

<i>Policy: Working with Children Check</i>		
Date of Review: March 2018 Responsible for review: <i>Principal</i>	Bright P-12 College Council Policy 	Date Approved: 15 th March 2018 Approving Authority: College Council
<i>Associated Processes:</i>	<i>Reference Guide:</i> SCHOOL COMMUNITY	<i>Associated Documents:</i>

Policy Purpose

To ensure volunteers approved to work with children meet legal requirements.

To minimise risk of harm to students by requiring staff and volunteers of Bright P-12 College to provide evidence that they have appropriate approvals to work with children in accordance with legislation and Department policy.

Policy Statement

Bright P-12 College will assess and verify the suitability of staff and volunteers who will work with children. Unless an exemption applies to a person, a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC) is the minimum standard for all adults working with children. If a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to have a WWCC e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption.

In addition to a WWCC, Bright P-12 College may also require a criminal record check. This may be considered necessary when certain offences are relevant to the duties of the volunteer or staff member, for example checking for dishonesty offences may be required for a role that involves managing finances or petty cash.

Principles/Objectives

1.1 Implementation

It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. Prior to employing a person, the principal must be satisfied that the person meets the required Suitability for Employment Checks.

To maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our school, Bright P-12 College will ensure that the Department's procedures for criminal record checks are implemented.

Bright P-12 College will adhere to the Department procedures for the conduct of criminal records checks for all school based employees, including arrangements that allow for the acceptance of the criminal records check conducted by the Victorian Institute of Teaching and WWCC to meet the Department's pre-employment suitability for employment requirements.

1.2 Volunteers

WWCC are required by all volunteers who will be working with students for school activities whether or not supervised by a teacher and whether or not the activity is on school grounds or during school hours.

For example, a volunteer who is assisting at a school camp or any other approved school activity outside of school grounds will require a WWCC. See section below for a list of exemptions. See the Volunteer's Policy for a list of suggested activities.

1.3 Working with Children Check

The WWCC is a minimum checking standard set by the *Working with Children Act 2005* for those who work with children, either on a paid or voluntary basis. It checks for serious sexual, violent and drug-related offences as well as disciplinary findings of professional agencies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

To be a volunteer at Bright P-12 College a valid Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is required. This card is:

- valid for 5 years
- transferable between volunteer organisations
- free of charge for volunteers, but cannot be used for paid employment.

Note: WWCC for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work.

1.4 Maintaining Records

A copy of the staff member or volunteer's WWCC will be kept on the file at the school.

Bright P-12 College will implement procedures to ensure staff members and volunteers hold a valid WWCC card; at a minimum annually at the commencement of the school year.

It is the responsibility of the staff member or volunteer to:

- provide Bright P-12 College with the successful WWCC 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 WWCC has been suspended.
- apply for a new WWCC before their card expires.

1.5 Privacy

Bright P-12 College will apply privacy principles when collecting, using, retaining or disposing of personal or health information in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic).

1.6 Exemptions

The Working with Children Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWCC. Bright P-12 College reserves the right to nevertheless require a WWCC if the Principal considers it necessary in the circumstances. The exempt categories are:

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 WWCC.

Police officers

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

1.7 Contractors

Bright P12 College strongly recommends all contractors submit a WWCC or be asked to complete works outside of school hours or on weekends.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for:

- The implementation of Bright P-12 College policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school.

The Bright P-12 College Council is responsible for:

- Systematic review of College Council Policies and procedures.

The Bright P-12 Office staff are responsible for:

- Collating and storing Working With Children Checks
- Checking the currency of Working With Children Check's