

Working with Children Check Policy and Procedures

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Purpose

Meriden School ('the School') is committed to the safety, welfare and well-being of its students and to providing them with a safe and supportive environment.

The *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW) ('the Act') and the *Children Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013* (NSW) ('the Regulation') protect children by requiring people engaged in child-related work to have a Working with Children Check clearance ('WWCC clearance') or current application to engage in child-related work.

The purposes of this policy are to set out:

- some responsibilities and obligations under the Act and the Regulation
- the School's procedures to ensure that all people in child-related work have a current WWCC clearance
- the School's procedures to ensure that it obtains a current WWCC clearance from all people engaged in child-related work (as defined by the Act)
- the School's procedures to verify WWCC clearances for all people engaged in child-related work prior to the commencement of their employment/engagement and following renewal of a WWCC clearance, and
- how the School ensures evidence of verifying WWCC clearances and other WWCC records is maintained.

Policy

Background

The Office of the Children's Guardian ('OCG') (an independent State Government agency) is responsible for managing applications for, and renewals of, WWCC clearances in NSW. The process involves a national criminal history check and a review of reported workplace misconduct (such as the Reportable Conduct Scheme).

If a WWCC clearance is granted it is generally valid for 5 years. WWCC clearances can be extended beyond the five year period at the discretion of the OCG.

WWCC clearance holders are subject to ongoing monitoring by the OCG. The OCG may impose an interim bar on engaging in child-related work for both applicants and WWCC clearance holders.

There are two classes of WWCC clearances:

- volunteer – authorising works to engage in unpaid child-related activities
- employee – authorising workers to engage in paid and unpaid child-related work.

Employees of the School are not permitted to commence their first day of child-related work at the School unless they have an employee WWCC clearance.

The School's obligations

The School complies with the Act and the Regulation by requiring all workers engaged in child-related work (unless they are exempt) to obtain a WWCC number and to provide it to the School.

The School will maintain an active employer registration with the OCG's WWCC Check system (portal).

The School has nominated two senior workers (those holding the role of the Principal and the Executive Assistant to Principal) to be the authorised contacts to be contacted by the OCG about any serious matters (e.g. in the event that a child-related worker becomes barred). If the person holding either role changes, the person taking over the role will be advised of what needs to be done so that the School remains compliant with the Act and the Regulation.

The School will verify the WWCC status of all workers engaging in child-related work no later than five days after the expiry date of each WWCC clearance of a worker.

The School will maintain all records of verifications in accordance with this policy.

The School will remove any barred or unauthorised persons from child-related work and will update their records to show that the person has been barred or is unauthorised.

The School will notify the OCG if a person is subject to any adverse finding in relation to an allegation of misconduct that is the subject of a Mandatory Reporting and/or Reportable Conduct notification. This notification will trigger a risk assessment by the OCG and a review of the individual's WWCC. It is the responsibility of the Principal to make the notification.

Worker's obligations

Upon receiving a WWCC clearance, it is the worker's responsibility to provide their WWCC number to the School, along with their full name and date of birth, to enable the School to undertake an online verification.

A worker who engages in child-related work is responsible for:

- **applying for their own WWCC**
- **the cost of obtaining and renewing a WWCC - the School will not reimburse the cost of the fee**
- renewing their own WWCC before it expires
- **notifying the OCG of any change to their personal details** within 3 months of the change occurring
- **notifying NESA of their current WWCC details (teachers only)**
- **not engaging in child-related work at any time that they are subjected to an interim bar or a bar**
- **reporting to the Principal if they are no longer eligible for a WWCC clearance, the status of their WWCC clearance changes or they are notified by the OCG that they are subjected to a risk assessment, and**

It is an offence for a worker to engage in child-related work when they do not hold a WWCC clearance or if they are subject to a bar.

Who needs a WWCC?

Subject to the exemptions referred to below, any worker (aged 18 or older) who is engaged in child-related work at the School must hold a WWCC clearance of a class applicable to the work (i.e. volunteer or employee).

Child-related work (including voluntary work) is:

- providing services for children and young people under 18
- where the work normally involves direct contact (physical contact or face to face contact) with children, and

- where contact with children is a usual part of, and more than incidental to, the work

A 'worker' is defined by the Act to mean:

any person who is engaged in work, as an employee, a self-employed person, a contractor or subcontractor, a volunteer, a person undertaking practical training as part of an educational or vocational course (other than as a school student undertaking work experience), or as a minister, priest, rabbi, mufti or other like religious leader, or spiritual officer of a religion or other member of a religious organisation.

Exemptions

Under the Act, people engaged in the following types of work are not required to have a WWCC:

- people under the age of 18
- administrative, clerical or maintenance work, or other ancillary work, that does not ordinarily involve contact with children for extended periods
- work with minimal direct contact or unsupervised contact with children, done for no more than five days in a calendar year
- volunteering by a parent or close relative (as defined by the Act):
 - of a child in activities for the child's school, early education service or other educational institution; except where the work is part of a formal mentoring program or involves intimate person care of children with a disability
 - with a team, program or other activity in which their child usually participates or is a team member; except where the work is a part of a formal mentoring program or involves personal care of children with a disability.
- a visiting speaker, adjudicator, performer, assessor or other similar visitor at a school or other place where child-related work is carried out if the work of the person at that place is for a one-off occasion and is carried out in the presence of one or more other adults
- work by an interstate visitor:
 - in a one-off event such as a jamboree, sporting or religious event or tour, if the event is the only child-related work carried out by the worker in NSW in that calendar year and the period of work does not exceed 30 days
 - who holds an interstate working with children check, or is exempt from the requirements to have such a check in his or her home jurisdiction, whose child-related work in NSW is for no more than 30 days in any calendar year.

Procedures

The School's procedures for various categories of workers are outlined below:

Obtaining a WWCC

EMPLOYEES

All paid employees of the School (unless exempt because they are under the age of 18) are required to obtain and maintain a valid WWCC clearance. It is a condition of employment at Meriden for an employee to obtain and maintain a WWCC clearance during their employment.

For teachers, it is also a mandatory requirement for teacher accreditation with NESAs. An application number (APP number) is not a clearance and cannot be used for teacher accreditation. Therefore, the School will not permit a teacher to commence child-related work with an APP number.

Each new employee's WWCC number and date of birth must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification of the WWCC number before the employee commences their first day of child-related work at the School.

The verification must only be completed online on the OCG website. Meriden will not accept the worker's notification letter or verification email as proof of their clearance.

The following staff members are responsible for informing paid employees of their requirement to obtain a WWCC number and are also responsible for providing the name, number and date of birth to the Executive Assistant to Principal and requesting an online verification before the employee commences their first day of work:

Responsible Staff Member	Category of Employee
HR Manager	Permanent teaching staff
HR Manager	Permanent support staff
Dean of Staff (Senior School)	Casual teaching staff (Senior School)
Dean of Staff (Junior School)	Casual teaching staff (Junior School)
HR Manager	Casual support staff (including for co-curriculars that are not sport)
Music Academy Administrator	Casual support staff – Music tutors
Sports Administrator	Casual support staff - Sport

Records

The Executive Assistant to Principal retains a copy of the verification and also provides a copy of the verification to the relevant staff who requested the verification (see above) and the Administration Assistant – Employment Relations.

The Administration Assistant – Employment Relations is responsible for entering the employee's WWCC details into the employee's record on the School's Payroll system (TASS) and filing a copy of the verification in the Notes section.

A refreshable spreadsheet of all current employees WWCC details from TASS is saved on the School's I:drive.

NON-EMPLOYEES

Volunteers

Any volunteer for the School who has direct contact (physical or face-to-face contact) with a child at the School (e.g. Student Christian Group leaders and Duke of Edinburgh mentors) and is not otherwise exempt by the Act, is required to obtain and maintain a valid volunteer or paid WWCC clearance. The volunteer's WWCC number and date of birth must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to Principal for online verification of clearance before they commence at the School.

The staff member supervising the volunteer (or the activity in which the volunteer is engaged) is responsible for informing the volunteer of their requirement to obtain a WWCC number and is also responsible for providing the name, number and the date of birth to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification before the volunteer commences their volunteering at the School.

Student Practicum Teachers

All student practicum teachers are required to obtain and maintain a valid WWCC clearance to do their placement at the School. Their WWCC number and date of birth must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to Principal for online verification of clearance before they commence their placement at the School.

The Dean of Staff is responsible for obtaining the student practicum teacher's WWCC details and is also responsible for providing the name, number and date of birth to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification before the student practicum teacher commences work at the School.

Outside Tutors

All outside tutors approved by the School are to obtain and maintain a valid WWCC clearance. The outside tutor's WWCC number and date of birth must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification of clearance before they commence as an outside tutor to a student of the School.

The Dean of Studies is responsible for informing an outside tutor of their requirement to obtain a WWCC clearance and is also responsible for providing the name, number and date of birth to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification before the outside tutor commences with a student.

Examination Invigilators

Examination invigilators (whether paid by NESA or the School) are required to obtain and maintain a valid WWCC clearance. The invigilator's WWCC number and date of birth must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to Principal for online verification of clearance before the invigilator commences their first day at the School.

The Dean of Studies is responsible for informing invigilators of their requirement to obtain a WWCC number and is also responsible for providing the name, number and date of birth to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification before the invigilator commences.

Volunteers attending overnight activities

The School does not ordinarily use volunteers on overnight activities. However, if a volunteer (including a parent volunteer) attends an overnight school activity, they must first be approved by the Principal and they are also required to obtain and maintain a valid WWCC clearance. The volunteer's name, WWCC number and date of birth must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to Principal for online verification of clearance at least three weeks prior to the commencement of the overnight school activity.

The teacher in charge of organising the overnight activity is responsible for informing a parent volunteer of their requirement to obtain a WWCC number and providing the name, number and date of birth to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification prior to the overnight school activity.

Cadet Unit – Trinity Grammar School employees

An Agreed Framework for Partnership for students from Meriden School to be part of the Trinity Grammar School Army Cadet Unit dated 27 February 2020 requires that Trinity Grammar School ('TGS') will provide WWCC numbers for all TGS employees involved in the cadet unit to the School prior to commencing any role in the cadet unit (clause 3(g)).

The Head of Campus is responsible for obtaining these from TGS and for providing the name, WWCC number and the date of birth to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification prior to the person commencing any role in the cadet unit.

Contractors

Any contractor for the School who is engaged in child-related work (including cleaners) and is not otherwise exempt by the Act, is required to obtain and maintain a valid WWCC clearance. The contractor's name, WWCC

number and date of birth must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to Principal for online verification of clearance before they commence work at the School.

The staff member engaging the contractor is responsible for informing a contractor of their requirement to obtain a WWCC number and forwarding the name, number and date of birth to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification before the contractor commences at the School.

Homestay – International students

All adults (other than parents and siblings) involved in the provision of the accommodation of international students are required to obtain and obtain and maintain a valid WWCC clearance.

The Registrar is responsible for obtaining the name, WWCC number and the date of birth of any WWCC required for international student accommodation provider and providing them to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification.

Host families - Exchanges

If a Meriden family hosts exchange students, any person living in the host household who is 18 years of age or older is required to obtain and maintain a valid WWCC clearance. The host family member's name, WWCC number and date of birth must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to Principal for online verification of clearance before the host student commences their first day with the host family.

The staff member in charge of organising the exchange is responsible for host family members of their requirement to obtain a WWCC number and is also responsible for providing the name, number and date of birth to the Executive Assistant to Principal for verification before the exchange commences.

Records

For all non-employees, the Executive Assistant to Principal retains a copy of the verification and also provides a copy of the verification to the relevant staff who requested the verification (see above) and to the Director of Compliance.

The Director of Compliance is responsible for entering the non-employee's WWCC details into a spreadsheet on the School's I:drive and also filing a copy of the verification in the I:drive.

Renewal of WWCCs

It is the responsibility of each worker to renew their WWCC prior to its expiry. An application for renewal can be made through Service NSW or its replacement agency.

The School adopts the following procedures to remind workers to renew their WWCC clearance prior to its expiry.

1. At regular intervals (at least once a term), the Director of HR will create an expiry report of the employee WWCC clearances due to expire in the coming 1 to 3 months (from the School's electronic records) and the Director of Compliance will identify the non-employee WWCC clearances due to expire in the coming 1 to 3 months.
2. The Director of HR (or their delegate) emails each employee whose WWCC is due to expire to advise them of their responsibility to renew it and to request they provide details of the renewed WWCC to the Executive Assistant to Principal to ensure that verification by the School can take place. Upon receipt of the details of the renewed WWCC from the employee, the Executive Assistant to Principal runs the verification of the renewal on the OCG portal.
3. The Director of Compliance requests the Executive Assistant to Principal to run renewal verification checks for non-employee WWCC numbers due to expire.

4. The Executive Assistant to Principal retains a copy of the renewal verification and also provides a copy of the verification to the relevant staff who requested the verification (see above) and the Administration Assistant – Employment Relations (employees) or Director of Compliance (non-employees).
5. The Administration Assistant – Employment Relations updates the employee’s WWCC details (i.e. new verification and expiry dates) in their TASS record and files a copy of the renewal verification in the Notes section.
6. The Director of Compliance updates the non-employee WWCC details (i.e. new verification and expiry dates) on the School’s spreadsheet and files a copy of the WWCC verification on the School’s I:drive.

Workers not authorised to work with Children

Meriden will not employ or engage or continue to employ or engage any worker if the outcome of their online verification is ‘expired’, ‘barred’, ‘interim barred’ or ‘not found’.

In the event that an employee’s WWCC Clearance expires during their employment, the Director of HR is responsible for immediately advising the Principal and the Principal will immediately stand the employee down from their duties until they have a valid WWCC clearance and it has been verified by the School.

In the event that a non-employee’s WWCC Clearance expires and they are currently engaged child-related work, the Director of Compliance will advise the employee responsible for the non-employee (as above) that are not permitted to use the non-employee until they have a valid WWCC clearance and it has been verified by the School.

If the School is advised by the OCG that a current worker has become barred (or has an interim bar) the School will immediately remove that worker from child-related work and will update their records to show that the person has been barred.

If a WWCC verification results in a outcome of ‘expired’, ‘barred’ or ‘interim barred’, the School’s records will be updated to record this result.

Records

It is the responsibility of the Executive Assistant to Principal to verify all new WWCC numbers and WWCC renewals. The Executive Assistant to Principal will email the results of a verification (including renewals) to the staff member responsible for obtaining the WWCC number from the worker and the HR Manager and Administration Assistant – Employment Relations (for employees) or the Director of Compliance (for non-employees).

The School maintains spreadsheets on the School’s I:drive for each worker that includes the following relevant details (required by the Act):

- worker’s full name
- worker’s date of birth
- WWCC number
- verification date
- verification status result
- expiry date of the WWCC number
- status of the worker (paid or volunteer)

A copy of the employee verifications are attached to each employee’s Payroll record in TASS by the Administration Assistant – Employment Relations.

A copy of the non-employee verifications are stored on the School’s I:drive.

The following staff members are responsible for maintaining an electronic record of the above information:

Responsible Staff member	Category
Director of HR	All employees
Director of Compliance	All non-employees

The School maintains these records during the period the worker carries out child-related work at the School and retains the records for a period of at least seven years after the worker ceases child-related work.

Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff training
- record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary

Related Documents

- Child Protection Policy and Procedures (AS33)
- External Providers Policy and Procedures (SS20)
- Outside Tutors Policy and Procedures (SS19)
- Replacement Teacher Policy and Procedures (AS32)
- Welfare and Accommodation Selecting, Screening and Monitoring Policy (International Students)
- Younger International Students Policy