



Fact Sheet: Working with Children Check (WWCC)

A Guide for Parish Volunteers

Firstly, we would like to thank you for expressing an interest to take part in the parish community as a volunteer, it is the collective initiative of people such as yourself that ensures the growth and connectedness of the Catholic Church.

Before actively participating in your chosen ministry, you may need to have some background screening checks completed to ensure you are suitable for the ministry selected, this is due to legal and ethical reasoning.

Working with Children Checks (WWCC) are required for the following child related roles (please note, this is not an exhaustive list):

- Acolytes,
- Adult Altar Servers,
- Band Leaders (where there are children's musicians in the band),
- Catechists,
- Children' Liturgy Leaders,
- Choir Director (where there are children in the choir),
- Clergy, - Ensemble Leaders (where there are children in the ensemble), -
- Music Coordinators and Directors (where there are children in the music group),
- Playgroup Coordinators and Supervisors,
- Religious Persons delivering services to children,
- Sacramental Programme Coordinators,

- Sacramental Programme Team Members,
- Voice Trainers (where children are receiving a direct service from the voice trainers),
- Youth Group Leaders, and
- Youth Ministry Coordinator and Team Members,
- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adult Coordinator (where the person receiving the Rite of Christian Initiation is a child).

There may be other roles in the diocese that are considered child-related which need to be assessed on a case by-case basis. There may also be some exemptions that apply; however, exemptions need to be applied cautiously. It is **your** responsibility to advise the Diocese if you are subject to an exemption. If in doubt, please seek advice from the parish office who can liaise with the Diocesan Office of Professional Standards and Safeguarding to provide clarification if unsure.

WHAT IS A WWCC?

A WWCC is an ongoing assessment of a person's eligibility to work or volunteer with children. It is a prerequisite for anyone in paid or voluntary child-related work in NSW. The clearance varies from each state and territory in Australia; for NSW it is referred to as a WWCC and is governed by the Office of the Children's Guardian. It involves a national criminal history check and a review of findings of relevant workplace misconduct.

HOW DOES THE DIOCESE DETERMINE IF A ROLE IS CHILD RELATED?

The Diocese applies the appropriate legislative requirement, the Regulatory Framework is comprised of the following legislation:

- Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 No 51 (the Act)
- Child Protection (Working With Children) Regulations 2013 (the Regulation)
- Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2015

Under Section 6(1) of the Act, a worker is engaged in child-related work for the purposes of this Act if:

- a) The worker is engaged in work as defined by the regulations to be child-related work that has direct contact with children, or
- b) The worker is engaged in work in a specifically defined child-related role.

Direct contact is defined in Section 6(4) of the Act as:

- a) Physical contact, or
- b) Face-to-face contact.

In accordance with the Act, 'children' are considered to be persons under the age of 18 years.

It is important that the definition is applied carefully, as those who are not in a child-related role should not be required to obtain a Working with Children Check, as the Diocese has no right to receive information about a person's Working With Children Check if they are not in a child-related role.

The definition to be applied is as follows:

- Where there is physical or face-to-face contact with a child, and
- The person's role in the religious organisation involves activities primarily related to children. (i.e., the contact should not be of an incidental nature).

A person under the age of 18 is not eligible for a Working With Children Check.

WHY IS A WWCC NECESSARY?

Not only is it a legislative requirement for child-related roles (as set out above) it is one of many tools that is employed to ensure that organisations are child safe. The Diocese of Wollongong is a recognised employer by the OCG for the purposes of the working with children check and as such can verify checks of volunteers that come through.

HOW DO I OBTAIN A WWCC?

You can apply for the WWCC online (or in person if you do not have the ability) via the [WWCC website](#), you must then attend a Service NSW or motor registry with your ID Documents and confirmation email, following payment you will receive an email with your WWCC details (once you have been cleared).

ONCE I RECEIVE MY WWCC NUMBER WHAT DO I DO WITH IT?

Once you have completed the requisite Teacher Engagement Form or Ministry Engagement Form you will need to pass your WWCC number along with your full name and date of birth onto the parish office. This information is then shared with the verification team for the Catholic Diocese who will run a clearance on the number to ensure the details are correct and you are suitable to assist in your volunteer role which is child related.

HOW LONG DOES THE OCG TAKE TO PROCESS MY WWCC?

WWCC can take up to 4 weeks to be processed.

HOW LONG IS MY WWCC VALID FOR AND WHAT HAPPENS IF A BAR IS PLACED ON MY WWCC?

The WWCC is valid for 5 years and during this time, cleared applicants will be subject to ongoing monitoring by the Office of the Children's Guardian. Under Section 23 of the Act, The Children's Guardian must cancel the working with children check clearance of a person if the Children's Guardian becomes aware that the person is a disqualified person or the Children's Guardian is satisfied that the person poses a risk to the safety of children. Under s23(4) of the Act, the Children's Guardian must advise the notifiable persons of any known employers of the affected individual that the individual's clearance has been cancelled.

