

## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **PURPOSE:**

Baden Powell P-9 College (BPC) must establish and implement policies to assess and verify the suitability of volunteers who will work with children including requiring all volunteers to provide evidence of their suitability. This evidence is generally a working with children check (WWC Check); however if a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to also have a WWC check e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption.

In addition to a WWC Check a school may also consider it necessary that a criminal record check is conducted through the Department. This may occur when possible offences are relevant to the duties of the volunteer, for example dishonesty offences, which are not part of the WWC Check. The school covers the cost of the criminal record check.

### **GOALS:**

To ensure teachers, staff and volunteers of BPC approved to work with children meet legal requirements.

### **GUIDELINES:**

The WWC Check 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.

To be a volunteer at a school a Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice and Regulation

Related Department of Education and Training (DET) policies:

- Fetes
- Private Car Use
- Visitors
- Volunteer checks
- Volunteer workers
- Suitability for employment checks
- Victorian Institute to teaching
- Working with children checks

## **IMPLEMENTATION:**

As part of the process for maintaining high standards of conduct and professionalism in the workplace, Principal Team of BPC will ensure that the DET procedures for criminal record checks are implemented.

It is the responsibility of the Baden Powell P-9 College Council to ensure that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. Prior to employing a person the College Council (or the Principal if the College Council has delegated its employment powers to the Principal) must be satisfied that the person has the required Suitability for Employment Checks.

Verification of a satisfactory criminal record is achieved by ensuring the employment of new employees and engagement of volunteers proceeds in accordance with DET policy (for Victorian Public Servants), and legislative obligations pursuant to the Working with Children Act 2005 (for school based and non-teaching employees and volunteers), and to the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 Part 2.6 Victorian Institute of Teaching (for Principal and Teachers

BPC will adhere to the Department procedures for the conduct of criminal records checks for all school based and non-school based employees, including arrangements that allow for the acceptance of the criminal record check conducted by the Victorian Institute of Teaching and Working with Children Checks to meet the Department's pre-employment suitability for employment requirements.

### **Volunteers**

A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work, without payment or reward. School work means:

- carrying out the functions of a College Council
- any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal or school council
- providing any assistance in the work of any school or kindergarten (Parent Helpers)
- attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support.

This is a broad definition, and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such fundraising and assisting with excursions, are well protected from legal action by others.

**Important:** “Voluntary” work carried out to meet Centrelink requirements

People who perform unpaid work in schools under the “Work for the Dole” program and “Community Work” programs administered by Centrelink have insurance cover provided by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and may perform work in schools.

Other Cent relink benefit recipients involved in “voluntary” work in order to fulfil their recipient obligations are **not** covered by an Australian Government insurance scheme and are **not** insured to work in Victorian government schools. Schools may not accept this group of Centrelink benefit recipients to work as volunteers in Victorian government schools.

**Commencing Volunteering**

A volunteer can commence work in BPC when they provide a receipt as proof they have applied for a WWC Check with the Department of Justice

**Working with Children’s check**

The WWC Check is a minimum checking standard set by the Working with Children’s Act 2005 for those who work with children, either on a paid or a voluntary basis.

To be a volunteer at BPC a Working with Children Check 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.

**Maintaining the register**

Upon receipt of verification, the WWC Check details will be photocopied and stored in the WWC Check register.

BPC will ensure suitable monitoring procedures are in place to ensure teachers, staff members and volunteers hold a valid WWC Check (or equivalent) at all times; at a minimum annually at the commencement of the academic year.

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

- provide the successful WWC Check card (or equivalent) prior to commencement at BPC
- 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
- apply for a new WWC Check card (or equivalent) before their card expires

## **Relevant Exemption**

### **Student Volunteers**

If you are a student who is 18 or 19 years of age, you are exempt from the WWC Check for volunteer work organised by or held at your educational institution.

### **Parents volunteering in an activity with their child**

If you are a parent volunteering in an activity in which your child participates, or normally participates, you are exempt from needing a WWC Check.

### **Family member and people closely related to the child**

If you are closely related to each child in your child-related work you are exempt from the WWC Check. 'Closely related' to a child means you are the:

- parent
- spouse or domestic partner
- step-parent
- mother-in-law or father-in-law
- grandparent
- uncle or aunt
- brother or sister, including half siblings, step siblings, brother-in-law or sister-in-law.

### **Teachers**

If you are a teacher who is currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), you are exempt from the WWC Check.

### **Police officers**

If you are a Victoria Police officer or an Australian Federal Police officer, you are exempt from the WWC Check.

### **Visiting/interstate workers**

Interstate visitors can do child-related work in Victoria without a Victorian WWC Check for a period of up to 30 days in the same calendar year. This work can be done:

- over several events or occasions if they have a WWC Check from where they live in Australia, or
- for one event or on one occasion.

For a full list of exemptions refer to:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/who+needs+a+check/exemptions/>

## **EVALUATION:**

- This policy to be reviewed as part of the school's two year review cycle, individually, in teams and with the community in 2017 or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.