



CLYDE PRIMARY SCHOOL WORKING WITH CHILDREN POLICY

RATIONALE:

In 2006, the Victorian Government introduced a new checking system to help protect children under 18 years of age from physical or sexual harm. The system, established under the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act), was phased in between April 2006 and June 2011. Employers, volunteer organisations and agencies must ensure that any staff or volunteers who need a Working with Children (WWC) Check have applied for one. The Working with Children Checks for volunteers and parents, coupled with Police Checks for teachers completed as part of VIT Registration ensure a safe environment for our students and are critical to maintaining high standards of professional conduct.

DEPARTMENT POLICY:

Amendments to the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act) came into effect on 1 August 2017

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse made several recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection children receive through Working with Children Checks. The following amendments to the Act implement these recommendations:

1. Expand the definition of '**direct contact**' in the Act. The definition of direct contact now includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact.
2. Remove references to '**supervision**' from the Act. This means that even if a person's contact with children as part of their child-related work is supervised by another person, they will still need to apply for a Working with Children Check.
3. Create a new occupational category of 'child-related work', known as 'kinship care'. Family members or other persons of significance caring for a child placed by Child Protection under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* are required to obtain a Check.

Related school policies:

Child Safe	Visitors
Volunteers	External Providers
Camps	Excursions

AIMS:

1. To ensure that all employees and volunteers involved in school activities are responsible and of sound character.
2. To ensure that all volunteers working within our school have a valid Working with Children's Check.
3. The Working with Children Check aims 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.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Professional -

- In order to maintain high levels of safety for all students and a commitment to maintaining high standards of professional conduct, it is a Department requirement that all employees, instructors, trades people, contractors, special guests and volunteers have a current and satisfactory criminal records check.
- All rehired, promoted or transferred teaching staff, and Casual Relief Teachers will produce a Registration Card from the VIT acknowledging a current Criminal Records Check.

- SSSO and other paid employees, and student teachers are required to have a valid Working with Children Check.

Volunteers -

- All volunteers over the age of 18 must have a Working with Children Check.
- A Working with Children Check is valid for 5 years unless revoked due to a change of circumstances.
- A Working with Children Check card holder must advise the Department of Justice of the following to maintain the card:
 - any 'relevant change in circumstances', including if you change your name
 - any change of address details
 - any change of employer or volunteer organisation, including changes to their contact details.
- The Working with Children Check is free for volunteers.
- Clyde Primary School requires all volunteers to hold a current Working with Children Check. This includes:
 - Canteen volunteers
 - Classroom Volunteers
 - Excursion Helpers
 - Camp Helpers
- Before volunteers can assist children at Clyde Primary School, Working with Children Checks must be supplied to office staff, who will make a copy and file them. The office will monitor these and be responsible for making necessary updates.
- Applications are completed online on the Australia Post website.
- This policy forms a critical component of ensuring that Clyde PS is a Child Safe School.

Exemptions

- people under the age of 18 years
- a sworn Victorian, or Federal Police officer
- teachers who are currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching

EVALUATION

- This policy will be evaluated and monitored particularly in regard to changes in relevant legislation.
- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.

ENDORSEMENT

This policy was last ratified on 22nd May 2017

This policy is due for review in 2020

