

# Working with Children Policy

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**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 and the Working with Children Act 2005.

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**Scope:** All PIVS Staff, volunteers and contractors attending school during school hours (for child-related work).

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**Implemented by:** Principal (Child Safety Officer)

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**Approved by:** PIVS Board

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

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**Communicated via:** PIVS Website, Staff Induction, Staff Meetings, Staff Handbook, Parent Handbook, Policies and Procedures Folder

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## Overview

Phillip Island Village School is required 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. Phillip Island Village School will assess and verify the suitability of staff, contractors and volunteers who will work with children.

The Working with Children (WWC) Check 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 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 Victorian Institute of Teaching.

## Requirements

Unless an exemption applies to a person, or the individual is performing child-connected work (work or situations in which contact with children is indirect, occasional and incidental to their work) a valid Working With Children Check (WWC Check) is the minimum standard for all adults working at PIVS during school hours.

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

The school will investigate and assess all potential staff members history of work involving children and seek references that can confirm that person's suitability for the job and working with children. No employees will commence duties prior to providing a verified WWC. Once engaged, PIVS, will also continue to monitor and assess the continuing suitability of all staff members in relation to child related work.

## Responsibilities

### Staff

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. The Village School Recruitment Process will be used to ensure the suitability of all staff and contractors.

#### Teachers & Casual Relief Teachers

- Teachers must have a valid VIT registration card
- Proof of identity must be verified
- At least two positive reference checks completed before employment commences

#### Non-teaching staff

- A WWC Check (employee status) is required by all employed staff at Phillip Island Village School whether or not working directly with children or supervised by a teacher.
- Proof of identity must be verified
- At least two positive reference checks completed before employment commences

#### Contractors

- WWC C (employee 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

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that only suitable persons volunteer in the school. A valid Working with Children Check is required by all volunteers who are assisting 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 as part of a school excursion. A WWC Clearances for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work however a volunteer WWC Check is not suitable for clearance to commence paid work.

## Maintaining records

A copy of the staff member, contractor or volunteer's WWC Check card will be kept on the file at the school and recorded on the Phillip Island Village School WWC register which is maintained by Administration.

Phillip Island Village School will ensure staff members, contractors and volunteers hold a valid WWC Check card and will monitor their expiry dates; at a minimum annually at the commencement of the school year.

It is the responsibility of the employees or volunteers to:

- provide Phillip Island Village School with the successful WWC Check card or current VIT registration card prior to commencement
- notify the Principal 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 WWC Check or VIT registration has been suspended or if any restrictions are applied.
- apply for a new WWC Check 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 Principal.

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 restrictions to the Principal 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 condition, limitation or restriction on their registration or permission to teach, this will be noted in the relevant column in the teacher register. The Principal 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.

## Exemptions

The Working with Children Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWC Check. Phillip Island Village School reserves the right to require an exempted individual to have a WWC Check if the Principal considers it necessary in the circumstances.

## Parents volunteering in an activity with their child

Parents volunteering in an activity in which their child participates or normally participates, are exempt from needing a WWC Check except for the scenarios listed under the Volunteer section. **Example:** *Emily has volunteered to make and fit costumes for other children in her daughter's school play. As Emily's daughter usually participates in the school play, Emily does not need a Check, even if her daughter does not attend all of the play rehearsals or performances.*

## 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 WWC Check.

## Police officers

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

## 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 or volunteering for a maximum of 30 days in a calendar year)

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

## Related Documentation

*WWC Register*

*Employment Terms & Conditions & Contracts*

*VIT Register*

*Village School Induction Plan*

*Village School Recruitment and Onboarding Process*

*Working With Children Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools*

## Related Policies

- Student Supervision Policy
- Protecting Children Policy
- Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy