



Working with Children Check

General Information Sheet

2007

Do you need to apply for a Check?

The Working with Children (WWC) Check is a checking system, introduced in Victoria in 2006, which helps to protect children (under 18 years of age) from sexual and physical harm.

Over the next five years, people who work or volunteer in some types of child-related work will be required to apply for a WWC Check. Certain occupational fields are being phased in each year.

This information sheet will help you understand how the WWC Check relates to you.

Do I need a WWC Check?

The *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act) requires a person who works or volunteers in connection with certain types of "child-related work" to pass a WWC Check.

You are undertaking "child-related work" if you are doing:

- paid or unpaid (volunteer) work,
- your work involves contact with children and is in connection with one of the 20 occupational fields listed in the Act, and
- your work usually involves, or is likely to usually involve, regular and direct contact with a child, where that contact is not directly supervised by another person

There are 20 occupational fields being phased in. These are listed in the phasing in plan.

There are some exemptions that may apply even if you are undertaking "child-related work". The phasing in plan and the exemptions are listed in the WWC Check Application Guide, website or by calling the Information Line.

When do I need to apply?

The WWC Check is being phased in over a five year period. If you are required to have a WWC Check, **you need to consult the [phasing in plan](#) to see when the occupational field of your work is being phased in.** If you fall into more than one type of "child-related work", you should apply under whichever type comes first.

What if I don't apply?

If you are required to apply for a WWC Check and have not done so by your due date, it will be an offence for you undertake "child-related work". It will also be an offence for your employer or volunteer organisation to engage you in "child-related work".

How do I apply?

1. Obtain an Application Guide and Form from a participating Australia Post outlet (visit www.auspost.com.au for your nearest outlet)
2. Complete the Application Form attached to the back of the Guide
3. Submit your application, together with your proof of identity documents, a passport sized photo, and the application fee (if required) to a participating Australia Post outlet

An application for a WWC Check is free for volunteers and \$71.70 for paid workers. A Volunteer WWC Check **cannot** be used for paid "child-related work". An Employee WWC Check can be used for both paid and volunteer "child-related work".

The Act allows you to start or continue "child-related work" once you have lodged your application. You will need to show your receipt to your employer or volunteer organisation as proof you have applied for a WWC Check.

How is the WWC Check different from a police records check?

Unlike a police records check, the WWC Check only considers some offences and is valid for five years (unless revoked). During this period, cardholders continue to be checked for new offences or disciplinary findings by professional registration bodies.

A new WWC Check Card is not needed when you change your employer or volunteer organisation.

As the WWC Check is different from a police records check, you will still need to apply for a WWC Check even if you have already had a police records check.

What is checked?

Not all criminal offences are relevant under the Act.

- Broadly, applications will be checked for serious sexual, serious violent and serious drug-related offences. A checklist is available on the website, or by calling the Information Line.
- Professional disciplinary findings will also be considered. Currently, only findings from the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) are included. In future other professional registration bodies will also be considered.

If you do not have a criminal offence, and there have not been any findings made against you by VIT, you will pass the WWC Check.

How will I know that I have passed the WWC Check?

People who pass the WWC Check will be sent an Assessment Notice and a WWC Check Card in the mail. Your WWC Check Card can be used to prove you have passed a WWC Check.

Under the Act, your employer or volunteer organisation must make sure you have passed the WWC Check, and will ask to see your WWC Check Card as proof.

An example WWC Check Card is shown below:



Can I still pass the WWC Check if I have a criminal history or a finding by VIT?

Not all offences and findings are considered when assessing a WWC Check application. The outcome of an application will be dependent upon the type of offence or finding and the circumstances surrounding it. You may wish to contact the Information Line to discuss your personal circumstances.

People who are subject to sex offender reporting requirements are not able to work with children.

What happens if someone does not pass the WWC Check?

In all cases, if the Department of Justice believes an applicant should not pass the WWC Check, the applicant will first be given an opportunity to explain why they believe they should pass the Check.

If, after the applicant's submission is considered, the applicant does not pass the WWC Check, they will be issued with a "Negative Notice". A person who is issued with a Negative Notice cannot undertake child-related work. Negative Notices can be appealed at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

How will my privacy be protected?

The Department of Justice, employers and volunteer organisations are bound by Victorian Privacy laws. In addition, the Act makes it an offence for a person to release any information they have acquired through the Check except in very limited circumstances allowed by the law. Refer to the website or contact the Information Line for further details.

Where known, your employer or volunteer organisation will be notified of whether or not you pass the WWC Check, if the status of your Check is reviewed and if you are no longer eligible to undertake "child-related work".

Details of any criminal records or findings from a professional registration body you may have will not be provided to your employer or volunteer organisation.

Further information?

This information sheet should be read with the Application Guide, which is attached to the Application Form.

Information is also available from:

Website www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren

Email workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au

Information Line 1300 652 879

9am–5pm, Monday–Friday (excluding Public Holidays)

