Working With Children Check Policy

RATIONALE

St James Primary School works to ensure that non-teaching staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors are of suitable character and do not have a relevant criminal record that poses an unjustifiable risk to children.

Teaching Staff and Casual Relief Teachers who are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) have undergone criminal record checks via their annual registration.

This policy and associated requirements apply to all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, contractors, volunteers, visitors and any person authorised by the school to participate in child connected works.

GOAL

St James Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment and takes active steps to ensure any person authorised to conduct 'child connected works' does not pose a risk to their safety or welfare. To achieve this, the school implements screening processes, including Working With Children Checks (WWCC), to assess and verify their suitability

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Definitions:

Child Connected Work: Work authorised by the school's Principal, members of the Leadership Team or Board performed by an adult in the school environment, while children are present or are reasonably expected to be present.

Child Related Works: Work within one or more of the occupational fields defined in the Act where the contact with a child is unsupervised, direct, and part of a person's duties.

Working With Children's Check: Screens an applicant or cardholder's criminal record. If the Check identifies serious sexual, violent or drug offences, or adverse professional reports, the department assesses these to determine if the person will pass the 'Check'.

Process:

- Members of the school's Leadership Team will ensure that any person authorised to participate in 'child connected works' is aware of their requirement to maintain a current Working With Children's Check (WWCC) and has provided a copy of their check to the school.

NOTE# St James Primary School acknowledges that exemptions do exist under the Victorian Government's Working With Children's Act 2005; however, mandates that all non-teaching staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors maintain a current WWCC and provide a copy to the school prior to being authorised to participate.

- Upon receipt of the WWCC, school Administrators will ensure that the check is current, within 5 years of issue, and will enter the relevant information into the school's database.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of non-teaching staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors to:

- Apply for and receive a WWCC prior to expressing an interest to participate in 'child connected works'. The school will provide guidance on how to apply for a WWCC to all new parents and staff members to the school;
- Provide St James Primary School with the successful WWCC card prior to commencement;
- Have St James Primary School listed in the 'Details of Organisation;
- Notify the principal immediately if there has been a change in circumstances, ie…, if they have been charged or found guilty of a relevant offence or if their WWCC has been suspended;
- Apply for a new WWCC before their card expires.

Employee and Volunteer WWCC

Non-Teaching Staff and Contractors are required to maintain an 'Employee WWCC'. The reimbursement of fees incurred by individuals required to apply for an 'Employee WWCC' will be at the discretion of the school Principal.

Volunteers and Visitors are required to maintain a 'Volunteer WWCC'. These checks are free of charge. Volunteers and Visitors can apply to change from a 'Volunteer WWCC' to an 'Employee WWCC' via the Working with Children Check Website.

Non-Teaching Staff and Contractors are not permitted to conduct 'child connected works' with a 'Volunteer WWCC'.

CRT, Teacher and Police Volunteer

Casual Relief Teachers engaged by the school must ensure that they maintain current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Registration and provide a copy of their Registration Card upon entry to the school. Where the school employs CRT's via an agency, this requirement will be communicated to the agency prior to engagement.

Parents or other members of the school community who maintain current VIT Registration do not require a WWCC. They must; however, provide a copy of their Registration Card to the school prior to being authorised to participate in 'child connected works'.

Parents or other members of the school community who are acting members of Victoria Police or the Australian Federal Police (AFP) do not require a WWCC. They must; however, provide a copy of their identification prior to being authorised to participate in 'child connected works'.

Maintaining Records

St James Primary School will ensure the currency of WWCC at the commencement of each school year and periodically (once a term) subsequent to this. The assessment of currency will identify WWCCs that have expired or are due to expire. The school will make direct contact with the WWCC cardholder prior to expiry to inform them that their WWCC requires renewal.

NOTE# Non-teaching staff, contractors, volunteers or visitors are not permitted to participate in 'child connected works' where their WWCC has expired. They will only be permitted to recommence 'child connected works' upon successfully reapplying for a WWCC and by providing a copy of their new WWCC to the school.

Privacy

St James Primary School applies stringent practices to ensure the security and privacy of all information collected, used, retained or disposed of in accordance with requirements of the Victorian Government's Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's School Development Plan.

This policy was reviewed in 2017 and ratified by the Education Board.

References:

Ministerial Order No. 870- Child Safe Standards -Managing the risk of child abuse in schools
Victorian Government Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
Victorian Government Working With Children's Act 2005
Working With Children Check Website