

Working with Children Check requirements

We acknowledge that the requirement for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) for all clergy, employee and volunteer roles across the Archdiocese is but one component of a comprehensive approach to child safety. Possessing a WWCC does not guarantee that a person is suitable to work with children and young people.

Clergy, employees and volunteers in parish, agency and entity roles represent the Archdiocese and hold a position of trust in our communities, irrespective of whether their role involves direct, indirect or no contact with children and young people.

In acknowledging that children and young people often hold those who work or volunteer in Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities in high regard, there is a need to ensure that all who work or volunteer within the Archdiocese have been appropriately screened through the WWCC process.

Employment in a paid or voluntary capacity is subject to and conditional upon a satisfactory WWCC (with the exception of short-term or one-off volunteers).

The WWCC requirements of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM) exceed the requirements of the WWCC legislation. CAM's blanket approach to WWCCs ensures that we all stand united in creating safe environments for children and young people, and demonstrates our commitment to excluding persons who pose an obvious risk to children and young people.

WWCC REQUIREMENT FOR CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

All clergy, employees and volunteers over the age of 18 are required to maintain a current WWCC throughout their involvement in parishes, agencies and entities.

It is a requirement that clergy, employees and volunteers who do not have a current WWCC apply for a WWCC before commencement – and are able to provide an application receipt as evidence that they have applied for a WWCC. The application process for a WWCC can be commenced online and finalised at a participating Australia Post Office.

FURTHER INFORMATION

WWCC website – Apply for a Check:

https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/individuals/applicants/how-to-apply#Complete_online_application

Most people can work once their application has been lodged and a determination is pending. Only certain persons are not permitted to work with children by law while their application is being processed. These include persons who:

- have been charged with, convicted of, or found guilty of a sexual, violent or drug offence listed in sch 3 cl 2 of the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic)
- have been given a Negative Notice in the past
- intend to supervise a child under the age of 15 in employment under the *Child Employment Act 2003* (Vic)

Working with Children Check requirements

- intend to work in a service regulated by the *Children's Services Act 1996* (Vic) or in an education and care service under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (Vic)
- are subject to orders or reporting obligations under the:
 - *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004* (Vic)
 - *Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005* (Vic)
 - *Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009* (Vic).
- Working with Children Check Website – FAQs:
<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/about-the-check/resources>
- Working with Children Check information and translations for non-English speakers:
<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/about-the-check/resources/general-information-guide-and-translations>
- Working with Child Check Ministers of religion information guide:
https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/embridge_cache/emshare/original/public/2019/02/4b/387709789/MoR%20nformation%20Guide%20.pdf
- Working with Children Check Victoria
1300 652 879

A volunteer check is only valid for volunteer work and is free. It is an offence to engage in paid child-related work with a volunteer check. An employee check is valid for both paid and volunteer work and a fee applies.

A WWCC is valid for 5 years. Members of the clergy, employees and volunteers are responsible for maintaining a valid and current WWCC.

The Professional Standards Unit will coordinate WWCCs for CAM clergy and seminarians.

The Archbishop's Office of Evangelisation will continue to coordinate WWCCs for applicants for accreditation as lay ecclesial ministers.

FURTHER INFORMATION

In addition to being available in English and Easy English, WWCC information has been translated into many community languages including Arabic, Cantonese, Hindi, Mandarin, Somali, Spanish, Urdu and Vietnamese.

WWCC website – Translations:

www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/resources/translations

If an information sheet is not available in a community language, the person can contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50 and request that they call the Working with Children Check Support Line on 1300 652 879 (local call charge).

Services are also available for those with speech, hearing impairment or deafness (TTY) through the National Relay Service (NRS):

CONTACT DETAILS

- TTY/voice calls: 133 677

Working with Children Check requirements

- speak and listen: 1300 555 727
- website: <https://relayservice.gov.au>.

IF A PERSON DECLINES TO APPLY FOR OR PROVIDE A WWCC

If a person declines to apply for or provide a WWCC, they are not permitted to engage in work or undertake a voluntary role within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. The Professional Standards Unit of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne should be contacted for further advice where a person has declined to meet the WWCC requirement.

REQUIREMENT TO REGISTER INVOLVEMENT WITH PARISHES, AGENCIES AND ENTITIES

Clergy, employees and volunteers are required to register their involvement with the parish, agency or entity within 21 days of their commencement, through the MyCheck function of the Working with Children Check website: <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu/login.doj?next=mycheck>

This will enable the parish, agency or entity to be notified if there is a change in the status of the person's WWCC (e.g. suspension, withdrawal due to relevant charges or convictions).

The Check Status function on the Working with Children Check website enables organisations to check the status, type and expiry date of person's card or application:

<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu/checkstatus.doj>

REQUIREMENT TO UPDATE WWCC DETAILS

Clergy, employees and volunteers are required to keep all WWCC details up to date, including:

- name
- date of birth
- residential address
- telephone numbers
- contact details of organisations they are engaged with (e.g. employment, voluntary work).

WWCC details can be updated through the MyCheck function of the Working with Children Check website:

<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu/login.doj?next=mycheck>

WWCC REGISTER

Archdiocesan parishes, agencies and entities must maintain a register of all WWCCs and ensure that WWCCs for clergy, employees and volunteers are appropriate to their situation (e.g. volunteer or employment), current and linked to the parish, agency or entity i.e. the person has registered their involvement with the parish.

Parishes, agencies and entities are required to check the status of WWCCs through the Working with Children Check website to ensure that the person has applied for a WWCC or to confirm that the person has a current WWCC.

Minimum requirements of the register:

- name of the member of the clergy, employee or volunteer

Working with Children Check requirements

- role title(s)
- whether the role is a voluntary or employee role
- whether an exemption applies and an explanation of why an exemption applies e.g. volunteer under the age of 18
- application receipt number (for those applying for a check)
- WWCC number
- card sighted column – for a signature of the person sighting the card
- expiry date
- currency/validity check through Working with Children Check website
- parish, agency or entity involvement has been registered

OBLIGATIONS IN RELATION TO A CHANGE OF WWCC STATUS

In circumstances where the:

- person has been issued with an Interim Negative Notice as part of the application process
- a WWCC of existing clergy, employees and volunteers has expired, been suspended or withdrawn (Negative Notice)

the member of the clergy, employee or volunteer must notify the parish, agency or entity immediately and cease to engage in ministry or work until the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.

Parishes, agencies and entities that are notified or become aware of changes in the status of the WWCC (e.g. expiry, suspension or withdrawal) must act to ensure that the employee or volunteer is not able to engage in work until the matter is satisfactorily resolved.

PARENTS WORKING OR VOLUNTEERING IN AN ACTIVITY IN WHICH THEIR CHILD USUALLY PARTICIPATES

In our efforts to strengthen child safety, CAM has taken the decision to require parents who work or volunteer in an activity in which their child usually participates to undertake a WWCC. Clergy, employees and volunteers hold a position of power and authority in relation to children and young people, and all steps must be taken to ensure that persons interacting with children and young people within CAM are screened to ensure that they do not pose a risk to children and young people.

VICTORIAN INSTITUTE OF TEACHING REGISTRATION AND THE WWCC

A teacher who holds a current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and is involved in child-related work in an educational setting is exempt from the requirements to undertake a WWCC. Effective from the 1st of September 2019, VIT will require registered teachers to nominate organisations in which they undertake volunteer work to WWCC Unit. The WWCC Unit will send the parish, agency or entity confirmation that the teacher has nominated the organisation. This will ensure that VIT is able to alert organisations if the teacher's registration has been suspended or cancelled.

POLICE AND THE WWCC

Serving members of Victoria Police or the Australian Federal Police are exempt from the WWCC requirement under Victorian legislation.

However, as there is no direct mechanism to alert organisations to the current status of the employment of the officer, it is required that police officers undertake a WWCC and nominate the parish, agency or entity as

Working with Children Check requirements

the volunteering body. This will ensure that CAM is notified if the WWCC card is suspended and/or withdrawn.

PARISH, AGENCY AND ENTITY RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO WWCCS FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AUSPICED BY EXTERNAL AGENCIES, EXTERNAL PROVIDERS WHO USE PARISH AND ARCHDIOCESAN FACILITIES AND CONTRACTORS

The 'Application' section of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy sets out responsibilities in relation to WWCCs for:

- community programs auspiced by external agencies
- external providers who use parish and Archdiocesan facilities
- contractors who may be engaged to provide specific goods or services.

EXEMPTIONS

There are limited circumstances where a WWCC is not required:

- Children under the age of 18 are exempt from the WWCC requirement unless they are supervising a person under the age of 15 in an employment situation.
- Interstate and overseas visitors are required to apply for a WWCC if they are in ministry, working or volunteering in Victoria for a period that exceeds 30 days per calendar year.
- People can engage in short-term or one-off volunteering or work within a parish for a period of up to 5 days in the same calendar year. Parish, agency and entity Safeguarding Committees are required to undertake a risk assessment to evaluate the possible risk associated with short-term or one-off roles to determine WWCC (and/or criminal history record check) requirements and strategies to reduce risk to children and young people. Activities that are reasonably deemed to be high risk include home visiting, overnight stays, camps and overseas trips; these require a WWCC. The Professional Standards Unit can assist you in determining your approach to short-term or one-off volunteering or roles.

OBLIGATIONS OF PARISHES, AGENCIES AND ENTITIES WHEN A WWCC IS SUSPENDED OR WITHDRAWN

If a person (member of the clergy, employee, volunteer or applicant) receives an Interim Negative Notice (when they first apply for a WWCC) or a Negative Notice (as a result of the ongoing checking that occurs during the duration of the check), your parish, agency or entity will receive a copy of the notice, if your parish, agency or entity is listed with the Working with Children Check Unit, Department of Justice and Community Safety.

The person has an obligation to inform the parish, agency or entity that they work or volunteer with, within 7 days of the receipt of the Negative Notice.

The parish, agency or entity must ensure that:

- the employee or volunteer is suspended from their employment or volunteer role until they can demonstrate a re-instatement of their WWCC
- the employee or volunteer does not have contact and/or work with children and young people involved in parish, agency or entity programs, activities or events
- the Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice is recorded on the parish, agency or entity's WWCC register.

Working with Children Check requirements



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

Version 1: July 2019
Professional Standards Unit
psu@cam.org.au