



VIC-EDU-P-032 Working with Children Check Policy

1. Policy Scope

This policy and its procedures apply to all MacKillop Family Services ('MacKillop Education') staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and parents/guardians/carers.

This policy and its procedures apply in all school environments, including physical, virtual and online environments, and on-site and off-site school grounds (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas).

2. Policy Outline

Context

Our values of respect, hope, justice, compassion, and collaboration inform the quality of relationships we establish and all that we do to ensure our learning community is a place of welcome and safety. MacKillop Education celebrates diversity, and we are committed to inclusion, so that every student, regardless of race, religion, culture, gender identity or personal circumstances, including barriers to learning, can access education and experience success.

Our model, Reframing Learning and Teaching Environments (ReLATE), supports our trauma-informed practice and highlights the critical partnership between students, parents/guardians/carers, and staff, as we work together, to enhance the learning outcomes for every child.

Purpose

MacKillop Education is committed to the creation of a safe, just and respectful environment that supports the health and wellbeing of all members of the school community. MacKillop Education has a particular responsibility to ensure children and young people are safe in our care, and to work actively and intentionally to eliminate all forms of abusive behaviour towards children and young people.

The Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic.) (the Act) aims to protect children and young people from harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them have their suitability to do so checked by a government body.

People who are assessed as posing an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children and young people fail the Working With Children Check (WWCC) and the Act prohibits these people from working or volunteering with children.

This policy and its procedures summarise the responsibilities and obligations of MacKillop Education, staff, volunteers, contractors and others under the Act, under Ministerial Order 1359 and under MacKillop Family Services and MacKillop Education policy.

Policy statement

MacKillop Education will ensure that a current WWCC is held by all persons involved at the school who are required to do so. MacKillop Education will ensure that accurate and up-to-date WWCC and VIT registers are maintained.

1. Working with Children Checks are legally required for child-related work

If a person is engaging in child-related work, it is a legal requirement under the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) that they must, at a minimum, have a valid WWCC unless an exemption applies (see below).

Schools may also require anyone visiting the school and people engaged in child-connected work (who are not performing child-related work) to undertake a Working with Children Check, and/or other checks, to ensure that volunteers and visitors are adequately screened, considering the child safety risks relevant to the person's role.

Who must have a WWCC

Under the Act, and under MacKillop Family Services and MacKillop Education policy, the following must have a WWC clearance or VIT registration:

- MacKillop Family Services Board members
- MacKillop School Advisory Council members
- MacKillop Education staff, other than registered teachers (who are exempt - VIT registration)
- MacKillop Family Services staff
- Contractors on site when students are present*
- Visitors** on-site from 8.30 am - 4.00 pm on days when the school is operating.
- Volunteers, other than parents who are volunteering in an activity in which their young person is participating (who are exempt) on-site from 8.30 am - 4.00 pm on days when the school is operating.
- Ministers of religion and people performing duties of a religious vocation
- Trainee teachers

*For emergency works it may be necessary for a building, grounds, or equipment maintenance contractor without a WWCC, to be onsite when students are present. The Principal will ensure that they are supervised at all times and contact with children and young people is minimised.

** Excluding - guardians, and individuals having brief interactions with the school office E.g., courier.

MFS building, grounds and equipment maintenance contractors

MacKillop Family Services (MFS) maintains a register of preferred building, grounds and equipment maintenance contractors and where possible contractors will be engaged from this register.

Building, grounds, or equipment maintenance contractors will be engaged to perform their work outside of school hours. If these contractors are required to work on site during the school day when students are present they will be required to have a WWCC.

MacKillop Education activities conducted at school out of school hours, when students may or may not be present.

It is the Principal's discretion to determine whether visitors are required to have a WWCC.

MacKillop Education reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity or WWCC, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

2. When a Working with Children Check is not legally required – exemptions

A person is exempt from needing a WWCC if they are any one of the following:

- a registered teacher in Victoria (due to VIT registration)

- a parent volunteering in an activity with their child
- closely related to all the children they are undertaking the activity with
- under the age of 18
- a student who is 18 or 19 years old volunteering or on placement, organised by an educational institution
- a Victorian or Australian Federal Police officer.

Principles

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety and wellbeing within our school:

- all students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect
- a safe environment is required to protect children and young people from harm, and to prevent staff or other adults from abusing their position of authority and trust
- our school’s commitment to the protection of children is embedded in the culture of our school, and our individual and collective responsibility to take action is understood and accepted
- each child and young person’s ongoing safety and wellbeing must be the primary focus of all decision-making.

At MacKillop Education the leaders, teachers and all staff must be fully self-aware of, and comply with, their professional obligations and responsibilities with regard to the protection of children.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Child-related work	<p>Child-related work is defined in the Worker Screening Act 2020 as work that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ involves an adult working with children under 18 years old (both paid and unpaid work) ▪ usually involves direct contact with a child or children, including physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact and ▪ the contact with the child or children is a usual part of the person’s duties and is not occasional direct contact which is incidental to their work. <p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sporting, musical and other extracurricular coaches ▪ Allied health, NDIS therapists, Chaplains ▪ Case Managers who are working with children ▪ School camp or excursion support ▪ Volunteering in the classroom (in any capacity)
Child-connected work	<p>Child-connected work differs from child-related work</p> <p>For the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359, “child-connected work” is defined as “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.”</p> <p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plumber fixing the toilet during school time ▪ IT technician repairing the photocopier

3. Procedure

MacKillop Family Service/MacKillop Education's obligations

Working with Children Checks for MacKillop Family Services/MacKillop Education staff

MacKillop Education must:

- before engaging staff:
 - verify the status of the person's WWCC Card or application number using the Working With Children Check Victoria (WWCCV) online checking system, on the WWCCV website, or
 - verify Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration on the VIT website
- record the staff member's name and details in the WWCC register
- ensure that new staff notify WWCCV within 21 days of commencing child-related work with MacKillop Education
- ensure that paid staff doing child-related work have an Employee WWCC Card, not a Volunteer WWCC Card
- remove, immediately on being notified, any staff
 - whose WWCC is suspended or revoked; or
 - who is issued with a WWC Exclusion.

MacKillop Family Services WWCC registers

The following information will be recorded on the MacKillop Family Services WWCC register for each MacKillop Family Service/MacKillop Education staff to whom the WWCC applies:

- full name
- WWCC Card Number or WWCC Application Receipt Number (the date and outcome of the WWCC will be updated when the application is processed)
- WWCC expiry date
- Card type: 'E' for employee, 'V' for volunteer
- notices sent by WWCCV
- notices provided by the worker

MacKillop Family Services maintains a WWCC register for MacKillop Family Services Board members, and all MacKillop Family Services staff including MacKillop Education non-teaching staff. MacKillop Family Services monitors the currency of the WWCCs and provides alerts of the need for renewal prior to card expiry.

VIT registration for teachers employed by MacKillop Education

MacKillop Education must:

- before engaging a new teacher, verify the status of the person's VIT registration on the employer portal of the VIT website
- the Campus Principal must ensure that the VIT register on the VIT employer portal contains up-to-date records for all teachers

The MacKillop Family Services Human Resources team monitor the currency of the VIT registration and provide teachers with alerts for renewal prior to expiry.

MacKillop School Advisory Council members

The Executive Principal maintains a WWCC register for MacKillop School Advisory Council members.

Visitors, contractors and volunteers attending school campus

MacKillop Education Campus Principals ensure that a register for visitors, contractors and volunteers engaged directly at their site is maintained. The WWCC number for those campus visitors, contractors and volunteers, requiring a WWC clearance will be recorded in this register.

Obligations for MacKillop Education staff required to have a WWCC

MacKillop Education staff required to have a WWCC must:

- provide their WWCC Card and/or Application Receipt numbers to MFS/MacKillop Education before commencing work at MacKillop Education
 - for those who have applied for a WWCC, once the WWCC has been processed, provide their WWCC Card to MFS/MacKillop Education and to any other organisation where they do child-related work
- comply with their notification obligations under the Act
- stop working with children immediately if they receive a WWC Exclusion or if their WWCC Card is suspended or revoked
- not let another person use their WWCC Card for child-related work
- lodge a renewal form before their WWCC Card expires.

Obligations for MacKillop Education teachers

MacKillop Education teachers must:

- provide their VIT registration details to MacKillop Education before commencing work at MacKillop Education
- notify WWCCV of any paid or volunteer child-related work they do outside of MacKillop Education
- notify VIT of any conduct and/or suitability matters such as current or previous criminal charges.

Obligations for Visitors, Contractors and Volunteers

Visitors, Contractors and Volunteers who are required to have a WWC clearance must provide their WWCC card for verification when signing in.

Records management

Recordkeeping obligations

MacKillop Education will ensure that all required records relating to WWC Checks are maintained. The recordkeeping obligations relating to the WWC Check are outlined in the *VIC-EDU-P-004 Child Safety Recordkeeping Policy*.

MacKillop Education will ensure that all required records relating to VIT registration are maintained. The recordkeeping obligations relating to the VIT Registration are also outlined in the *VIC-EDU-P-004 Child Safety Recordkeeping Policy*.

4. Related legislation, policy, guidelines and resources

- Melbourne Archdiocese of Catholic Schools (MACS) Working with Children Check Policy
- VIC-EDU-P-004 Child Safety Recordkeeping Policy
- Victorian Institute of Teaching

- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic.)
- Working with Children Check Victoria

5. Approval and Review Details

This policy will be communicated to the MacKillop Education school community and will be published on the MacKillop Education website.

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Group Director, The MacKillop Institute and MacKillop Education
Approval Date	12 December 2023
Recommended to Approval Authority by	MacKillop Education Leadership Team
Next Review Date	1 July 2026
Version	3