
- free of charge for volunteers, but cannot be used for paid employment
- Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', candidates must ensure they state Strathmerton Primary School.

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

### **3.3 Maintaining records**

A copy of the staff member or volunteer's WWC Check will be kept on file at the school.

Strathmerton Primary School has procedures to ensure staff members and volunteers hold a valid WWC Check card; annually at the commencement of the school year.

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

- provide Strathmerton primary School with the successful WWC Check card prior to commencement and have Strathmerton Primary School listed under Details of Organisation.
- 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.
- apply for a new WWC Check before their card expires.

### **3.4 Privacy**

Strathmerton Primary School 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).

### **3.5 Exemptions**

The Working with Children Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWC Check. Strathmerton Primary School reserves the right to nevertheless require a WWC Check if the principal considers it necessary in the circumstances. The exempt categories are:

#### **3.5.1 Student volunteers**

A student who is 18 or 19 years of age is exempt from the WWC Check for volunteer work organised by or held at the same educational institution they attend.

#### **3.5.2 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.

#### **3.5.3 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
- spouse or domestic partner
- step-parent
- 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.

#### **3.5.4 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.

#### **3.5.5 Police officers**

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

#### **3.5.6 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**

#### **4. CONTRACTORS**

*The principal assesses the duties to be performed by contractors to determine whether they constitute 'child-related work' and will therefore require a WWC Check.*

*Contractors such as IT Technicians, gardeners, cleaners and maintenance staff require a WWC Check as they are frequently in schools during normal school hours.*

*The principal will contact the Conduct and Ethics Branch on 9637-2594 for advice on whether the duties to be performed by a contractor meet the definition of 'child-related work' as contained in the Act if there is any doubt.*

#### **5. LINKS AND REFERENCES**

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](#)

**Reviewed by Strathmerton Primary School Council: May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**To be reviewed:** Annually or when changes occur to the Department's "School Policy and Advisory Guide"