

BALLARAT ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS (BAS)



Working with Children Check Guidelines Screening and Recruitment of BAS Staff

Rationale

Ballarat Associated Schools Incorporated (BAS) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. All children participating at and involved in BAS events have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of our children and young people will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. BAS has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Purpose

The WWC Check guidelines have a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at BAS Events and Activities against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes, as well as the policies and procedures of each member school.

BAS is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students, and the creation of a just and respectful environment that supports the health and wellbeing of our member school communities. All people involved in our Association have a duty of care, a moral obligation and a shared responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of the community.

The purpose to ensure children and young people are protected against sexual abuse is a community- wide responsibility, and schools have particular responsibilities to ensure children and young people are safe in their care, and to actively and intentionally work to eliminate all forms of abusive behaviour towards children.

Scope

These guidelines apply to the whole BAS community in supporting safe environments for all children and young people.

It concerns the responsibilities of BAS in complying with the provisions of the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic.), which was enacted 'to assist in protecting children from sexual and physical harm by providing for screening of persons who work with, or care for, children' (section 1(b)).

Teachers with current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration are exempt from obtaining a Working with Children Check (WWC Check) as the VIT registration process includes screening for suitability for child-related work. Ministers of religion and those performing duties of a religious vocation are required to have a WWC Check.

Definitions

For the purposes of the *Worker Screening Act 2020*, **children** are those under the age of 18 years.

Child-related work is work involved in one of the occupational fields listed in the Act, and usually involves direct contact with a child where that contact is not directly supervised by another person.

Note: Work is **not** child-related work by reason only of occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

Direct contact is any contact between a person and a child that involves:

- physical contact
- face-to-face oral communication.

Direct supervision is supervision of a person's contact with children, rather than of their work in general. Supervising another person's contact with children must be personal and immediate, but can include a brief absence such as taking a telephone call in another room.

Unsupervised child-related work is any type of activity where an adult has 'direct contact' with a student or students/young people that is not directly supervised by a member of staff.

Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) is the registration body for teachers in Victoria.

Working with Children Check (WWC Check) is required by persons doing child-related work in Victoria as paid workers or volunteers, where that work is not directly supervised by someone with an appropriate check. A WWC Check is not required by teachers who hold current VIT registration.

Principles

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety and wellbeing within our Association:

- all students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect
- a safe environment is required to protect children and young people from harm, and to prevent staff or other adults from abusing their position of authority and trust
- our Association's commitment to the protection of children is embedded in the culture of our member schools, and our individual and collective responsibility to take action is understood and accepted
- each child and young person's ongoing safety and wellbeing must be the primary focus of all decision-making.

At BAS, the leaders, teachers and all staff must be fully self-aware of, and comply with, their professional obligations and responsibilities with regard to the protection of children.

Guidelines

BAS will apply screening processes in the recruitment of all employees, officials, contractors and prospective volunteers involved in student-connected work. All employees, officials, contractors and prospective volunteers are provided with copies of the association's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

BAS will ensure that a current WWC Check is held by all persons engaged by BAS to be involved in Association events and activities who are required to do so. BAS will maintain accurate and up-to-date WWC Check and VIT registers for staff, contractors, officials and volunteers. This duty is allocated to BAS Executive Officer, Sharyn Canny.

Where staff, officials, coaches and volunteers involved in BAS activities and events are engaged by a member school, it is the responsibility of that school, the Head of Sport, to sight and check the WWC Check of that person. This includes all students over the age of 18.

When recruiting and selecting employees, officials, contractors and prospective volunteers involved in student-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- Confirm the minimum standard for background checks of employees and volunteers of BAS and its member is the law as it applies in Victoria.
- BAS undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and prospective volunteers which aims to:
- Promote and protect the safety of all children and young people who participate in the activities of BAS;
- Identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share BAS's values and commitment to protect children and young people; and
- Prevent a person from working at BAS if they pose an unacceptable risk to children / young people.

BAS requires staff and prospective volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with BAS.

Who requires a WWC Check?

Only adults doing child-related work (and who are not otherwise exempt under the Act) need a WWC Check. This applies to both paid and volunteer workers engaged by BAS. Not everyone who has contact with children needs a WWC Check. More information about the occupations requiring a WWC Check is included in the [list of occupational fields](#).

A WWC Check is required:

- by adults engaged in child-related work within the meaning of the Act, which includes engaging in voluntary work and providing practical training as well as paid employment. This includes current students of BAS member schools over the age of 18.
- if the work usually involves direct contact with a child or children
- when the contact with children is not occasional direct contact and is not incidental to the work
- for clergy and those performing duties of a religious vocation, including the parish priest, who must show the principal or delegate their current WWC Check
- by volunteers, including members of the school's advisory committees or boards, and those involved in practical training, such as student teachers.

Specific to BAS:

- All BAS staff and Board members require a WWC Check; and
- The following key event personnel must have a valid WWC Check:
 - Those paid by BAS for their services; (including students enrolled in BAS member schools over the age of 18);
 - Prospective volunteers; and

- Anyone else who BAS staff feel requires a WWC Check due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for BAS.

All staff, officials and volunteers etc. are responsible for obtaining their own WWC Check and any associated costs; however, our Association must ensure that valid checks are held by all those requiring one by maintaining a current and up-to-date WWC Check register. The currency of WWC Checks by all staff is monitored by BAS Executive Officer whose role specifically includes maintenance of the WWC Check register and related tasks.

The BAS Executive Officer is required to satisfactorily complete the *Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting* online course each year to continue in their role. Schools may also refer the BAS EO to, and provide access to, other training modules and courses relevant to this position.

PLEASE NOTE: Officials, referees and volunteers, engaged by BAS, will never be charged with the **direct supervision** of students involved. Schools will remain responsible for the adequate and active supervision of their students engaged in BAS activities and will appoint appropriate staffing to manage this.

With this in mind, adult officials and volunteers engaged by BAS will be required to hold a current WWC Check but will not necessarily be required to produce a National Police Check. Schools will be required to confirm this commitment in a Statement of Commitment to be completed and signed by each school at the commencement of the school year.

- **External references**

Victorian [Worker Screening Act 2020](#)

Working with Children Check Victoria [website](#)

Policy owner	Ballarat Associated Schools
Approving body/individual	BAS Inc.
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