



# Working With Children Check Policy

Endorsed by School Council: November 2017

## Rationale:

- Our school encourages active participation in the life of the school by all members of the school community. The school is also committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of students.
- NGPS is bound by law to ensure that anyone engaging in 'child-related work' as part of their role or duties, whether as employee, volunteer, visitor or contractor, must hold a current Working With Children (WWC) Check regardless of whether they are being supervised by a teacher or another adult with a WWC Check.
- The school considers it particularly important that parents attending activities with high level student contact such as camps, sleep-overs and sporting programs should be required to have a WWC Check irrespective of whether their own child is a participant.

## Aims:

- To ensure all employees and volunteers involved in activities with student contact, are of sound character and have been deemed suitable to be employed or to volunteer in schools consistent with the Department of Education (DET) policy and in line with legislative requirements.
- To provide clear explanation of the school's requirements for teachers, other employees, parent volunteers and other volunteers in relation to the state government's Criminal Records Check procedures and WWC Check procedures.
- To provide a consistent policy that recognises the legislative requirements but sets a broader standard of probity at New Gisborne Primary School to inspire confidence and allow for the more flexible engagement of volunteers in the school.

## Definitions:

Some of the terms in this policy have specific meaning:

- **'Direct Contact' within child related work** is defined as work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) regular, direct contact with a child where that contact involves oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact. This work may be either paid work or unpaid voluntary work.
- **Working With Children (WWC) Checks** are the mandatory minimum checking standard for employees and volunteers who work with children in schools. WWC Checks are free for volunteers. Application forms are available online. The WWC Check consists of a national criminal history check and also includes consideration of any relevant findings from professional disciplinary bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). Not all criminal offences will be taken into account, only serious sexual, violence or drug offences or pending charges. The WWC Check is valid for up to five years, but is monitored on an ongoing basis. Teachers and Principals are exempt from requiring a WWC Check if they have current VIT registration.

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Teachers registered by the VIT undergo ongoing monitoring and checking of a similar kind to that of a WWC Check.

- **Criminal Records Checks (CRC)** are conducted by the Department of Education to check suitability for employment in schools. The CRC also permits release to the Department of spent and non-spent criminal records and discloses findings of guilt where no conviction was recorded. This CRC is valid for up to three years and must be conducted by Department of Education. A CRC obtained directly from Victoria Police or other sources cannot be accepted as an equivalent check. A CRC differs from a WWC Check.

#### **Implementation:**

In order to maintain high levels of safety for all students and a commitment to maintaining high standards of professional conduct at New Gisborne Primary School, the following shall apply:

- **Teachers employed by the Department of Education (DET):** All teachers and Principals must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) which by definition will mean that a CRC will be completed. The letters 'NPHC' (National Police History Check) must appear on their registration card.
- **Education Support Staff (ES) employed by DET and School Council** - All ES staff must apply for a WWC Check and subsequently be issued with an 'Assessment Notice' and a WWC Check card stamped 'E' (Employee). The school will meet the cost of WWC Checks for current DET employees and long term School Council members.
- Some ES staff may also be required to undergo a CRC if they have responsibilities in activities such as handling finance (because a WWC Check would not disclose some offences relevant to that job function). The school pays any fees incurred by ES staff while obtaining a CRC. New employees obliged to obtain a CRC will be required to complete, sign and provide the Principal with a 'Consent to Check and Release Criminal Record' form accompanied by 100 point ID evidence.
- **Other Casual Employees** - Casual employees who perform 'child-related work' must apply for a WWC Check and be issued with an 'Assessment Notice' and a WWC Check Card stamped 'E'. Casual employees will be required to meet the cost of their check.
- Some casual employees may also be required to undergo a CRC for the reasons described above. The school does not reimburse any fees incurred by casual employees while obtaining a CRC. New casual employees obliged to obtain a CRC will be required to follow the process described above.
- **Volunteers** – Under the Working With Children Act 2005, the Principal, as the Executive Officer of School Council, retains the authority to require casual employees and volunteers to undergo a WWC Check and/or a CRC irrespective of whether the person is exempt from the Act. At New Gisborne Primary School, to avoid any ambiguity, ALL volunteers must hold a current WWC Check. This includes parents volunteering in activities in which their child ordinarily participates. WWC Checks for volunteers are free. Volunteers must apply for a WWC Check and be issued with an 'Assessment Notice' and a WWC Check Card stamped 'V' (Volunteer).
- Some volunteers may also be required to undergo a CRC for the reasons described above. The school pays any fees incurred by volunteers obtaining a CRC. New volunteers obliged to obtain a CRC will be required to follow the process described above.

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- **Contractors on-site** – A WWC Check may be required based on the nature of the work, and the type of contact the contractor will have with children. A WWC Check may be required if the contracted work is child related, and involves, or is likely to involve, direct contact with a child (e.g. music lessons, cooking demonstrations or sports coaching).
- **Other considerations**
  - The cost of photos for all WWC Checks will be met by the applicant;
  - The applicant and the school will each retain copies of CRC's;
  - The applicant will be issued with a WWC Check Assessment Notice and a WWC Check Card and the organisation (where relevant) will be provided with a copy of the WWC Check Assessment Notice;
  - The results of all CRC's and WWC Checks are strictly confidential and DET will not disclose any details about an applicant's criminal record or professional conduct to the organisation.
  - It is acknowledged that the application process for WWC Checks and CRC's may take weeks. Employees and volunteers may be directed not to work at the school pending the completion of the application. The Principal's discretion can be used depending on the nature of the employee/volunteer role e.g. the level of supervised versus unsupervised contact with children.
  - Expired WWC Checks will not be considered.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or in response to relevant legislative changes.

**Approval Body:** School Council

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