



Working with Children Check

General Information Sheet

What is the Check?

The Working with Children (WWC) Check is designed to help keep children safe. The Check was introduced in Victoria in 2006 and aims to prevent people who may pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them.

People who work or volunteer in connection with certain services, bodies, places or activities are required to apply for a WWC Check. Check the phasing-in plan for a list of these. Detailed information about the WWC Check and application process is available on the Department of Justice website or by phoning the Information Line on 1300 652 879.

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

Unlike a police records check, the WWC Check only considers certain offences and is valid for five years (unless revoked). During this period, cardholders continue to be checked for new offences, disciplinary findings by prescribed professional bodies, or relevant determinations by VCAT under the *Health Professions Registrations Act 2005*.

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

You may still need to apply for a WWC Check even if you have already had a police records check.

Do I need a WWC Check?

You may need a WWC Check if:

- you are working in paid or unpaid (volunteer) work, **and**
- your work is in connection with one of the services, bodies, places or activities listed in the phasing-in plan, **and**
- your work usually involves, or is likely to usually involve, regular and direct contact with a child where the contact is not directly supervised by another person.

If you answer "Yes" to each of the statements above, you are doing 'child-related work'. Some exemptions apply. It is your responsibility to find out if you need a WWC Check.

When do I need to apply?

Each year, certain services, bodies, activities and places are phased-in. Phasing-in will be completed by June 2011.

If you need to apply you should check the phasing-in plan to find out when you need to apply. If you fall into more than one category, you should apply by the earliest date.

What if I don't apply?

It is a criminal offence for you to start or continue 'child-related work' without having applied for a WWC Check if the service, body, place or activity that your work is in connection with, has been phased-in.

It will also be an offence for your employer or volunteer organisation to engage you in 'child-related work' if you have not applied for a WWC Check and the work has been phased-in.

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 Application Guide
3. Submit your application, together with your original proof of identity documents, a passport-sized photo, and the application fee (if required) to a participating Australia Post outlet.

You can 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.

Note: Legislation or policy governing some organisations only allows applicants to work once they have passed the WWC Check. Please check with your organisation regarding this matter.

How much will it cost?

Applying for a WWC Check is free for volunteers and \$77.80 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'.

*Fees change annually on 1 July. Please check the website or contact the Information Line for the current fee.

What is checked?

- Primarily, applications will be checked for serious sexual, serious violent and serious drug-related offences. A checklist of offences is available on the website or by calling the Information Line.

- Findings of professional disciplinary bodies are also considered. These are:
 - Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT),
 - out of home carers Suitability Panel;
 - and relevant determinations by VCAT under the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005*.

Other professional bodies may be included in the future.

If you do not have a criminal record, and no professional disciplinary findings have been made against you, 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 in the form of a WWC Check Card from the Department of Justice in the mail.

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.

A sample WWC Check Card is shown below:



Can I still pass the WWC Check if I have a criminal history or a professional disciplinary finding?

The outcome will depend on the type of finding made or the offence, and the circumstances surrounding it. Not all offences and findings are considered to indicate a risk to the safety of children.

You may wish to contact the Information Line to discuss your personal circumstances.

People who are subject to sex offender reporting requirements or a supervision order or a detention order within the meaning of the ***Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009*** are not permitted to work with children or apply for a WWC Check.

What happens if I don't pass the WWC Check?

Before the Department of Justice makes a final decision to refuse a WWC Check, you will be given an opportunity to make a submission explaining why you believe you should pass the Check. Your submission will then be considered by the Department of Justice.

If you do not pass the WWC Check after your submission has been considered, you will then be issued with a Negative Notice. If you are issued with a Negative Notice you cannot perform child-related work. In most cases you may apply to Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for a WWC Check Card to be granted.

Do I need to update my details?

Yes, while your application is being processed and as a cardholder, you must inform the department each time your personal and employer/voluntary agency details change. You can change your details online, completing the Change of details form or calling the Information Line.

How will my privacy be protected?

The Department of Justice, employers and volunteer organisations are bound by privacy and confidentiality laws.

Your employer or volunteer organisation (where relevant) will be notified of the outcome of your application, and if your WWC Check is revoked.

The details of any criminal records, findings from a professional disciplinary body or relevant VCAT determinations will not be provided to your employer or volunteer organisation.

You can find out more on the website or via the Information Line.

Further information

Additional information is available from:

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

Email workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au

Information Line 1300 652 879

8:30am–5pm (EST) Monday–Friday
(excluding public holidays)



If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and have them contact the WWC Check Information Line.

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, such as large print or audio, email workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au or call the Information Line 1300 652 879, the **National relay telephone service** (TTY) 13 36 77.

This information is intended as a general guide only. It is not intended to be given as legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. It is recommended that you obtain legal advice relevant to your particular circumstances.