



Primary Only	Secondary Only	Combined Policy
Both Campuses	<i>Taylor's Hill Only</i>	<i>Mernda only</i>
Policy Type: Administrative		

RATIONALE

NOTE: The following information is referenced and/or adapted from the [Department of Justice and Regulation's Working With Children Check](#) website.

The Working With Children Check (WWCC) 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, other than those exempted by virtue of their occupation, e.g. registered teachers, police. The card is valid for 5 years.

Purpose of the Working With Children Check

The Working With Children Check helps protect children from physical and sexual harm. It does this by screening people's criminal records and criminal professional conduct, and by preventing those who pose an unjustifiable risk to children from working with or caring for them.

Gilson College requires all adults who are not registered teachers and who work in a paid or voluntary position with children and young people enrolled in the College to have a valid and current Victorian WWCC.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work

Passing a Check is a legal requirement for everyone in Victoria doing paid or voluntary **child-related work** who doesn't qualify for an exemption. The Check seeks to regulate only the contact a child has with someone doing child-related work. The Act exempts a range of people from the WWCC including teachers registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) as teachers have already been screened.

2. Suitability to work with or care for children

- The Check does not assess a person's suitability to work with or care for children in a particular role. Gilson College assumes the role of assessing paid and voluntary workers' suitability to work with children and to establish sound, ongoing supervision practices so that children are safe from harm. For more information go to [Commission for Children and Young People](#).
- In accordance with Ministerial Order 870 (2016), Clause 10, Gilson College has in place screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel. Part of meeting this obligation is verifying the WWCC status of persons who propose to engage in College authorised child-connected work in the College environment – on-campus or off-campus – while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

3. Special Obligations for Ministers of Religion

- The Working with Children Act 2005 creates special obligations for ministers of religion. All ministers of religion are required to get a Check unless the contact they have with children is only occasional and always incidental to their work.
- Child-related work for ministers is defined more broadly than for everyone else. For ministers, child-related work is not limited to work involving unsupervised, direct contact with children. By law, any contact with children, unless it is only occasional and incidental, is enough to require the minister to get a Check.
- This includes ministers, regardless of whether their contact with children is supervised or not, who visit schools, children's camps or have children present in their congregation.
- Gilson College requires all Chaplains employed by the College to have a valid and current WWCC.

4. Obligations for Overseas Students Homestay providers/families/carers

- **Gilson College requires all adults (18 years or over) in an overseas student homestay accommodation to have a valid and current WWCC.**

5. Verifying the WWCC status

- The College has established and implements processes and procedures to assess and verify the suitability of all people who will undertake approved paid or voluntary work with College students – in on-campus and off-campus learning environments.
- The College ensures that each person meets their legal requirements of having a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) by checking WWCC cards, photocopying and filing them.
- **The College regularly checks validity of each WWCC regularly using the Victorian WWCC website.**
- A record is also kept of each holder, beginning and expiry dates so that the College ensures currency of status.
- While the evidence of suitability required is generally a Working with Children Check (WWCC), a paid or volunteer worker's occupation may exempt them from the requirement to also have a WWCC check e.g. teachers, Police officers. These individuals must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption, for example a current professional registration card. Records are kept of this evidence in the same way as WWCCs.
- In addition to a WWCC check the College may also consider it necessary that a criminal record check is conducted through Adventist Schools (Victoria) Inc. This may occur when possible offences are relevant to the duties of the volunteer, for example dishonesty offences, which are not part of the WWCC check. The college covers the cost of the criminal record check.

6. 2017 Amendments to the WWC Act 2005

The College will take into consideration any and all amendments to the WWC Act 2015 when applying the minimum WWCC checking standard.

Current legislation defines:

1. Direct Contact

WWC Act 2005, Section 3 defines **direct contact** to include **not only**

- a. physical contact
- b. face-to-face oral communication,

but to **also include contact by:**

- c. post or other written communication;
- d. telephone or other oral communication; or
- e. email or other electronic communication.

2. Child-related work

WWC Act 2005, Section 9 expands the **definition of child-related work**.

Consequently, a person who engages or intends to engage in:

- a. work at **or** for a school; and
- b. that usually involves **direct contact** (physical, face to face, post, written, telephone, oral, email, electronic) with a child, must have a current WWCC.

3. Supervision

Even if a person's contact with children as part of their child-related work is supervised by another person, they will still need to apply for a Working with Children Check.

4. Non-conviction charges

Non-conviction charges (charges that have been finally dealt with other than by a conviction or finding of guilt) for serious sexual, violent or drug offences are considered as part of WWCC assessments and re-assessments.

This policy was shared with Taylors Hill staff in Jul 2017

This policy was shared with Mernda staff in Jul 2017

This policy was checked by ADCOM in Jul 2017

This policy was ratified by the College Council Jul 2017

*This policy was **updated Oct, 2019***

This policy is due for review by 2021