Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

Child Safety Recruitment Procedures

Including WWCC and VIT registration

Our Lady of the Way
Catholic Primary School
Wallan East

1. Introduction

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) schools operate with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and are owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd.

The Child Safe Recruitment Procedures form part of MACS policies for child safety and wellbeing. They support the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. The procedures take into account relevant legislation, including the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standard 6 as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359, *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic) and other relevant legislation such as the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and requirements under federal and state law for anti-discrimination.

2. Purpose

These procedures are in place to ensure that school staff, including the principal, teachers, consultants, contractors, volunteers and those involved in religious ministry (Staff) are suitable for child related work and able to comply with MACS' commitment to minimise the risk of child abuse in MACS schools.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to all Staff in MACS schools, including specialist schools operated by MACS subsidiary, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools (MACSS).

4. General requirements

MACS is committed to ensuring that recruitment practices create a safe environment for our students. To this end, we have established policies and procedures for assessing the suitability of Staff to work with children.

5. Recruitment processes

MACS will implement processes in recruiting and selecting Staff that comply with and be consistent with the Guidelines published Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) and updated from time to time by the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA):

Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools

Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools

Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools

NDIS External Providers Guidelines

Position descriptions for all those involved in child-related work (being those persons with direct contact with children that is regular and not incidental to the work) must have a clear statement that sets out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing and requirement to provide the applicant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

All applicants for child-related work are informed about these requirements and child safety and wellbeing practices, including Code of Conduct for MACS Staff and the Child Safety Commitment Statement, prior to commencing work.

All Staff are provided with appropriate information about child safety and wellbeing at the time of appointment and induction. They are required to comply with the Code of Conduct for MACS Staff and all policies and procedures for child safety and wellbeing.

6. Selection processes

6.1. Teachers

All teachers are required to have current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). As part of their registration, they are required to apply for a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC). This check has broader scope than the Working with Children (WWC) Clearance and for this reason, teachers are exempt from the requirement to hold a valid WWC clearance.

6.2. Non-teaching staff including employees, volunteers and contractors

All non-teaching staff and volunteers are required to hold a valid WWC Clearance as appropriate to their engagement at the school. Refer to Appendix 1, which provides further information about the requirements for WWC Clearance. Staff and volunteers are responsible for obtaining their own WWC Clearance.

6.3. School screening processes for teaching and non-teaching staff

All applicants undergo screening prior to appointment. This is to verify and record information about a person being selected to perform child-connected work. The principal or nominated staff member is to:

- sight and verify:
  - VIT registration and associated NCCHC
  - WWC Clearance for non-teaching Staff
- personal identity verification and background checking
- professional and other essential or relevant qualifications
- an examination of their history of child-connected work

6.4. School screening processes for volunteers

The appointment of all volunteers must be approved by the Principal. All volunteers, including Parents and Carers, must undergo screening prior to their engagement by the school. This includes:

- personal identity verification and background checking
- verification of WWC Clearance through the WWCC website or Service Vic app
- verification of professional and other essential or relevant qualifications
- an examination of their history of child-connected work

7. Reference checking for potential candidates

Screening for all employees, contractors and volunteers must include reference checking prior to appointment. Reference checks must be completed with both the current and most recent employer. If these employers are schools, the referees must be the principals of the schools.

If the Principal has changed since the candidate was employed, the candidate should make all reasonable efforts to provide contact details for the former principal. A reference check must include suitability for child-related work.

The Template Referee Report is to be used to ensure all required information is captured, especially regarding child safety and suitability.

All referee discussions are to be documented in writing.

Any gaps in employment history should be clarified during the interview process and can be followed up in the reference check.

If a candidate refuses to provide referee details as required, please contact the MACS Employee Relations team for guidance.

You must obtain written consent from candidates before contacting any referees not listed in your application.

Acting as a referee

If you are contacted for a reference, you must:

- Be transparent and candid in your responses
- Disclose any known concerns relating to the employee, regardless of whether the conduct has resulted in substantiated findings, a formalised outcome or otherwise.

8. Appointment processes

Once appointed, the person's Clearance must be sighted, verified and recorded. New employees must not commence work until:

- All probity checks are finalised and recorded (e.g. VIT registration, WWC Clearance)
- The employment contract is signed and salary confirmed
- Onboarding is completed by both the principal and the employee.

Staff must receive induction appropriate to the nature of their role, and that further reiterates their duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing. Where relevant to their role, the induction procedure will also cover the mandatory reporting, reportable conduct and complaints handling.

8.1. Registers for VIT and WWCC

The principal is required to maintain a register of VIT registration and a register of WWC clearances. Those exempt from holding a WWCC should also be listed, with the reason why a valid WWCC is not required. Refer to section 9.1 regarding Working with Children Exclusions. The principal is to document the school-based processes for checking, updating and monitoring and these registers.

The processes for notifying employees and volunteers of expiry dates of Clearances and that proof of renewal is required by the expiry date; for following up overdue proof of renewal and providing information to employees and volunteers when their Clearance is expired is to be documented by the principal and assigned to a Staff member.

The tasks are to be included the position description for the nominated staff members.

VIT register

The VIT register must include the following information for each registered teacher:

- Full name
- VIT registration number
- Expiry and renewal date
- VIT category of registration
- Note any conditions, limitations on their registration or permission to teach

The principal must document the process for notifying teachers of the VIT expiry date, that proof of renewal of registration is required by the expiry date and the process for following up overdue proof of renewal. Teachers are informed they cannot teach until renewal is confirmed.

A teacher whose registration is suspended is not registered and must not teach. If they are employed in a non-teaching capacity they need a WWC clearance.

WWC register

The WWC register must include the following information for each person:

- Full name
- Position in the school
- Category (employed, volunteer)
- WWC card number
- State where card was issued
- Issue date
- Expiry date
- Current or former employee/volunteer (date of resignation)
- Date sighted or verified on WWCCV website or Service Victoria app

9. Ongoing monitoring

Ongoing training and supervision is provided to ensure the conduct of all Staff is consistent with the policies, procedures and strategies for child safety and wellbeing in place in the school and that they remain suitable to work with children.

All new Staff members are supervised regularly to ensure that their behaviour towards children is appropriate and to monitor their compliance with the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices. Ongoing supervision and people management of all staff is provided in a way that focuses on child safety and wellbeing.

Performance and development reviews, known as annual review meetings, are regularly undertaken for all employees and include consideration and understanding of the Code of Conduct for MACS Staff and the child safety and wellbeing policies and practices.

9.1. Working with Children exclusions

If a Staff member fails the WWCC, they will receive a WWC Exclusion. MACS will be notified and a copy of the WWC exclusion will be sent to all organisations the individual has listed with Working with Children Checks Victoria.

MACS will not be informed of the reason for the Exclusion. By law, the person must tell MACS in writing within seven days of the date they have received the Exclusion notice.

Once issued, the person is not allowed to do any child-related work effective from the date listed on the notice. Please refer to the Working with Children Check Victoria website for more information Principals are to contact MACS Employee Relations if the exclusion is issued or disclosed at the school or for further advice and support.

> If you get a WWC Exclusion, you cannot apply for a Clearance again for five years, from the date of the notice, unless your circumstances change. If you reapply after this time, by law you must not do any child-related work until you pass the WWC Check and obtain a Clearance.

Appealing a WWC exclusion

In limited circumstances, and within 28 days of date of the notice, a person may apply the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to review the decision. Refer to the WWCCV website for more information. They are only permitted to recommence child-related work at the school upon successfully reapplying for a WWC Clearance and by providing a copy of their new Clearance to MACS.

10. Roles and reporting responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement
Principal	Ensure all teachers employed in the school have current VIT registration and as part of their registration complete a NCCHC as required	Annual attestation to MACS Executive Director
Principal	Ensure all applicable staff have current working with children Clearances, obtained after a successful Working with Children Check.	Annual attestation to the MACS Executive Director
Principal	Ensure compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements for all Staff	Report non-compliance to the General Manager, Employee Relations

11. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this Policy can be found in the Glossary of Terms.

Child related work

The *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic) defines 'child-related work' as work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) direct contact with a child, irrespective of whether that contact is supervised or not, and in any of the child-related occupational fields listed in the Act. The definition of direct contact includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact. 'Child-related work' may be either paid or unpaid (voluntary).

MACS Staff or Staff member

In accordance with the MACS Code of Conduct, in this document the term Staff or Staff member refers to the MACS board, board committee and working party members, MACS executives, employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers in MACS schools and offices.

Volunteer

A person who performs work without remuneration.

Working with Children Check

A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is required by persons doing child-related work in Victoria as paid workers and volunteers, where that work is not directly supervised by someone with an appropriate check. It is a screening process for assessing people who work with, or care for children, administered by the Department of Justice in Victoria. A WWCC is not required by teachers who hold current VIT registration.

Working with Children Clearance (Clearance)

A Working With Children Clearance is issued to an employee or volunteer following the successful application for a WWCC.

12. Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Appendix 1: Working with Children Checks Information for Principals

Related MACS policies and documents

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Code of Conduct for MACS Staff
Privacy Policy
Privacy Collection Notice – Job Applicants
Teacher Registration Policy

Resources

Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools
Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools
Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools
NDIS External Providers Guidelines

13. Legislation and standards

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
Ministerial Order 1359 – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Victorian institute of Teaching Act 2001 (Vic)
VIT Code of Conduct
Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

Policy information table

Approving executive	Director, Child Safety and Risk
Procedure owner	General Manager, Child Safety
Approval date	1 July 2025
Review by	July 2027
Related policy	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Publication	CEVN
Superseded documents	Recruitment Policy – Schools – v1.0 – 2022
New procedure	New
School document owner	[role]
School review	[date]

Appendix 1: Working with Children Checks – Clearances

Question	Information
Source of obligation	The Victorian *Worker Screening Act 2020* (the Act) aims to protect children from harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them have their suitability to do so checked by a government body. The Act aims to prevent those who pose a risk to children from working or volunteering with them.
Who needs a WWC Clearance?	Subject to the exemptions referred to below, any worker who engages in child-related work that involves direct contact with a child (being a person under 18 years of age) needs a WWCC. Section 3 of the Act defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child that involves: • physical contact • face-to-face contact • contact by post or other written communication • contact by telephone or other oral communication • contact by email or other electronic communication. A WWC Clearance will apply to any person who is engaged by MACS as an employee, a self-employed person, a volunteer, a third-party contractor (who has or is likely to have direct contact with children), a supervisor of child employees, part of practical training through an educational or vocational course, unpaid community work under a court order, a minister of religion or performing duties of a religious vocation, an officer of a body corporate, a member of a committee of management of an unincorporated body or a member of a partnership. All volunteer helpers, including Parents, in MACS schools are required to hold a WWCC.
What is child-related work?	Child-related work is defined in section 9 of the Act as voluntary or paid work, in any of the occupational categories listed in the Act that usually involves direct contact with a child. For the purposes of the Act, work will not be 'child-related work' by reason only of occasional direct work with children that is incidental to the work. The following are considered child-related work: • mentoring and counselling services for children • direct provision of child health services • clubs, associations, movements, societies or other bodies (including bodies of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature) • educational and care services, childcare centres, nanny services and other childcare • coaching and tuition services for children • any religious organisation where children form part of the congregation • boarding houses or other residential services for children and overnight camps for children • transport services specifically for children, including school bus services and taxi services for children with a disability and supervision of school road crossings • commercial photography services for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities • commercial talent competitions for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities • commercial entertainment or party services for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities. **Child-related work for ministers of religion**

Question	Information
	The Act defines child-related work for ministers of religion more broadly than for other occupations. All ministers of religion are required to get a WWC Clearance unless the contact they have with children is only occasional and always incidental to their work. This would include for example having children in their congregation, attendance at schools or school camps even when all their contact with children is supervised. An example of when a minister of religion would not require a WWC Clearance is a minister conducting purely administrative roles within a church's bureaucracy.
Key exemptions	People engaged in the following types of work are not required to have a WWC Clearance: • teachers registered with the VIT • students, aged 18 or 19, undertaking volunteer work organised or held at school • Victoria Police or Australian Federal Police officers • workers, who usually live in another state or territory, visiting Victoria to engage in child-related work (only up to 30 days within the same calendar year) • all children under the age of 18. **Note:** Some drivers accredited under the *Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983* (Vic.) who were engaging in child-related work were previously exempt from the WWCC. These drivers must now pass the WWCC to continue this work.
How to apply for a WWC Clearance	A worker who engages in child-related work is responsible for applying for their own WWCC. An employer cannot apply on behalf of a worker. To apply, fill out an online application form at www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au. Upon completion of the application, you will be provided with an online receipt.
Obligations for MACS school	MACS schools must: • not engage anyone in child-related work who does not have a WWC Clearance • not allow anyone who has an Exclusion notice to undertake child-related work, even if they are directly supervised or exempt • ensure workers engaged in paid work have an Employee Clearance and not a Volunteer Clearance.
Penalties	It is an offence to work with children without a valid WWC Clearance or application receipt while your WWCC is being processed. It is an offence for anyone to apply for or engage in child-related work if they have been issued an Exclusion notice. The maximum penalty is two years imprisonment, a fine or both. MACS must take reasonable steps to ensure it does not engage or continue to engage a person in child-related work who does not hold a valid Clearance. The penalty for organisations is a significant fine.
Recordkeeping obligations	MACS keeps records of all Clearances in accordance with its recordkeeping obligations (and in accordance with the Public Record Office of Victoria Recordkeeping Standards) and updates these regularly.