

Working with Children Policy

Purpose: To assist in protecting students from harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them are subject to a screening process, and to comply with the Child Safe Standards in Ministerial Order 1359, the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) and the Worker Screening Regulations 2021 (Vic).

Scope: Principal (School Coordinator), Administration, Teachers (including casual relief staff), families and students

Implemented by: Principal (School Coordinator), Teachers

Approved by: Parent Group, LC Board

Communicated via: School website, staff induction, enrolment agreement, Staff and Parent Group meetings

Reviewed: Every two years or as legislative changes or improvements are identified

Overview

Learning Co-operative owes a duty to students to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the school while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the school.

Under the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic), all persons engaged in child-related work must satisfy a working with children clearance (WWCC) to assess (or re-assess) whether or not they are suitable for child-related work. The Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a minimum checking standard set by the Worker Screening Act 2020 for those who work with children, either on a paid or voluntary basis. It assists in protecting children from sexual and physical harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them are subject to a screening process. It checks for serious sexual, violent and drug-related offences, failure to protect and failure to report



offences, as well as disciplinary findings of professional agencies such as the Victoria Teaching.

Learning Co-operative uses the WWCC to assist with assessing and verifying the suitability of staff and volunteers who will work with children.

Definitions

Child-connected work

Child-connected work means:

Work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present

Note: Working with Children clearance is required by law only for people who engage in child-related work. Schools and school boarding premises may also choose to require suitability checks (including Working with Children clearance) for visitors and volunteers engaging in child-connected work.

Child-related work

The Worker Screening Act 2020 defines Child-related work as:

child-related work as work in any of the occupational fields, involving contact with a child that is direct and not incidental to the work.

Requirements

Unless an exemption applies to a person, or the individual is performing child-connected work (work or situations in which the contact with children is indirect, occasional and incidental to their work) a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC) is the minimum standard for all adults working at our school and regularly visiting our school for example to take part in time- on activities and social events.

If a volunteer or contractor has an exemption or is performing child-connected work, it is the responsibility of the School Coordinator to determine if a WWCC or other clearance may still be required based on a child safety risk assessment.



Staff

It is the responsibility of the Board, HR Subcommittee and the Coordinator to ensure that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. Our Recruitment Process and Volunteer Induction Process will be used to ensure the suitability of all staff, contractors and volunteers. Through these processes the school will investigate and assess all potential staff, contractors and volunteers to confirm a person's suitability to work with children. No individuals will commence duties prior to providing a verified WWC. Once engaged, the school will also continue to monitor and assess the continuing suitability of all staff members in relation to child related work.

Teachers & Casual Relief Teachers

- Teachers must have a valid VIT registration card
- Proof of identity must be verified



Non-teaching staff

- WWCC (employer status) is required by all employed staff whether or not working directly with children or supervised by a teacher.
- Proof of identity must be verified

Contractors

- WWCC (employer status) are required by all Contractors who will be on a cyclical schedule working on the school grounds during school hours, in the vicinity of students.

Volunteers

- A valid Working with Children Check is required by all volunteers who are assisting with time on activities, on excursions, at a school camp, any other approved school activity outside of school grounds, driving the school bus or transporting students other than their own children in their own vehicle
- Proof of identity must be verified.

A WWCC for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work however a volunteer WWCC is not suitable for clearance to commence paid work.

Exemptions

The Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWCC. Learning Co-operative reserves the right to require an exempted individual to have a WWCC if the School Coordinator considers it necessary in the circumstances.

Teachers

Registered teachers or teachers who have permission to teach from the Victorian Institute of Teaching under Part 2.6 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 are exempt from requiring a WWCC.

Police officers

Sworn Victoria Police officers or sworn Australian Federal Police officers are exempt from requiring a WWCC.

Other

Other exemptions include

- Anyone under the age of 18
- A student aged 18 or 19 attending a volunteer placement organised by an educational institution



- Those who hold an equivalent check from another state (which allows work volunteering for a maximum of 30 days in a calendar year)

For a full list of exemptions and examples refer to: [Working with Children Check – Exemptions](#)

Maintaining records

It is the responsibility of the School Coordinator and Board to ensure staff members, contractors and volunteers hold a valid WWCC prior to commencing work with the school. A copy of the staff member, contractor or volunteer's WWCC will be kept on the file at the school and recorded on the WWCC register which is maintained by Administration. Expiry dates and validity will be monitored at a minimum annually at the commencement of the school year.

It is the responsibility of the employees or volunteers to:

- provide the school with the successful WWCC card or current VIT registration card prior to commencement
- notify the School Coordinator if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, for example, if they have been charged or found guilty of a new relevant offence or if their WWCC or VIT registration has been suspended or if any restrictions are applied.
- apply for a new WWCC before their card expires.

The VIT teacher register will be populated at the time of employment and a copy of a teacher's VIT card and identity documents will be put in their employment file. This task will be completed by administration staff and is included on the Staff Induction Checklist which is signed-off by the School Coordinator.

VIT registrations will be checked via the VIT School Portal at the time of employment, during the annual VIT Census in April and during September of each year.

Staff employment contracts require teachers to advise any changes to their registration or permission to teach, including conditions, limitations or limitations or restrictions to the School Coordinator as soon as they occur. They are also required to advise the school if they are under investigation or charged with any offence that would impact their ability to work with children, drive a vehicle or be employed at the school.

Should a teacher have any conditions, limitation or restriction on their registration or permission to teach, this will be noted in the relevant column in the VIT teacher register. The School Coordinator will check this register when changes are made to a teacher's subject or year level allocation to ensure they have adequate permission to teach at that level or in that curriculum area.



Related Policies

- Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Student Supervision Policy

Related Documentation

- Induction Plan
- Recruitment and Onboarding Process
- WWCC Register
- VIT Register
- Working With Children Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools