



## Visitors to the College: Working With Children Check

### Rationale

St Patrick's College (**the College**) is a Catholic educational community founded upon the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice. The College promotes a sense of community through encouraging a variety of stakeholders to have an active involvement in the curricular and co-curricular programmes of the College.

The operation of a dynamic educational environment also requires the involvement of a wide range of visitors such as trades, service and delivery people. At all times the College will have in place policies and procedures that ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

All relevant community members are required to comply with this policy and it should be read in conjunction with other statements and policies made by the College and may be amended from time to time to ensure continued compliance with all relevant legislation.

This policy **must** be read in conjunction with the College's Child Safety Policy.

### Legislative Background

The Victorian Government has introduced a new checking system that will affect many adults who work or volunteer with children (under 18 years of age). The Working With Children (**WWC**) Check helps to protect children from sexual or physical harm by checking a person's criminal history for serious sexual, serious violence or serious drug offences and findings from certain professional disciplinary bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

A unique feature of the WWC Check is the ongoing monitoring of the criminal records of those who hold a WWC Check Card. When the Department of Justice is notified that a person with a WWC Check card has been charged or found guilty of a relevant offence or had a finding against him/her made by a relevant professional body, that person's suitability to hold a WWC Check card will be reviewed.

The WWC Check helps to protect children (under 18 years of age) by requiring those who do certain types of child-related work including volunteer work and some practical training to pass a WWC Check. The WWC Check does not apply to everyone who has contact with children however the College reserves the right to insist that a person hold a WWC Check before participating in the College community.

## **Scriptural Context**

“I tell you most solemnly, whoever does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand.”

John 10:1

## **Policy**

Members of the College community and regular visitors to the College will be required to have a WWC Check when involved in activities as specified under all relevant legislation.

## **Guidelines**

All visitors to the College will be required to report to Reception at the College Front Office to complete the visitor register book. They will visibly wear a visitor identification tag at all times when on the College property. If the purpose of their visit may bring them into contact with children under the age of 18, either in a supervised or unsupervised capacity, they may be required to obtain a WWC Check prior to being able to obtain access to the College property.

A WWC Check will be compulsory for members of the St Patrick's College community and other visitors to the College who:

- participate in 'child-related work' as defined as: paid or unpaid, if the work is in relation to one of the 20 occupation fields listed by Government, if the work involves or is likely to involve regular and direct contact with children where the contact is not directly supervised by another person;
- is a current full-time, part-time, casual, or contract member of staff;
- undertakes activities including sports coaching, music tutoring, boarding house duties, performing arts events, language assistants, home-stay families and outdoor education experiences;
- is a volunteer for the College;
- is a student teacher at the College.

Contractors to the College will be required to have a successful WWC Check. Visitors to the College may be required to have a successful WWC Check.

WWC Checks expire after five years, or earlier if the Department deems individuals to be unsatisfactory for a WWC Check. The validity of all employees' WWC checks will be confirmed every six months and all staff are required to update their WWC Check every five years.

## **Exemptions from WWC Legislation**

Some staff/volunteers may be eligible for an exemption if they fall within one of the following categories:

- Under the age of 18 years;

- A parent who volunteers in the specific activity in which their own child is participating;
- A sworn police officer who is not suspended from duty;
- A teacher who has a current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and a CRT as part of this registration;
- Is closely related to each child they have contact with in their work; \*
- Is 18 or 19 years of age, is a student at an educational institution (such as a school or TAFE college) and is working as a volunteer either at an educational institution or outside an educational institution under an arrangement made by that institution (this does not include practical training); \* and
- A visitor to Victoria who does not ordinarily reside and perform child related work in Victoria. \*

\* Please note that if a person participates in other child-related activities, then they may still require a WWC Check for those other activities.

### **Additional Information**

Should a person be a paid or unpaid worker who has regular and direct contact with children not directly supervised by another person at the College they will be required to comply with this legislation.

An **Unpaid Worker** is a volunteer who does not receive any payment for the work undertaken.

A **Paid Worker** is any person who is paid for work undertaken. Payment can be received by way of:

- salary through payroll, cheque, cash;
- non-monetary payment such as the provision of food, accommodation;
- one-off thank you payments, such as persons who complete 'hobby forms'.

Regular and direct contact with children is difficult to define under the legislation and the Department of Justice recommends persons who are not sure if their contact is defined as regular and unsupervised to seek advice from the Help Line.

The WWC Check Unit is part of the Department of Justice Victoria. The Unit's contact details are:

Department of Justice, GPO Box 1915, Melbourne VIC 3001

Telephone: 1300 652 879

Email: [workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au)

Website: [www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren)

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**Status of Policy:** Ratified by the College Board, 2012

Updated, August 2016, to meet Ministerial Order No. 870

**Review:** 2017