

Castle Cove Public School Parents & Citizen's Association

Working with Children Check (WWCC) Policy Paid Employees and Volunteers

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to ensure that the Castle Cove Public School (CCPS) P&C Association adheres to its statutory obligations to employees and volunteers when working with children within a school environment.

The purpose of the WWCC policy is to protect children by not permitting certain persons to engage in child-related work and requiring those that can to have Working With Children Check (WWCC) clearances. **This policy covers individuals employed by CCPS P&C and P&C volunteers who have face-to-face contact with children unless exempt under the legislation.** It does not cover activities organised by the school.

Statutory obligation

In New South Wales, there is legislation governing the prerequisites for those working in child-related work: Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (the **Child Protection Act**) and Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 (the **Child Protection Regulation**). The Office of Children's Guardian is responsible for administering WWCC clearances in NSW. In some cases, a school Principal may impose further or additional requirements on volunteers.

CCPS P&C Association is responsible for ensuring all its employees and volunteers have a WWCC clearance if required under the Child Protection Act. The Act has exemptions for certain volunteer functions. The phase-in period for primary schools is 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Employing any person or engaging any volunteer that the CCPS P&C knows or has reasonable cause to believe does not hold a WWCC clearance or has been barred (even on an interim basis) from working with children carries penalties up to \$11,000 under Section 9 of the Child Protection Act.

Positions requiring WWCC clearances

The following CCPS P&C employee roles and volunteers require a WWCC clearance given they have **face to face or supervisory contact with children** or are in positions of authority.

- All paid employees and contractors, e.g. band conductors/tutors, clothing pool etc.
- Volunteers who are P&C executive office bearers, WWCC officers, and the coordinators of the second hand clothing pool and band sub-committees.
- Volunteers at any camp or offsite run by the P&C, e.g. band camps.
- Volunteers who are responsible for supervising children, e.g. band rehearsal coordinators, sports committee volunteers, etc.

Castle Cove Public School Parents & Citizen's Association

- Volunteers who regularly work in the second hand clothing pool.
- Volunteers who are not close family members of children at the school. A close family member is roughly defined as a sibling, parent, step-parent, grandparent, step-grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew of the person.
- Volunteers that provide formal mentoring or intimate, personal care of children with a disability.
- Private tutors or teachers whom the P&C endorses to the school community to provide lessons or classes on an ongoing basis to children for a fee.

If there is any doubt about whether a WWCC is required, the WWCC Officer should be consulted first and, if necessary, a resolution should be made at a P&C General Meeting.

Clearances for the above activities will be phased in throughout 2017, with mandatory clearances required by 31 March 2018.

Exemptions

Apart from the roles listed above, CCPS P&C parent volunteers DO NOT require a WWCC clearance if they are not supervising children as part of the role.

A bookkeeper employed by the P&C Association, who works from home and does not have face to face contact with the students as part of the role (e.g. the bookkeeper doesn't attend the school as part of their role).

Strategies to keep children safe

In addition to requiring WWCC clearances for certain roles, the P&C also has the following best practice guidelines to keep children safe and which should be used by P&C volunteers at all times.

- No volunteer should be alone with a child. Always make sure that another adult OR at least two children are present at the same time.
- Keep the door open if inside a room.
- To minimise misunderstandings, avoid and discourage physical contact with children.

Note: exceptions apply to being alone with your own children.

Band Camps

- If no-one is in the room, wait outside the room in line of sight until others arrive. Do not enter a room with just one child.
- Do not leave the tutor on their own in the room with the children.
- If children need to leave the room to go to the toilet or to fetch someone, always send three children. Do not accompany the child on your own. Do not send a child alone.
- Don't let students leave the tutorial early. Always wait until the end of the tutorial to dismiss them.
- For overnight volunteers, the teachers are usually the first port of call for students but if you are required to help during the night, always make sure you are accompanied by another

Castle Cove Public School Parents & Citizen's Association

adult.

Second Hand Clothing Pool

- If a child is trying on clothing, please stay outside the room and seek assistance from accompanying parents with clothes fittings.

Sub-committee and Event Coordinator responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each sub-committee/event coordinator to notify parents:

- whether volunteers are required to have a WWCC or not for their activity/event, e.g. via emails, on promotional materials;
- how to apply for a WWCC;
- the need to provide their WWCC details to the WWCC Officer at least 7 days in advance of the event.

A list of verified volunteers will be sent back to the sub-committee/event coordinator before the event takes place.

Employment advertisements and contracts

All child related employment positions advertised by the P&C Association must clearly state the WWCC clearance requirements.

Employment contracts should include a clause that stipulates the need to maintain a cleared WWCC during the course of employment, at their own cost. If the person does not apply or is barred, they cannot be employed or continue to be employed by the CCPS P&C.

How to apply for a WWCC

Employees and volunteers who are required to have a WWCC clearance must apply for their own WWCC clearance. The CCPS P&C cannot apply for a WWCC clearance on behalf of any employee or volunteer.

Employees and volunteers required to have a WWCC should undertake the following:

- STEP 1:** Apply online at www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/check. Unless you are a paid employee or contractor, ensure that 'VOLUNTEER' is selected otherwise the check will incur a fee but is free for volunteers. Once the form is submitted, an application number will be provided.
- STEP 2:** Take the application number and proof of identity **IN PERSON** to a NSW Motor Registry, Government Access Centre, or Service NSW office (closest one is 313 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood). The proof of identity required is the same as for a NSW photo driver licence. If in paid work, the fee must also be paid. You will be emailed a WWCC Clearance Letter after this.

Castle Cove Public School Parents & Citizen's Association

STEP 3: Forward your **WWCC Clearance Letter (or WWCC number and full name) AND date of birth to the P&C WWCC Officer** at wwccCCPSpandc@gmail.com. The WWCC Officer will confidentially verify your WWCC – **the WWCC will last for 5 years**. *By providing the WWCC Clearance letter and your other personal information to CCPS, you consent to this being used by CCPS for the purpose of verifying your working with children status.*

STEP 4: The WWCC Officer will provide a list of verified volunteers to the sub-committee/event coordinator. Only verified employees and volunteers will be allowed direct access to children.

Further information on the WWCC or how to apply can be found here:

<http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check/apply/apply>

<http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check/resources>

CCPS P&C Responsibilities

Compliance with the Child Protection Act is the responsibility of the entire P&C Association and its Office Bearers collectively. The CCPS P&C must take the following actions to ensure they are compliant with the Child Protection Act:

- **Appoint a P&C Officer** at each AGM who will be responsible for administering the P&C's WWCC policy. This officer should be one of the Office Bearers.
- **Appoint two officers as official contacts** with the Office of the Children's Guardian at each AGM. The P&C shall confirm to the Principal in writing that these two officers possess WWCC clearances.
- **Register online as an employer** with the Office of Children's Guardian.
- The WWCC Officers are responsible for:
 - **Verifying the clearances of all paid employees and volunteers** required to have a WWCC clearance at www.check.kids.nsw.gov.au. The P&C Association **MUST** verify the employee/volunteer's clearance online before the employee/volunteer starts work. Paper copies of an employee or volunteer's WWCC clearance should not be accepted as proof of WWCC clearance under any circumstances. **Only the nominated WWCC Officers can conduct online verifications** as this is confidential information.
 - **Confirming in writing to the Principal that employees have been verified** as cleared by the NSW Children's Guardian (prior to the start of the work).
 - **Maintaining a WWCC Register** with records of all employees and volunteers with a WWCC clearance.
 - **Removing or barring** any employee or volunteer that fails to gain a WWCC clearance from child-related work.
 - **Ensuring the maintenance of WWCC clearances for those required to have them.** When an employee or volunteer's WWCC clearance expires, he or she needs to obtain

Castle Cove Public School Parents & Citizen's Association

a new WWCC clearance and the clearance should be rechecked. Note: at present, employees and volunteers will receive a notification prior to their clearances expiring, but employers (including P&C Associations) will not.

- **Reporting regularly** to the P&C Association.

Refusal to obtain a check or barred notification procedures

If a paid employee or volunteer refuses to obtain or does not receive clearance of their WWCC then it is mandatory that the individual is barred from child-related work.

If the WWCC Officers receive notification from the Children's Guardian that an existing employee or volunteer has been barred from working with children, the WWCC Officers will immediately notify that person that they cannot continue in child-related work. In the case of an employee, that person will be terminated from employment, according to the conditions of their employment contract.

Any notification about barred volunteers or employees will be passed on to the School Principal.

Record-keeping

The CCPS P&C Association is required to keep a register of its employees or volunteers who required a WWCC clearance including their:

- full name
- date of birth
- start date for work
- status (paid or volunteer)
- WWCC clearance number and expiry date
- date and outcome of online verification

The WWCC Register is confidential and can only be accessed by the two approved Officer Bearers of the P&C Association. It must be stored safely and securely for at least 7 years. The WWCC office bearers are responsible for maintaining the register and securing the username and password of the CCPS P&C employer details with the Office of the Children's Guardian. The Register must be reviewed annually.

These records may be electronic or in hard copy format, but must be made available if required for inspection. If there is a notification by a reporting body, the CCPS P&C Association must keep all records of allegations, investigations, and findings about the notification for at least 30 years (check with the Office of Children's Guardian for any changes to this requirement), unless the records are given to the Office of the Children's Guardian. If a reporting body or any successor to a reporting body ceases to exist all records must be lodged with the Office of the Children's Guardian before the body or successor ceases to exist.

Castle Cove Public School Parents & Citizen's Association

Questions

If you require assistance or have any queries about this policy please contact the WWCC Officer via the secretary at ccspandcsecretary@gmail.com

This WWCC policy was adopted by the Castle Cove Public School P&C Association General Meeting, ***Date TBC****

Signed President: _____ NAME: _____

Witnessed Principal: _____ NAME: _____

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