Working with Children Checks
POLICY

RATIONALE
The Department of Education and Training (DET) and School Councils have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all children and employees, and maintain the security of assets by requiring and maintaining high standards of professional conduct from employees and volunteers.

In meeting these responsibilities, the Department of Education and Training and School Councils must be satisfied that only those employees and volunteers who meet the highest standards of probity and suitability are employed. Such assessments may include reference or referee checks, medical assessments, qualification verification and criminal record checks. Schools are required to comply with the Working with Children Act 2005. The Act introduced a **Working with Children Check (WWC Check)**, thereby creating minimum checking standards across Victoria for people who work or volunteer with children. The WWC Check will ensure that people who are unsuitable to engage in ‘child-related work’ do not do so. The Act defines ‘child-related work’ as work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) regular, direct contact with a child where that contact is not directly supervised, and in any of twenty child-related occupational fields listed in the Act. ‘Child-related work’ may be either paid or unpaid (voluntary).

**There are exemptions from The Act including people under 18 years of age, sworn police officers, teachers currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).**

AIMS
- To ensure students under the school’s care are protected from being exposed to inappropriate people.
- To ensure all people engaged in ‘child related work’ with the school’s students and who are required to have Working with Children Checks, do so.
- To ensure that the school complies with the relevant Acts and laws.
- To provide an environment that is safe.

IMPLEMENTATION
- The Principal or his/her representatives will ensure that all persons engaged in “child related work” at Strathmore Primary School and who are required to have WWC Checks, do so.

The following information is provided to better understand the Act as it pertains to specific categories of persons likely to engage in “child related work” within the school.

**Principal and Teachers**
Members of the Principal and Teacher Class are employed pursuant to the Teaching Service Act 1981 and are required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching as a condition of employment. Teachers and principals who are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching are exempt from the Working with Children Act 2005 and do not require a WWC Check as they undergo full Criminal Records Checks.

DEECD HR Suitability for Employment Guidelines
Department of Justice, Victoria, Australia.
Education Support Staff
All ESS appointed staff will be required to undertake a police check. When appointed, an ESS staff member must produce their WWC Check and a copy is kept on their personnel file.

Casual Relief Teachers
Casual relief teachers are required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Accordingly they qualify for an exemption as they undergo full Criminal Records Checks.

Other Casual Employees
Casual employees in schools, other than casual relief teachers, are employed pursuant to the Education Act 1958 and therefore are required to demonstrate their suitability for employment by undergoing a WWC Check or a criminal records check conducted by the DET.

Contractors
All contractors and trades people must report to the school Principal or delegate. The Principal or delegate must sight the WWC Card before any work with or near children can commence on the school site within school hours.
Regular contractors in the school (eg. cleaners and regularly used trades people) must present their WWC Card at the office. Office staff will copy the card and keep it on file as a record.
If a trades person does not have a WWC Card and is working on school grounds within school hours, the Principal or delegate will supervise their work and escort them off site once the job is complete.
When in the school, all contractors/trades people must comply with the Strathmore Primary School Visitor’s Policy.

Student Teachers and Student Internships
Student teachers/interns must have a WWC Check prior to commencing a practicum in a Victorian Government School. As student teachers/interns do not receive payment for undertaking a practicum, a volunteer WWC Check is acceptable.

Volunteers
To be a volunteer at a school a WWC Card provided by the Department of Justice is required.
All volunteers must present their WWC Card to the office where a list of registered volunteers will be established and kept up to date. A ‘read only’ copy of this register will be kept on the staff drive for ease of access.
- The School Council will require volunteers to present a WWC Check for:
  - Participation in excursions and overnight camps and sleepovers.
  - Transport of students without staff members present.
  - Extra-curricular activities such as training of school sporting teams.
  - Involvement in any other events where it is deemed by the Principal and/or School Council as appropriate.
- When deemed necessary, the Principal or delegate will exercise his/her authority to require a potential volunteer to undergo a WWC Check irrespective of the volunteer’s exemption from the Act.

References:
DEECD HR Suitability for Employment Guidelines
Department of Justice, Victoria, Australia.
• The Principal or delegate will sight and retain a record of all employees’ WWC Checks unique numbers and expiry dates.
  • The Principal or delegate may enquire on the status of a WWC Check at any time by visiting www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren and entering a WWC Check unique number or alternatively by telephoning 1300 652 879.
  • The Principal or delegate will require all persons to display the WWC Card on their person at all practicable times when working or volunteering at the school or during school related activities.
  • WWC Checks are free for volunteers, but cannot be used for paid employment.
  • WWC Checks for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work.

**EVALUATION**
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s cyclic review.

DEECD HR Suitability for Employment Guidelines
Department of Justice, Victoria, Australia.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....  22nd August, 2016