



**Help for non-English speakers** - If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Administration at Ph. 8766 4000

## PURPOSE

The purpose of Working with Children (WWC) checks and other suitability checks for volunteers and visitors is to ensure the safety and protection of children who are participating in activities or programs provided by Barton Primary School. The checks are designed to prevent individuals who may pose a risk to children from being granted unsupervised access to them.

## POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Barton Primary School admin, teachers and school leaders understand and comply with the legal requirements for undertaking suitability checks including Working with Children Checks for volunteers and visitors who work with children in government school environments.

Note: All references to 'schools' in this guidance includes school boarding premises.

## SUMMARY

- Schools must establish and implement school-level policies and procedures to assess and verify the suitability of volunteers and visitors who engage in child-related and child-connected work. These may exceed the requirements of the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) if required. For guidance about child-related or child-connected work, refer to the [Guidance tab](#).
- Working with Children Checks are required by law for people who engage in child-related work (whether paid or unpaid) as defined in the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic).
- Schools must comply with the volunteer child safety screening requirements of [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises \(PDF\)](#).
- In assessing what suitability checks should be undertaken, schools must consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer or visitor's role. For guidance in assessing risks, refer to the [Guidance tab](#).
- For information relating to suitability checks for all school employees refer to [Suitability for Employment Checks](#) and the [Recruitment in Schools Policy and Guidelines](#).

## DETAILS

School leaders and school councils have a vital role in establishing a child safe culture through implementing and reviewing child safe policies and practices to minimise child abuse risks.

Victorian legislation requires schools, and other organisations working with children, to take specific steps to minimise the risk of child abuse. Both the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) and Victoria's Child Safe Standards establish requirements for schools to appropriately screen adults who will be working with children.

Note that in this policy, a reference to 'visitors' also includes a reference to contractors engaged by the school and employees of contracted service providers engaged by the school.

Schools and school councils must:

- establish and implement school-level policies and procedures to assess and verify the suitability of volunteers and visitors who engage in child-related and child-connected work. Schools can establish local policies that exceed the requirements of the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) if required.

- comply with the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) requirements to ensure that all adults engaging in child-related work (see definition below), whether paid or unpaid, have a current Working with Children Clearance (issued as the successful outcome of a Working with Children Check). For more information about when a Working with Children Check is required to be undertaken refer to the Guidance tab.
- comply with the requirements of [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises \(PDF\)](#) to:
  - sight, verify and record the person’s Working with Children clearance, if the person is required to have a clearance in accordance with the Worker Screening Act 2020, or any equivalent background check
  - consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer’s role and, if reasonable and appropriate, collect and record:
    - proof of personal identity
    - information about any essential or relevant professional or other qualifications
    - the person’s history of work involving children
    - references that address the person’s suitability for the job and for working with children
- consider the child safety risks relevant to any volunteer role and assess what suitability checks should be undertaken. For more information about determining what additional checks may be appropriate, see Guidance tab.
- follow this policy regarding suitability checks for volunteers and visitors (for employee checks refer to: [Suitability for Employment Checks](#) and the [Recruitment in Schools Policy and Guidelines](#))
- verify the status of their Working with Children Clearance at least once every 12 months. The Working with Children Check website provides a [Status Checker tool](#) to assist with this process.

Once initial suitability checks have been successfully undertaken, schools must also ensure that the ongoing supervision and people management of volunteers and other adults working with children focuses on child safety and wellbeing.

For more information, including assistance with determining whether work is child-related or child-connected work, refer to the [Guidance tab](#).

## SCHOOLS MAY INCREASE REQUIREMENTS

The Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) sets out the minimum requirements in relation to Working with Children Checks.

Schools may also require anyone visiting the school or 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.

For more information on deciding when and what suitability checks may be required, refer to the [Guidance tab](#).

## DEFINITIONS

### CHILD-RELATED WORK

- involves an adult working with children under 18 years old (both paid and unpaid work)
- usually involves direct contact with a child or children (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).

### CHILD-CONNECTED WORK

- 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, or
- for the purposes of a school boarding premises, work authorised by the provider of school boarding services in a school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Definitions related to the Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359 can be found at: [Child Safety: Definitions](#).

### RELATED POLICIES

- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [Visitors in Schools](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards: Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises \(PDF\)](#)
- [Worker Screening Act 2020 \(Vic\)](#)

### COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

### POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	06/08/2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	06/08/2026