



BENTON JUNIOR COLLEGE

WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICY

Rationale

The Working with Children (WWC) check aims to protect children from sexual or physical harm. It does this by screening people's criminal records and professional conduct and preventing those who pose an unjustifiable risk to children from working with or caring for them. The WWC is designed to complement good selection, supervision and training practices (including rigorous reference checking).

This policy applies to all positions at the school including volunteer, honorary, consultant and contractor positions. Any reference to 'candidates' also extends to staff currently occupying a position.

Definitions:

- child: a person who is under the age of 18 years; and
- student: any child who is enrolled at the school.

Aims

The intent of this policy is to outline which positions at the school require a WWC check and the process prescribed to those staff.

Implementation

What is the WWC check?

The WWC check verifies a person's history to make sure they do not have any relevant criminal offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. The WWC check screens for serious sexual, violent and drug offences and adverse professional conduct reports made by the agencies listed in the Act. The list of offences is on the WWC website <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/> The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time the cardholder continues to be checked for new relevant offences or findings. The WWC check is administered by the Department of Justice.

When is a WWC check required?

A WWC check is required for positions that meet all of the following criteria:

- involve contact with children in connection with our college;
- the contact happens on a regular (everyday) basis;
- involve direct contact with children and this contact is not directly supervised; and
- the position does not qualify for an exemption as listed under the act.

What is the application process?

The candidate must complete a WWC Check application form. The forms are available online or at Australia Post outlets in Victoria.

Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', candidates should ensure they state the school name.

If the applicant passes the check they will be sent a successful Assessment Notice, followed by a WWC check card 2-3 weeks later.

It is an offence to start child-related work without applying for a Check first.

Further information about the application process is available on the [Department of Justice webpage](#).

What if the applicant does not pass the check?

If the applicant does not pass the check they will be given an Interim Negative Notice. The applicant can then make a submission to the Department of Justice to explain why they believe they should pass. If this submission is not successful the applicant will be issued with a Negative Notice. This means they have failed the WWC Check and cannot undertake 'child-related work' or work in the school.

When can the candidate commence?

Commencement in the school is conditional upon receipt of a successful Assessment Notice or WWC check card. Any queries should be directed to the Principal.

Who pays for the WWC check?

Candidates who are required to undergo a WWC check as a condition of working in the school will not be able to receive reimbursement for the cost from the school.

Responsibilities

The College must:

- identify all staff who require a WW Children Check;
- ensure existing staff and volunteers are informed of the requirement to undergo the check;
- ensure prospective staff and volunteers have passed a WWC check before commencement;
- check the card's validity on the [Department of Justice webpage](#);
- have a photocopy of the WWC card and with details updated on the school register (if individual is a staff member, copy to be kept on the staff member's personnel file);
- ensure suitable monitoring procedures are in place to ensure staff members hold a valid WWC check card at all times;
- all volunteers and workers visiting the school must sign in at the school office where they record their WWC card number.

The staff member or volunteer must:

- provide the successful WWC check card prior to commencement at the school;
- notify the office if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, for example, if they have been charged or found guilty of a new relevant offence; and
- apply for a new WWC check before their card expires.

What is the difference between a WWC Check and a Police Records Check?

A Police Records Check (PR) gives information about a person's past criminal record and is only valid at the time of issue. The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time, cardholders continue to be checked for new relevant offences or disciplinary findings from professional bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching. In addition, not all criminal offences are relevant to the WWC check. Broadly, the WWC check considers serious sexual and violent drug offences.

A staff member or volunteer is required to undertake a WWC check even if they have already completed a PR.

Related Procedures

- [Police Records Check Procedure](#)

Related Documents

- [Working with Children Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)

Further information is available from the [Department of Justice Working with Children webpage](#) or the Working with Children information line on 1300 652 879

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

College Register

The college will take a copy of each WWCC and add to the Working with Children Check Register

Date ratified by College Council	April 2018
Date to review policy	April 2020