

The Partnered Catholic Parishes of:

**Sacred Heart Diamond Creek, St. Mary's Greensborough
& St. Thomas the Apostle Greensborough North**



WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK AND POLICE CHECK POLICY

Clergy, religious, employees and volunteers in the Partnered Parishes 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 the Partnered Parishes in high regard, there is a need to ensure that all who work or volunteer within the Partnered Parishes 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).

We acknowledge that the requirement for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) for all clergy, religious, employee and volunteer roles across the Partnered Parishes 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.

The WWCC requirements of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM) that have been adopted by the Partnered Parishes, exceed the requirements of the WWCC legislation. CAM's blanket approach to WWCCs ensures that all stand united in creating safe environments for children and young people and demonstrates a commitment to do all that we can to mitigate the risk to children and young people.

WWCC REQUIREMENT FOR CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

All clergy, religious, employees and volunteers over the age of 18 are required to maintain a current WWCC throughout their involvement in the Partnered Parishes.

It is a requirement that clergy, religious, 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.

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, religious, employees and volunteers are responsible for maintaining a valid and current WWCC.

FURTHER INFORMATION

WWCC website – Apply for a Check: <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>

Working with Children Check Support Line on 1300 652 879 (local call charge)

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.

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):

- TTY/voice calls: 133 677
- Speak and Listen: 1300 555 727
- Website: <https://relayservice.gov.au>

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)
- 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).

REQUIREMENT TO REGISTER INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PARTNERED PARISHES

Clergy, employees and volunteers are required, within 21 days of their commencement, to register their involvement through the MyCheck function of the Working with Children Check website: www.online.justice.vic.gov.au identifying the Parish with which they are involved.

Upon registration you will be asked the details of your particular parish:

- Sacred Heart Parish: 25 Gipson Street, Diamond Creek, 3089. (03) 9401 6361
- St Mary's Parish: 204-210 Grimshaw Street, Greensborough, 3088. (03) 9435 1543
- St Thomas the Apostle Parish: 251 Diamond Creek Road, Greensborough North, 3088. (03) 9434 7373

This will enable the Partnered Parish 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 a person's card or application.

<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au>

REQUIREMENT TO UPDATE WWCC DETAILS

Clergy, religious, 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>

WWCC REGISTER

The Partnered Parishes are each required to maintain a register of all WWCCs and ensure that WWCCs for clergy, religious, employees and volunteers are appropriate to their situation (e.g., volunteer or employment), current and linked to the Parish i.e., the person has registered their involvement with the Parish.

The Partnered Parishes 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 WWCC register:

- name of the member of the clergy, religious, employee or volunteer role and title(s)
- whether the role is a voluntary or employee role
- whether an exemption applies and an explanation of why an exemption applies
- 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 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, religious, employee or volunteer must notify the Parish immediately and cease to engage in ministry or work until the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.

If the Parish is notified or becomes aware of changes in the status of the WWCC (e.g., expiry, suspension or withdrawal) the Parish 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 and in line with CAM Policy, the Partnered Parishes have taken the decision to require parents who work or volunteer in an activity in which their child usually participates, to undertake a WWCC.

Clergy, religious, 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 as far as possible, that we who interact with children and young people within the Partnered Parishes are screened.

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 requires registered teachers to nominate organisations in which they undertake volunteer work to the WWCC Unit. The WWCC Unit will send the Parish 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 as the volunteering body. This will ensure that the Partnered Parish is notified if the WWCC card is suspended and/or withdrawn.

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

The Partnered Parishes have a responsibility for the safeguarding of children and young people in relation to Working with Children's Checks for:

- community programs auspiced by external agencies
- external providers who use Parish facilities
- contractors who may be engaged to provide specific goods or services (See Contractors' Policy).

Parishes are required to do due diligence on third parties who use/hire their facilities to ensure child safeguarding policies and processes are in place.

Community organisations, groups or private providers that have contact (or likely contact) with children and young people are required to:

- be provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy to set expectations for the care and safety of children and young people
- demonstrate/confirm that those involved (e.g. employees, volunteers) have a current and valid Working with Children Check
- demonstrate (by providing a copy to the parish) that the agency has a Child Safety Policy consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- be briefed about onsite child safety.

PROGRAMS WITH NO CONTACT (OR NO LIKELY CONTACT) WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Community organisations, local groups or private providers who run and/or auspice programs where there is no contact (or no likely contact) with children and young people are exempt from complying with the requirements of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework.

Where arrangements change and the program has contact (or likely contact) with children and young people, the program must comply with the requirements set out in the section above titled 'Programs involving contact (or likely contact) with children and young people'.

USING A FACILITY BELONGING TO ONE OF THE PARTNERED PARISHES ON A ONE-OFF BASIS

Where an organisation, group, private provider or members of the general public use and/or hire a Partnered Parish's facility on a one-off basis, they are not required to comply with the requirement of the CAM Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework.

However, usage or hire agreements need to reflect that hirers are responsible and should take all steps to ensure that children and young people are safe.

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. The Partnered Parishes' Safeguarding Committee is required to undertake a risk assessment to evaluate the possible risk associated with short-term or one-off roles to determine WWCC (and/or Police 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 in determining the approach to short-term or one-off volunteering or roles.

OBLIGATIONS OF PARISHES WHEN A WWCC IS SUSPENDED OR WITHDRAWN

If a person (member of the clergy, religious, 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), the Parish will receive a copy of the notice, if the Parish is listed with the Working with Children Check Unit, Department of Justice and Community Safety.

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

The Parish 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 programs, activities or events.
- the Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice is recorded on the Parish's WWCC register.

POLICE RECORD CHECK FOR CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

All clergy, religious, employees and specific volunteers over the age of 18 (e.g., members of Parish Finance Committee, Parish Pastoral Council, Ministry of Communion to the Sick and Visitation Ministry) are required to maintain a current Police Record Check throughout their involvement in the Partnered Parishes.

It is a requirement that clergy, religious, employees and specific volunteers who do not have a current Police Record Check apply for one before commencement – and are able to provide an application receipt as evidence that they have applied for a Police Record Check. The application process for a Police Record Check can be commenced online and finalised at the Parish Office.

A Police Record Check is valid for 3 years. Members of the clergy, religious, employees and volunteers are responsible for maintaining a valid and current Police Record Check.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Detailed information is available from CAM [Criminal History Record Check \(Police Record Check\) \(melbournecatholic.org\)](http://melbournecatholic.org), including information regarding Police Checks from overseas.

Australian Police Record Check – apply online for a Police Record Check (fingerprint check is not needed) at National police record checks and fingerprinting

POLICE CHECK REGISTER

It is a requirement that the original Police Check document must be sighted. A register of all national criminal records checks must be maintained including the person's name, date of birth, position, police certificate reference number, date of issue and renewal date to ensure that checks are undertaken for all relevant roles every 3 years.

IF A PERSON DECLINES TO APPLY FOR OR PROVIDE A WWCC OR POLICE RECORD CHECK

If a person declines to apply for or provide a WWCC or Police Record Check, they are not permitted to engage in work or undertake a voluntary role within the Partnered Parishes. 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 or Police Record Check requirement.