



Frequently Asked Questions: Working With Children Checks (WWCC)

The Catholic Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes (Diocese) is wholly committed to ensuring the safety, well-being and dignity of all children, and acknowledges its important legal, moral and spiritual responsibility to create a safe and nurturing environment for children and for those who work and volunteer in our Church communities.

A common question that gets asked, is why a particular person is required to obtain a WWCC when a particular position does not appear to involve child-related work.

Below we have provided the rationale behind why certain positions require a WWCC that may not appear to involve direct child-related work.

Why do I have to get a WWCC?

Volunteers in our Parishes are viewed and considered to hold a position of trust and responsibility within the Diocese. Based on their position of trust and responsibility, the Diocese made an important decision to broaden the list of volunteer positions that are required to hold a WWCC.

It is important that we are informed and not complacent when putting adults in positions of responsibility before children as we have a duty to ensure that anyone put before a child in a ministry position is a safe person and that the Diocese has completed its due diligence.

Everybody who works, volunteers or worships in our Church communities, children and adults alike, deserve to know that the people who hold positions of trust and responsibility have been appropriately vetted and are considered safe and trustworthy people for the position.

Do I have to pay for a WWCC?

Volunteer positions:	\$0
Any paid staff or employee:	\$80 fee

How long does the WWCC last?

The WWCC is valid for 5 years from the date of issue. An email reminder is sent to you from the Office of the Children's Guardian when it is time for renewal. It is important that you keep your contact details up-to-date with the Office of the Children's Guardian so that they can send you reminders.

What are the age requirements for the WWCC?

You must be 18 years and over to apply for a WWCC. Children **under the age of 18** do not require a WWCC even if they are working in a child-related role in either a volunteer or paid capacity. For administrative purposes, a Young Person aged 17 and 9 months, may apply for a WWCC in anticipation of turning 18. The WWCC will not come into effect until they officially turn 18.

What records are checked when applying for the WWCC?

The Office of the Children's Guardian will check your national criminal history records for any **Schedule 1** convictions (spent or unspent) or charges (whether heard, unheard or dismissed) and juvenile records. The Office of the Children's Guardian will also check records to see if any findings of misconduct have been reported or any notifications have been made by the NSW Ombudsman.

When does a volunteer become an official volunteer?

If at anytime a person is volunteering in any of the positions listed in *Fact Sheet "Who Needs a Working With Children Check"*, even if only once, the person is considered to be volunteering and therefore needs to apply for a WWCC as is required for the position.

Can a volunteer commence volunteer work before their WWCC has been Verified?

A volunteer in the Diocese can not engage in their volunteer work until their WWCC has been verified and the result is 'cleared'.

What if a child comes into our Agency/Office with their parents? Do I need a WWCC in case this happens?

This will depend on the nature of your position. If your role is purely administrative and not considered child-related work and you do not have a WWCC, should a colleague come into the office with their child, you will not be required to obtain a WWCC.

If we are renting our Parish hall to a third-party that works with children, are we responsible for ensuring they have valid WWCC?

No. The third-party that you are renting to are required to ensure their employees have current WWCC. The Diocese has relevant contracts that require the third-party to undertake their screening obligations.

Whose responsibility is it to monitor the expiry date of WWCC?

Both the individual and the employer (Parish Priest, Agency Head), are required to monitor the expiry date of a WWCC. The Office of the Children's Guardian will send out a reminder to individuals that their WWCC is due to expire. Employers must also keep a record of the WWCC expiry date and regularly check their Child-Related Activity Register to ensure that personnel have current WWCCs.

Do parent volunteers require a WWCC?

Yes:

Parents (or close relatives: Aunties, Uncles, Grandparents or Siblings) **require a WWCC** if:

- The parent volunteer is in a position in the Church that requires a WWCC (see or *Factsheet: Who Needs a Working With Children Check*).
- The parent is volunteering in a 'working capacity' at an overnight camp involving children.
Note: if the parent and child are participating in the camp together (such as a father/daughter camp) then they are not required to have a WWCC.
- The activity or event involves the intimate personal care of children with a disability with a child that is not their own.
- A parent is working in a formal mentoring position in the church with a child that is not their own.

No:

Parents (or close relatives: Aunties, Uncles, Grandparents or Siblings) **are exempt** from requiring a WWCC under the following circumstances:

- If the parent or close relative is participating in a **same day** church activity or event that their child is also participating in. The exemption applies so that parents can participate in activities and events that their children may normally participate in.

Are contractors, such as plumbers or tradespeople, that come onsite required to obtain a WWCC?

A WWCC is not required for a tradesperson who comes onsite and incidentally comes into contact with children. Contractor companies are responsible for screening their own workers. The Diocese's relevant contracts require contractors to comply with their screening obligations. For further information please refer to the Diocese's *Protocol: Dealing with Volunteers and Contractors*.

What if I don't think that I require a WWCC?

The Priest of the Parish will instruct individuals on a case by case basis as to whether they require a WWCC for their volunteer or paid position. All positions mentioned in the WWCC Guidelines or Fact Sheet will be required to obtain a WWCC. If you are asked to provide a WWCC, and you still think you should not be required to, the Priest of the Parish will make a final decision as to whether you will be able to continue in the position.

Do Parishes need to verify overseas or visiting clergy WWCC?

Parishes do not need to verify overseas or visiting clergy WWCC numbers. The Chancery Office of the Diocese is responsible for verifying clergy WWCC numbers. Visiting clergy and overseas clergy are required to follow the Catholic Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes Visiting Clergy Protocols.

What should we do when overseas volunteers are applying for a WWCC and have different names on different documents?

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) has imposed new proof-of-identity requirements for anyone applying for or renewing their Working With Children Check. Volunteers will need to provide the following document types one commencement of identity document (such as a birth certificate), one primary use in the community document (such as driver licence) and two secondary use in community documents (such as Medicare card and bank card).

Do Parish Secretaries need a WWCC?

Yes, the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes requires all Parish Secretaries to obtain a WWCC.

What are employers' obligations in terms of WWCC?

Employers must verify the WWCCs of each prospective worker who is carrying out child related work **before** engaging or employing them. It is an offence for an employer to employ or engage a worker who has a barred, interim bar or not found WWCC. Employers must keep up-to-date records of workers full name, WWCC number, date of verification and WWCC expiry date.

Office of the Children's Guardian WWCC Resources

The Office of the Children's Guardian website has some great resources available for anyone requiring further information on the WWCC process. Go to: <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/working-children-check/apply-wwcc/frequently-asked-questions-about-wwcc>

For more information

If you have any questions in relation to this document please contact the Safeguarding Office by phone on 02 6853 9341.

Related Documents: *Factsheet: "Who Needs a Working With Children Check?"*