



Working with Children Clearance Policy and Procedure

Rationale:

Daylesford Dharma School 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 Clearance (WWC Clearance) is the minimum standard for all adults working with children. If a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to have a WWC Clearance e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption. In addition to a WWC Clearance, Daylesford Dharma School 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.

Aim:

To minimise risk of harm to students by requiring staff and volunteers of Daylesford Dharma School to provide evidence that they have appropriate approvals to work with children in accordance with The *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic) legislation.

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 will be satisfied that the person meets these requirements and will follow the DDS-POL-025 Child Safe Recruitment Policy and Procedure.

To maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our school, Daylesford Dharma School will ensure that the procedure for criminal record checks are implemented.

Daylesford Dharma School will adhere to the [Working with Children Check](#) guidance to ensure compliance in establishing clearance to work with children, for all school based employees and visitors. This includes the arrangements that allow for the acceptance of the criminal records check conducted by the Victorian Institute of Teaching and WWC Clearance to meet the School's suitability for employment requirements.

Volunteers Definition

WWC Clearances 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 WWC Clearance.

Commencing volunteering

A volunteer can commence work at the Daylesford Dharma School when they provide a receipt as proof they have applied for a WWC Clearance with the Department of Justice and have otherwise been considered by the school to be suitable.

Working with Children Clearance:

The WWC Clearance is a minimum checking standard set by the Victorian government in the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic) legislation 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 the School, a valid Working with Children Card provided by the Department of Justice is required.

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

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

Maintaining records:

A copy of the staff member or volunteer's WWC Clearance will be kept on the file at the school. The School will implement these procedures to ensure all staff members and volunteers hold a valid WWC Clearance card; at a minimum annually at the commencement of the school year, and prior to any new employee or volunteer beginning work at the school, or returning to work at the school after an absence.

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

- provide Daylesford Dharma School with the successful WWC Clearance 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 WWC Clearance has been suspended,
- apply for a new WWC Clearance before their card expires.

Privacy:

Daylesford Dharma School 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).

Exemptions:

The Worker Screening Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempted from the requirement to have a WWC Clearance. The School reserves the right to nevertheless require a WWC Clearance if the Principal considers it necessary in the circumstances.

The exempt categories are:

Student volunteers

A student who is 18 or 19 years of age is exempt from the WWC Clearance for volunteer work organised by or held at the same educational institution they attend.

Parents volunteering in an activity with their child

Parents volunteering in an activity in which their child participates or normally participates, are exempt from needing a WWC Clearance. It is the School policy to require a WWC Clearance for all volunteers at the school who wish to serve in an ongoing capacity.

Family members and people who are closely related to the child

Family members closely related to each child in the child-related work are exempt from the WWC Clearance.

'Closely related' to a child means: 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

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 WWC Clearance.

Police officers

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

Exemptions Links and References: Suitability for Employment Checks External Links: Victorian Institute of Teaching Working with Children Check Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed at least annually or more often if necessary due to changes in legislation or circumstances.

Renewal of Check:

Working with Children Clearances must be renewed every five years. The renewal of the Working with Children Clearance is the sole responsibility of the individual. The individual is required to provide proof of their registration in the form of a copy of their new Working with Children registration card to the School. This copy is to be provided within 7 days of receiving it from the Department of Justice.

Lapsed Check:

Once a Working with Children Check expires, a person cannot engage in any child related work until it is renewed, to do otherwise is an offence.

Where for any reason a Daylesford Dharma School employee does not have the required registration (or other evidence to permit them to work), the School will;

- Give the employee not less than seven days, to obtain the necessary authority; and
- Give the employee an opportunity to explain any extenuating circumstances and clarify any matter. Where following the steps above, the School is satisfied that the lack of the 'necessary authority' is a result of the actions or omissions of the employee, and not due to any extenuating circumstance, the School may stand down the staff member without pay until they satisfies the School that they have the 'necessary authority'.

Working with Children Clearance Register Procedure:

The School maintains a register of Working with Children Clearances which is administered by the Office Manager and oversighted by the Principal.

All persons requiring a Working with Children Clearance are;

- To provide a copy of their WWC clearance card together with their name, address and birthdate prior to commencing work or volunteering at or for the School.

- This information will be recorded in the School's Working with Children Clearance Register.
- When arriving at the School, every person will be required to sign in and show their Working with Children Clearance card which will be checked against the Register.
- All visitors and volunteers at the school are required to sign in at each and every visit with the Office Manager, establish their WWCC status and collect their lanyard.
- Where the School cannot establish a record of a Working with Children Clearance, we will require a copy of it together with the person's name, address and birthdate which will then be added to the School's register before they commence working in or for the School.
- Those exempt from the Clearance who are attending the school, will still be included on the register with an explanation as to why they are exempt.

If there is no Clearance, a person is not able to be on the school grounds without direct supervision from the Principal or a VIT registered teacher wearing a lanyard that identifies their lack of WWCC status.

Working with Children Clearance policy and procedure evaluation:

This policy and procedure will be reviewed at least annually or more often, if necessitated by changes to legislation or circumstances.

Related Policies & Links:

[Working with Children Check](#)

Child Safe Recruitment policy and procedure

Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Student Safety and Supervision policy

Offsite Activities policy

Review Date:

January 2023

Basis of Discretion:

Not applicable.