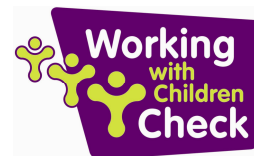


Factsheet 6: Information for Volunteers on Working with Children Checks



Volunteers play a vital role in the community. There are many volunteers working with children in schools, on the sporting field and in clubs and associations across the State. Almost 429,000 Western Australians, around one-third of the population, are volunteers. Rural Western Australia has the highest volunteering rate in Australia, with about 45% of the population involved in volunteering.¹

Many organisations that use volunteers already have good risk management policies in place to build child-safe organisations. To strengthen the protection of children in WA, the Government has introduced new laws requiring people (including volunteers) who do certain types of “child-related work” to have a criminal record check. These laws are found in the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* (the Act).

From 1 January 2006, many volunteers starting “child-related work” must apply for a Working with Children Check as they start volunteering. The Checks are being progressively introduced for volunteers over the next 3 years, depending on the age of the children that a volunteer works with.

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU AND YOUR VOLUNTEER ORGANISATION DECIDE IF YOU ARE IN CHILD-RELATED WORK

Question 1 - Do you carry out work as a volunteer in one of the 19 categories of child-related work?

The categories of child-related work include:

- a coaching or private tuition service
- a club, association or movement with a significant membership or involvement of children
- an educational institution for children
- a school crossing service

To view the full list of categories, see **Factsheet 1 “What is child-related work”**, visit the website at www.checkwwwc.wa.gov.au or contact the Working with Children Screening Unit on 6217 8100.

YES

Go to Question 2

NO

You do not need to apply for a Check

Question 2 - Do your usual duties involve, or are they likely to involve, contact with a child?

Contact includes –

- physical contact
- oral communication, including by telephone
- electronic communication

but **does not include** contact between an employer and an employee (including employees under 18 yrs) or between fellow employees.

YES

Go to Question 3

NO

You do not need to apply for a Check

Question 3 - Do any exemptions apply?

Exemptions include:

- volunteers under 18 years
- parents volunteering in a club or certain activities in which their child is also involved (This exemption does not apply to volunteer parents attending overnight camps)
- short term visitors to WA carrying out child-related work for 2 weeks after their arrival, and for no more than 2 weeks in any 12 month period.

For full details of all exemptions, see **Factsheet 5 “Child-related work and exemptions”**

YES

You do not need to apply for a Check

NO

Go to Question 4

Question 4 - Does the “5-day threshold” apply?

It is a defence under the Act to have worked with children on no more than five days in a calendar year, without making an application for a Check.

This “5-day threshold” applies to **all categories** of child-related work, **except** work in licensed child care services.

YES

You do not need to apply for a Check

NO

You must apply for a Check by the date required (See “**When to Apply**” on page 2)

Current Police Checks and Working with Children Check

The Working with Children Check is more comprehensive than previous police checks that volunteers may have had through the National Police Checks for Volunteers Program, government department employment screening or their volunteer organisation's policy. All volunteers in "child-related work" must have a Working with Children Check (even those who have had a police check in the past) and should apply according to the phasing-in arrangements.

Some volunteers who do a variety of tasks within an organisation may need to have **both** a **Working with Children Check** and a **National Police Check** (eg for driving vehicles or managing finances). To reduce the financial impact on organisations / volunteers, the National Police Checks for Volunteers Program will provide a check **free** of charge when evidence of an application for a Working with Children Check is provided. Further information is available at www.community.wa.gov.au/communities/volunteers or by emailing volunteering@dcd.wa.gov.au.

When to Apply

Commencing in 2006

- **"New" Volunteers** working with children aged **0-7 years**, who start child-related work after 1 January 2006, must apply for a Check as they start work.
- **"Existing" Volunteers** working with children aged **0-7 years**, who started child-related work before 1 January 2006, must apply for a Check by 31 December 2006.

Commencing in 2007

- **"New" Volunteers** working with children aged **8-12 years**, who start child-related work after 1 January 2007, must apply for a Check as they start work.
- **"Existing" Volunteers** working with children aged **8-12 years**, who started child-related work before 1 January 2007, must apply for a Check between 1 January 2007– 31 December 2007.

Commencing in 2008

- **"New" Volunteers** working with children aged **13-17 years**, who start child-related work after 1 January 2008, must apply for a Check as they start work.
- **"Existing" Volunteers** working with children aged **13-17 years**, who started work before 1 January 2008, must apply for a Check between 1 January 2008 – 31 December 2008.

Cost of a Check

The application fee for volunteers is \$10. The fee is payable when first applying for and when renewing a Check (every three years). The legislation does not say whether a volunteer or the volunteer organisation will meet the cost of the Check. This will need to be decided by the individual organisation and its volunteers.

How to apply for a Working with Children Check

- Pick up a Working with Children Check application form at an Australia Post outlet.
- Get your application form signed by an authorised representative of your volunteer organisation to confirm that you are performing child-related work.
- Collect 100 points of identifying information - you will need to satisfy a stringent identification check when you lodge the application form.
- Lodge your application form **in person** at Australia Post Offices throughout Western Australia. For more details on where to apply, visit the Australia Post website at www.auspost.com.au to locate an outlet with photographic facilities.

If you need more information about making an application:

- Speak to your volunteer organisation
- Check the Working with Children website at www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au, or
- Phone the Working with Children Screening Unit on 62178100 or 1800 883 979 (country callers).

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK	
NAME	JOHN CITIZEN
DATE OF BIRTH	1 JANUARY 1970
WESTERN AUSTRALIA NOTICE NUMBER	1234567
EXPIRY DATE	1 JULY 2008
Signature Area	Picture Area
Criminal History Evaluation Card	