



1. Purpose

This procedure sets out the requirements for Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) Schools regarding Working With Children Checks (WWCCs). This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Workforce Screening and Accreditation Policy and the Child Safety Recruitment Procedure, which outlines the overarching principles and requirements for ensuring compliance with child safety legislation.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to MACS Schools, including school boarding premises operated by MACS schools and specialist schools operated by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools (MACSS).

3. General Procedures

Who requires a Working with Children Check?

- 3.1. A Working with Children Clearance (Clearance), obtained after a successful Working with Children Check (WWCC) is required:
 - by adults engaged in child-related work within the meaning of the Worker Screening Act 2020, which includes engaging in voluntary work as well as paid employment,
 - if the work usually involves direct contact with a child or children
 - the contact with the child or children is a usual part of the person's duties and is not occasional direct contact which is incidental to their work for clergy and those performing duties of a religious vocation, including the parish priest
 - by volunteers including parent volunteers in school activities, including members of the school's advisory councils, and those involved in practical training, such as student teachers
 - by workers as outlined in the Workforce Screening and Accreditation Policy
- 3.2. MACS may also require MACS Staff not directly engaged in child-connected or child-related work, and who may otherwise be exempt under the *Victorian Worker Screening Act 2020*, to obtain a Clearance.

When is a Working with Children Check Clearance not required?

- 3.3. For children under the age of 18 years of age.
- 3.4. Students aged 18 or 19 years of age do not need a WWCC to do volunteer work organised by, or held at, a school.
- 3.5. Victoria Police or Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers do not need a Clearance. This exemption does not apply to those who are suspended or dismissed from Victoria Police or the AFP. For more information, refer to the WWCC [exemptions guide](#).
- 3.6. **VIT registered teachers** continue to be exempt from holding a Clearance but must notify Working with Children Check Victoria (WWCCV) of any child-related work they do outside their school or early childhood service-based position (whether paid or voluntary). If a teacher's VIT registration is suspended or cancelled, WWCCV may notify the organisations listed that the teacher exemption no longer applies. To notify WWCCV of their other child-related work, teachers must complete the 'Teacher notification' form available on the [WWCCV](#) website.

Process for Working with Children Checks

- 3.7. School Staff are responsible for obtaining and the cost of their own Clearance.
- 3.8. Principals must ensure that current Clearance is held by individuals who require one.
- 3.9. Principals must ensure a current and up to date WWCC register is maintained which includes the following information:
 - Full Name
 - Position in the school
 - Category (employed/volunteer)
 - WWC Card number
 - Expiry date
 - Date sighted or verified on Working With Children Check Victoria website or Service Victoria app
 - Current or former employee/volunteer (and date of resignation)
 - Staff who are exempt, the reason for the exemption and supporting evidence.
- 3.10. Each year, all school Staff will be made aware of their WWCC requirements and that ensure currency is maintained as a condition of their employment or engagement at the school.
- 3.11. Each year, all employees are to be made aware of the procedures for the engagement of volunteers, contractors and other persons, including the need for prior approval of such work by the designated member of the school's leadership team.

Procedures for maintaining the WWCC register in a school

- 3.12. The principal may nominate a person in their school who must maintain up-to-date registers for WWCC and VIT registration for teachers.
- 3.13. The principal must ensure that the school has an appropriate method to document and maintain the registers.
- 3.14. The WWCC and VIT register must be checked by the school at a minimum once a month.

Onboarding of staff

- 3.15. MACS Staff may not commence work while the Clearance screening process is being undertaken and until their Clearance has been sighted and recorded.
- 3.16. Recruitment, selection and appointment processes must be conducted in accordance with MACS policies and procedures including the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and *Child Safety Recruitment Procedures* and include evidence and active assurance a valid WWCC (or current VIT registration) prior to appointments to child-related work or volunteer activities.
- 3.17. The principal or nominated person in the school is to check the currency of Clearances through the WWCCV website or Service Victoria app to ensure WWCCs continue to be current.
- 3.18. Staff members will be reminded to renew their WWCC prior to the expiry of their card.

Payment for obtaining WWCC

- 3.19. All prospective MACS staff employed at a MACS school are required to hold a valid WWCC before commencing employment. Applicants are responsible for obtaining and covering the cost of their own WWCC as part of the recruitment process.

4. Working with Children (WWC) exclusions

- 4.1. If a MACS staff member fails the WWCC, they will be given a WWC Exclusion.
- 4.2. By law, the person must tell the school in writing within seven days of the date they are given the notice. Once issued, the person is not allowed to do any child-related work effective from the date listed on the notice. Please refer to the [Working with Children Check Victoria website](#) for more information. Principals must contact the MACS Employee Relations Team for further advice when exclusions apply.

- 4.3. A copy of the WWC Exclusion will be sent to all organisations listed by the person with Working with Children Check Victoria (WWCCV).
- 4.4. WWCCV will notify MACS if a person employed at a school receives an Exclusion notice. MACS will not be told the reason for the Exclusion notice. MACS will then notify the school immediately. The school will not be told the reason for the WWC Exclusion.
- 4.5. In limited circumstances, and within 28 days of date of the notice, a person may apply the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to review the exclusion decision. Refer to the [WWCCV website](#) for more information. Excluded individuals are only permitted to recommence 'child-related' work at the school upon successfully reapplying for a WWCC and by providing a copy of their new WWCC to MACS.

5. Definitions

Child/children

For the purposes of the *Worker Screening Act 2020*, a child or children are those under the age of 18 years.

Child related work

The *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Act) defines 'child-related work' as work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) direct contact with a child, irrespective of whether that contact is supervised or not, and in any of the child-related occupational fields listed in the Act. The definition of direct contact includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact. 'Child-related work' may be either paid or unpaid (voluntary).

Child-related works mean work at a service or place that usually involves direct contact with children. The work can be performed by an employee, contractor, minister for religion, and volunteers. Child-related work relevantly includes work in schools, clubs and association of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature that provide services or conduct activities for children, religious organisations, coaching and tuition services for children, counselling and other support services for children, overnight camps for children, school crossing services, gym and play facilities specifically for children, photography services specifically for children, and talent competitions for children. Child-related work does not include occasional direct contact with children that is incident to the work.

Child safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (see [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#)).

Direct contact

The *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Act) defines Direct Contact in relation to child-related work, means any contact between a person and a child that involves—

- physical contact; or
- face to face contact; or
- contact by post or other written communication; or
- contact by telephone or other oral communication; or
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

MACS staff or staff member

The term Staff or staff member refers to all people who carry out work in any capacity for MACS or its subsidiaries, and includes MACS Board Directors, board committee members, employees, volunteers, consultants, contractors and School Advisory Council members, as the context requires.

Victorian Institute of Teaching

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is the registration body for teachers in Victoria.

Working with Children Check

A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is required by persons doing child-related work in Victoria as paid workers and volunteers, where that work is not directly supervised by someone with an appropriate check. It is a screening process for assessing people who work with, or care for children, administered by the Department of Justice in Victoria. A WWCC is not required by teachers who hold current VIT registration.

Working with Children Clearance (Clearance)

A Working With Children Clearance is issued to an employee or volunteer following the successful application for a WWCC.

6. Related policies and documents

Related MACS policies and documents

Workforce Screening and Accreditation Policy
Teacher Registration Procedures MACS Schools
Working with Children Check Procedure for MACS Schools
Code of Conduct for MACS Staff
Child Safety Recruitment Procedures

Resources (external to MACS)

[VIT Website](#)
[WWCC Website](#)

7. Legislation and standards

Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic.)

Policy information

Related policy	Workforce Screening and Accreditation Policy
Approval authority	Director, People and Culture
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