

# Working with Children Check

## General Information Guide

English

### What is the Working with Children Check?

The Working with Children Check (Check) assists in protecting children from sexual and physical harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them are subject to a screening process.

#### Who needs a Check?

Under the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act), you need a Check if you meet ALL of the following five conditions for child-related work:

1. You are an adult who 'works' with children aged under 18 years of age. The term 'work' includes engaging in voluntary work and providing practical training as well as paid employment.
2. You are working with children at or for one of the services, places or bodies, or in one of the activities listed in the Act.
3. Your work usually involves direct contact with children.
4. The contact you have with children is not occasional direct contact that is incidental to your work\*.
5. You are not exempt from having a Check\*\*.

\*Under the Act, you do not need a Check if your work involves only occasional direct contact with a child that is incidental to your work.

\*\*Details are on the Working with Children website, under [Exemptions](#).

It is an offence to engage in child-related work without having a current Check. However, once you have applied for a Check, you may be able to start child-related work (see below - 'Can I work during the screening process?').

Your organisation is also committing an offence if they ask you to start child-related work before you have applied for a Check.

#### How do I apply?

- Go to the Check website and select either 'Apply in Victoria' or 'Apply from interstate'
- Fill in the online application form, providing details about yourself and the organisations where you'll be doing child-related work
- Victorian applicants can verify their identity online. The [Interstate applicant information sheet](#) explains how interstate applicants can verify their identity and submit their application
- Victorian applicants finalise their application at a participating Australia Post outlet using the barcode and instructions that will be emailed to them.

It is an offence to use a Volunteer Check for paid child-related work.

#### Can I work during the screening process?

The Act allows most people to do child-related work during the screening process. However, by law, you **must not** if you:

- have been charged with, convicted or found guilty of a sexual, violent or drug offence listed in clause 2 of Schedule 3 of the Act
- have been given a Negative Notice and not subsequently passed the Check
- will be supervising a child in employment under the *Child Employment Act 2003*
- will be working in a service regulated by the *Children's Services Regulations 1996* or in an education and care service under the Education and Care Services National Law 2010 (Victoria)
- are required to report or be supervised under the:
  - *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*
  - *Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005*
  - *Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009*.

Ask your organisation about working during the screening process, as some organisations only allow applicants to work after they have passed the Check.

#### What is checked?

You are screened for sexual, violent and drug offences and adverse professional conduct determinations and findings made by the agencies listed in the Act. The list of [offences](#) is on our website.

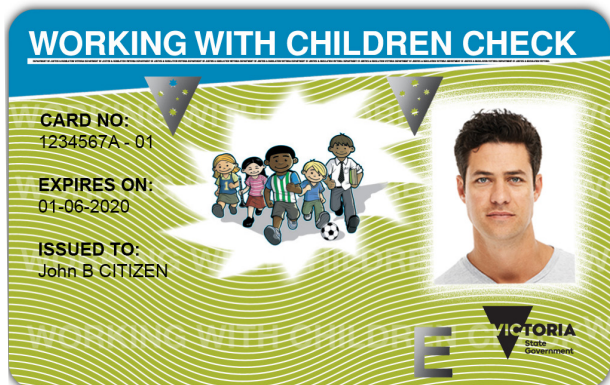
The protection of children from sexual or physical harm is the paramount consideration for any decision made under the Act.

## How do I know if I have passed the Check?

The Department of Justice and Regulation notifies both you and your organisation if you pass the Check.

The Check is valid for five years unless the department suspends or revokes it.

You must apply to renew your Check before it expires if you want to continue doing child-related work.



Sample Check card

## What if I have a criminal record or an adverse professional conduct determination or finding?

Not all offences and adverse professional conduct decisions mean that you pose an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children.

Whether you pass or fail the Check depends on the type of determination or finding you have been subject to, the offence you have committed, and the circumstances surrounding these matters.

It is unlawful to apply for a Check if you are required to report or be supervised under the:

- *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*
- *Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005*
- *Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009*.

You may wish to seek independent legal advice about your personal circumstances.

## What if I don't pass the Check?

If the department believes you pose an unjustifiable risk to children, it will notify you that it intends to prohibit you from working with children by issuing you an Interim Negative Notice.

This gives you the opportunity to write to the department and ask it to consider the reasons why you think you should pass the Check.

If, after the department considers your reasons, you fail the Check, the department will issue you with a Negative Notice prohibiting you from working with children.

You can appeal the department's decision by applying to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) within 28 days of the date on the Negative Notice.

## How is my privacy protected?

The department is bound by privacy and confidentiality laws. The *Working with Children Act 2005*, *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Health Records Act 2001* regulate how it collects and uses personal information.

The department must notify your organisation/s of any interim or final decision made about your application, if your Check is suspended or revoked or if you withdraw an application. If you remove any organisation/s from your records, the department has the power to notify these organisations that you have removed them. The department will not provide your organisation with the details of your criminal or professional conduct records.

## Is the Working with Children Check the same as the Police Check?

No. The Working with Children Check screens your criminal and professional conduct records and rigorously assesses any relevant sexual, violent or drug offences over your lifetime. The Police Check lists offences at a given point in time.

The Working with Children Check monitors a cardholder's criminal and professional conduct records for the life of their card. The Police Check does not. As the checks are quite different, some organisations require both checks. More details on the differences between the checks are on the Working with Children website, under '[How is a Police Check different?](#)'

## More Information

**Website** [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)

**Email** [workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au)

**Customer Support Line** 1300 652 879  
8.30am – 5pm, Monday – Friday (except public holidays)

**TTY** 13 36 77

**Speak & Listen** 1300 555 727



If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the Working with Children Customer Support Line.

**Large print** Email [workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au)

*This information is intended as a general guide only. It is not intended to be given as legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. It is recommended that you obtain legal advice relevant to your particular circumstances.*