

Statement

Oakwood School will assess and verify the suitability of staff and volunteers who will work with children. Oakwood School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Oakwood School has zero tolerance for child abuse. Oakwood School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse young people as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Oakwood School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

A Working with Children Check (WWC Check) is required for anyone engaging in 'child related work' and having 'direct contact' with children as part of their roles or duties, an employee, volunteer, visitor or contractor must have a WWC Check regardless of whether they are being supervised by a teacher or another adult with WWC Check.

Unless an exemption applies to a person, a valid 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, Oakwood School may also require a criminal record check. This may be considered necessary when certain offices 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.

1. Purpose

To minimize risk of harm to students by requiring staff and volunteers of Oakwood School to provide evidence that they have appropriate approvals to work with children in accordance with legislation and Department policy.

2. 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 Suitability for Employment Checks. See **Suitability for Employment Policy**:

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Suitability_for_employment.pdf

To maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our school, Oakwood School will ensure the Department's procedures for Criminal Record Checks are implemented.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/pages/crimcheck.aspx>

Oakwood School will adhere to the Department procedures for the conduct of criminal record 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.

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 3.2.

3.1.2 Commencing Volunteering

A volunteer can commence work at Oakwood School when they provide a receipt as proof they have applied for a WWC check with the Department of Justice and 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 Oakwood School, a valid Working with Children Check Card provided by the Department of Justice is required. This card is:

- Valid for 5 years
- Transferable between volunteer organizations
- Free of charge for volunteers but cannot be used for paid employment

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. Oakwood School will implement procedures to ensure staff members and volunteers hold a valid WWC Check card, at a minimum annually at the commencement of the school year.

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

- Provide Oakwood School with the successful WWC Check card prior to their commencement.
- Notify the Principal if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, for example, if they 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.

It is the school's responsibility to:

- Ask for WWC Check card on arrival at Oakwood School
- Keep a copy of the WWC Check card on file.

The Campus Business Manager will maintain a Working with Children Register with the files of WWC Cards of all relevant visitors, volunteers and staff.

Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Registration

- Current registration is required by all Teacher and Principal Class members, including Casual Relief Teachers.
- It is the responsibility of the Business Manager and Principal to ensure prior to employment that all prospective new employees are compliant with VIT registration
- It is the responsibility of teacher and Principal Class members to ensure that their registration is current. This information can be accessed by visiting MyVIT@ <http://www.it.vic.edu.au>
- Each Teacher and Principal Class must present their signed renewal VIT to the Business Manager for up-dates to be processed to the register and copied for their staff file.
- Any Teacher or Principal Class member whose registration lapses or is suspended will be removed from their duties as they have no registration to each and may have no current WWC Check.
- Provisionally registered Teachers must meet the VIT requirements to gain full registration within the timeframe set out by the VIT.

3.4 Privacy

Oakwood School will apply 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

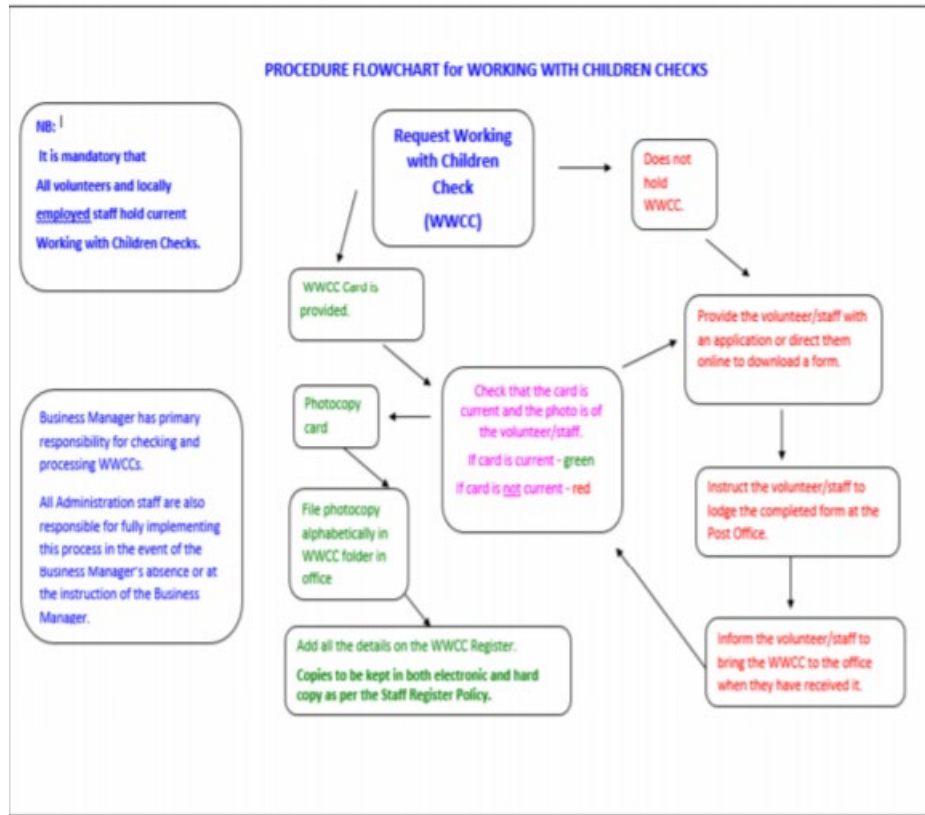
The working with Children Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWC Check. Oakwood School reserves the right to require a WWC Check if the Principal considers it necessary in the circumstances.

For a full list of exemptions and examples refer to: <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/do-i-need-a-checkexemptions/exemptions>

Guidelines

- A Register for VIT & WWC of Teaching, Education Support Staff and Volunteers will be maintained.
- The original version of a WWC Check or VIT Registration must be sighted, copied, and authorized by Principal Class Officers or the Business Manager.
- Staff and visitors identified in the scope of this procedure will not start in their role without a valid WWC or VIT Registration.
- The register will include dates for renewal of qualifications.

- A hard copy of VIT and WWC cards for employees including local payroll staff and volunteers will be kept in a folder and stored securely in the office. All staff including casuals will also have a copy kept in their individual files.



Review Cycle

This policy was tabled at the Oakwood School Council Meeting on 18 February 2020. To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years.