

Lowther Hall

ANGLICAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

All about the girl

Working with Children Check Policy

Date of last review:
Review cycle:
Review and approval responsibility:
Category:
VRQA required:
Locations:

2025
Triennial
Executive – School Council
HR
Yes
O Drive; LowtherLink;
Website; BoardPro



1. DEFINITIONS

Child	An individual who is under the age of 18 years and who is enrolled as a student at Lowther Hall.
Child-connected work	This is work that is authorised by Lowther Hall that is performed by an adult in the Lowther Hall school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
Child safety	Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
WWCC (Working with Children Check)	<p>WWCC (Working with Children Check) – The Victorian Government mandatory minimum checking system that affects adults who work or volunteer with children.</p> <p>The WWCC helps to protect children from sexual or physical harm by checking a person's criminal history for serious sexual, serious violence or serious drug offences.</p> <p>The WWCC Check card is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Valid for 5 years.• Transferable between volunteer organisations and employers.• Free of charge for volunteers but cannot be used for paid employment.• Involves a cost for paid employees. <p>Note: WWCC for paid employment can be used to show suitability for volunteer work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child - a person under 18 years of age.• Child-related work - for the purpose of this policy, child-related work is:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• work under a contract of employment or a contract for services (whether written or unwritten); or• work engaged in as a volunteer at Lowther Hall
Student	A person who is enrolled at or attends Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School
Volunteer	A person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school in the school environment

2. CONTEXT

Children have a right to be safe in their places of learning. As an employer, Lowther Hall has a responsibility to ensure, assess and verify that employees, prospective employees participating in the School's recruitment process, volunteers and external providers are suitable for child-related work.

The **Worker Screening Act 2020** in Victoria plays a crucial role in protecting children and vulnerable people by regulating who can work in child-related roles and with individuals with disabilities. This Act replaced the earlier **Working with Children Act 2005** and informs a screening process designed to prevent unsuitable individuals from working in child-related employment.

The Working with Children Check screening process helps ensure that only those deemed safe and appropriate are allowed to work with children. An organisation is breaking the law if it engages and allows an employee to work with children without a valid WWCC. An individual is also breaking the law if they start child-related work without a valid WWCC.

3. PURPOSE

The objective of this policy is to maintain high levels of safety for Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School students and high standards of professional conduct by ensuring all obligations regarding Working with Children Checks for staff, volunteers and external providers have been met.

- Provide a framework to protect the rights of students to work and learn in a safe environment.
- Establish a culture that has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- Maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our School and ensure that all employees, volunteers and external providers of Lowther Hall are responsible and of sound character.
- Ensure that legislative requirements are implemented consistently across the School and legislation is complied with, specifically the Working with Children Act (2005), the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) and Ministerial Order 1359.
- Inform all employees that the Victorian Government's mandatory minimum requirements apply to adults who work or volunteer with children.
- Provide information on how to apply for a WWCC and ensure that all employees, volunteers and external providers who are required to apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) do so and provide evidence that they have appropriate approvals to work with children in accordance with legislation.
- Confirm that employees, volunteers and external providers have passed the WWCC.
- Ensure that all WWCC documentation is lodged by employees with HR prior to commencement and with the relevant Lowther Hall Team for other staff in line with section 2.5 Accountabilities.
- Our School policies and procedures have been developed to create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities managed or conducted by Lowther Hall during and outside of school hours. This includes school activities that are occurring on school campus, offsite, online, co-curricular, sport activities and programs, excursions, camps, interstate and overseas travel. In the application and implementation of this policy full consideration is required regarding the needs of our students including culture, diversity and age.

Lowther Hall school environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Lowther Hall for use by a child during or outside school hours, and includes:

- our campus at 17 Leslie Road, Essendon
- online school environments including our email and intranet systems; and
- other locations provided by Lowther Hall for our students' use, including locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All people who work directly with children under 18 years of age must have a WWCC unless an exemption applies. WWCC's are carried out by Working with Children Check Victoria. It is an offence to do direct contact child-related work without first obtaining a WWCC.

Section 3 of the Worker Screening Act 2020 Act (Vic) defines "direct contact" as any contact between a person and a child that involves:

- Physical contact;
- Face to face contact;
- Oral, written or electronic contact (this may include conduct of survey, contact by post / letter or phone).

The requirement to comply with this policy extends to all Lowther Hall staff, visitors, volunteers, contractors, external education providers and Council and Committee members.

EMPLOYEES

To provide assistance in the application of this policy we confirm that the following are deemed as employees: Staff employed by the School in casual, part time and full time capacity, sport coaches and assistants, casual and emergency relief teachers, work experience staff, music staff, pre-service teachers and all teaching and professional support staff working both in and out of school hours.

VOLUNTEERS

A volunteer is a person who, without payment or reward, voluntarily engages in:

- School Council and/or Committee functions
- School run activities
- Camps
- Sports programs
- Any other program that has potentially higher levels of student contact than normal, as determined by the Principal.

Volunteering also includes the following:

- Parents and volunteers engaging in work as a volunteer in which their child does not participate.
- Parents and volunteers who support sports teams in which their child does not participate.

VISITORS

Arrival

Upon arrival all visitors must sign in via Lowther Hall Visitor Management System. We require visitors to wear identification stickers provided by the sign-in system for ease of monitoring and identification.

Working with Children Check Requirements

All visitors unaccompanied by a Lowther Hall employee when attending any of our school premises must provide evidence of their current WWCC or their VIT registration. Our sign-in system will validate this as current as part of the process. The only exception is parents attending on parent business.

CURRENT LOWTHER HALL STUDENTS

Lowther Hall students aged under 20 are not required to hold a WWCC for volunteer work organised by or held at the School, unless they are getting paid for this work. All Lowther Hall students aged 20 and above will require a WWCC when volunteering or getting paid by Lowther Hall for work.

EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

External Providers include Contractors, Sub-contractors, Service Providers, External Educators and Self-employed Persons who attend the School (both in and out of School hours) on an ongoing or temporary basis, such as a tradesperson or cleaner are required to have a current and approved Working With Children's Check.

Note: External visitors/contractors/providers who attend Lowther Hall for a one-off meeting, appointment or facilities works, and who are accompanied at all times, are exempt from this process. Sign in protocols apply at Mansion Reception or the Facilities sign in system.

Work, volunteering or service provision can only commence at the School once an individual provides a WWCC card, or receipt, as proof they have a valid WWCC with the Department of Justice. The receipt must be sighted and a copy placed on file in the Human Resources Department.

Employees or volunteers working in the Early Learning Program can only commence at the School with a valid and successful WWCC card; a WWCC receipt as proof of application is not sufficient. Contractors and sub-contractors are required to provide employee WWCC cards, whereas volunteers are required to provide volunteer WWCCs cards as a minimum.

USE OF DIGITAL WWCC CARDS

WWCC Victoria has made securing and using the Working with Children Check accessible with the Digital Working with Children Check. Lowther Hall can verify visitor or contractor WWCC's by using an iPad or phone to scan the QR code on a person's digital WWCC card.

- To check if a digital WWCC Card is current the iPad or phone Lowther Hall staff need to have access to or have the Service Victoria app downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

- When a visitor or contractor is signing in Lowther Hall staff will need to ask the person to open their digital WWCC if they have it, open the camera on the iPad or phone and hold it over the QR code on the person's digital WWCC.
- The QR code will bring up the Service Victoria app and confirm if the person's WWCC is current or not.
- If the person does not have a digital WWCC, they will need to use their physical WWCC card to sign in as per Lowther Hall's process for sighting the physical card.

EXEMPTIONS

The following groups of people are not required to have a WWCC under the WWCC Act:

- Teachers registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching ("VIT"). This is because their VIT compliance provides a higher level of checks than the WWCC.
- Victorian or Australian Federal Police officers, as they are already checked by a similar scheme.
- Employees, who usually live in another state or territory (and hold an equivalent Check from their home state or territory), visiting Victoria to engage in child-related work. (This allowance is only up to 30 days of work within the same calendar year).
- Parents or close relatives volunteering in an activity in which their child participates or normally participates (with the exception of kinship carers).
- People under 18 years of age.
- Students aged 18 or 19 years of age who are undertaking volunteer work organised by, or held at, their educational institution.

Volunteer requirements – volunteers are not exempt

While the above exemptions exist, in line with Lowther Hall's risk-based approach to child safety and protection, and as a matter of best practice and our commitment to child protection, all parents (when not undertaking parent business) and non-parent volunteers providing services to our children are required to undergo a WWCC clearance. This is still required even if the volunteer is expected to be fully supervised at all times. Note - A volunteer WWCC card is required, although a valid employee WWCC card or valid VIT card can be provided instead. Lowther Hall's WWCC procedures are to be applied in line with Lowther Hall Volunteer Management Procedure. The Principal reserves the right to request a WWCC clearance for any individual engaged by the School.

6. POLICY SECTION

6.1. Child Related Work

Child-related work is defined in section 9 of the Act as voluntary or paid work, in any of the occupational categories listed in the Act that usually involves direct contact with a child. For the purposes of the Act, work is not considered "child-related work" if it is only occasional direct work with children that is incidental to the work. The following are considered to be child-related work:

- Mentoring and counselling services for children.
- Direct provision of child health services.
- Clubs, associations, movements, societies or other bodies (including bodies of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature).
- Educational and care services, childcare centres, nanny services and other childcare coaching and tuition services for children.
- Any religious organisation where children form part of the congregation.
- Boarding houses or other residential services for children and overnight camps for children.
- Transport services specifically for children, including School bus services and taxi services for children with a disability and supervision of school road crossings.
- Commercial photography services for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities.
- Commercial talent competitions for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities.
- Commercial entertainment or party services for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities.

A WWCC is required for anyone engaging in 'child-related work' regardless of whether contact with a child is supervised by another person or not. This means even if a volunteer or visitor is supervised by a teacher, they must still have (and provide evidence of) a WWCC if they intend to engage in 'child related work'

6.2. Determine whether you need to apply for a WWCC

If you are in one of the following categories, you do not need a WWCC.

- Under the age of 18 years.
- A student who is 18 or 19 years of age, a student at an educational institution (such as a school, university or TAFE college), and working as a volunteer, either at your educational institution or outside your educational institution under an arrangement made by that institution.
- A parent or close relative of a child who is volunteering in an activity in which that child normally participates (with the exception of kinship carers).
- A Victorian or Australian Federal Police officer.
- A teacher who has current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching ("VIT").
- An employee, who usually lives in another state or territory (and holds an equivalent Check from their home state or territory), visiting Victoria to engage in child-related work.

6.3. How to Apply for a WWCC

To apply for a WWCC there are a few options depending on your identity verification preferences

Services Victoria	<p>This application process involves an online ID-checking process including submitting images of documents to enable verification of identity.</p> <p>Service Victoria Online ID Checking Process Video Note – this process does not include an option for in-person identity verification</p> <p>Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', applicants must ensure they state Melbourne Girls Grammar.</p>
WWCC Victoria/Aust Post	<p>Apply via the Australia Post managed service which provides you the option to verify your identity using Digital ID or in person at a participating Australia Post outlet if you would rather not provide your identity documents online.</p> <p>Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', applicants must ensure they state Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School</p>

- If applying outside Victoria, the following must be posted to the DJCS (Working with Children Check Unit, Department of Justice and Community Services, GPO Box 1915, Melbourne VIC 3001)
- An application summary and receipt or the completed paper form signed in front of a certifying officer.
- A signed statement by a certifying officer confirming they have witnessed your signature.
- Certified true copies of your identification documents.
- Two passport-sized photos, one certified on the back by the certifying officer and the other attached to the application summary or paper form.
- A bank cheque or money order for the fee if you are a paid employee.
- If you have difficulty completing or lodging this form, contact the WWCC Information Line on 1300 652 879.
- Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', applicants must ensure they state Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School.
- Do not sign the application form before lodging - it must be witnessed at Australia Post.
- Lodge your application at a participating Australia Post retail outlet, providing a photo and proof of your identity (and pay the fee if you are applying for an Employee Check).

6.4. What to take with you when lodging via Australia Post (in person identify verification)

- The application summary and receipt that you printed at the end of the online application.
- A passport-size photo of yourself.
- Documents that prove your identity.
- The fee if you are applying for an Employee WWCC Check. This fee is not refundable.
- Volunteer WWCCs are free.

6.5. Lodging your application

- Once you lodge your application it will be sent to the Working with Children Check (WWCC) Unit Victoria to process.
- If lodging at Australia Post, they will verify and issue an application receipt. Lowther Hall will require the application receipt as evidence that an application has been submitted. While the application is being processed.
- The Act allows most people to do child-related work during the screening process that takes place once an application for a Check is lodged.

6.6. What is checked?

When you apply for a WWCC, the following information is checked:

- Your criminal record in all Australian states and territories across your lifetime, including serious sexual, violent and drug offences you have previously been charged with, regardless of the outcome of those charges
- Your professional conduct, which is determined by:
 - The Victorian Institute of Teaching ("VIT")
 - The Suitability Panel, established under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, which makes findings related to the suitability of registered out of home carers
 - The Commission for Children and Young People ("CCYP") through the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Your compliance (if applicable) with historical and current health practitioner legislation
- Your current or historical reporting obligations or orders under the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004, the Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005 or the Serious Offenders Act 2018

6.7. Outcome of the WWCC

There are only two results for a WWCC:

- a Clearance to work with children or
- a Negative Notice barring an applicant from working with children.

6.8. Validation

Validation checks are critical, as the applicant may not have listed the organisation so it may not be informed if the notice is negative. The School will always validate all provided WWCC with the DJCS to confirm its validity and currency before a WWCC is considered cleared. A record of this will be kept in the WWCC register in Synergetic and the employee file for employees.

6.9. Clearance

Where the outcome is a Clearance, the applicant will receive a text message on their mobile phone or email confirming they have passed the Check and will then receive a WWCC Card in the mail. An Employee WWCC Card allows employees to engage in any paid or voluntary child-related work. A Volunteer WWCC Card can only be used for voluntary child-related work. The card, which is valid for five years, has the employee's name, signature, photograph, card number and expiry date.

Cleared applicants will still be subjected to ongoing monitoring to confirm currency and detect any issues on a regular basis, which could lead to the card being suspended or revoked before the five- year expiry date.

6.10. Negative Notice

Where an applicant has failed the WWCC, they will be issued with a Negative Notice. The notice will bar an applicant from engaging in child-related work from the date of notice. A copy of the Notice will be sent to all the organisations listed in the application but they will not be notified of the reasons for the Notice.

Once issued with a Negative Notice, an applicant cannot reapply for a WWCC for five years, unless their circumstances have changed, which can include:

- A pending charge being withdrawn or dismissed by a court
- Being found not guilty of a pending charge
- Being no longer required to report under the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic)
- Being no longer subject to an extended supervision or detention order under the Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005 (Vic) or Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 (Vic).

6.11. Employee's Obligations

Upon receiving clearance, it is compulsory that the employee shows their WWCC Card to Lowther Hall and provides their Card and Application Receipt numbers.

The employee must notify the DJCS via <https://www.service.vic.gov.au/services/working-with-children-check-update-details/home> within 21 days of any changes to their name, residential address, birth date or phone numbers provided in the application.

The employee must notify the DJCS of the details of a new organisation where they are starting child related work within 21 days.

The employee must apply for a new WWCC before their card expires. If the card expires, they must stop working with children immediately (both physically and virtually) and are unable to be present on any School premises or participate in any School activities if their WWCC Card has been suspended during a reassessment.

The employee must not let another person use their WWCC Card for child-related work and must lodge a renewal form before the Card expires.

In limited circumstances, applicants can appeal a Negative Notice by making an application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal within 28 days of the decision.

6.12. Lowther Hall's Obligations

Lowther Hall must:

- Not offer employment to any individual who does not have a valid and current employee type WWCC Card which has been validated directly with the DJCS
- Not engage anyone including employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors who do not have a valid and current WWCC Card which has been validated directly with the DJCS
- Not allow anyone who has a Negative Notice to undertake child-related work, even if they are directly supervised or exempt
- Set up a process to ensure new staff and volunteers notify the DJCS via www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au before commencing child-related work with Lowther Hall, including ensuring that:
- The School's letter of offer/engagement clearly stipulates the employee's/volunteer's obligation; and
- The DJCS confirmation letter and validation check result are retained on file and the date received is recorded in the WWCC Register Synergetic;
- Set up a process to ensure the validity of staff and volunteers' WWCC Cards. This process is to ensure the following:
- When HR are notified by the DJCS that a WWCC is due to expire, they are to follow up with the employee to ensure that the WWCC is renewed.
- The outcome of the check, confirming the status of each employee's WWCC card and the date the check was performed, must be retained on file and the WWCC Register updated.

- Any Negative Notices must be actioned immediately and escalated to the Human Resources Manager for necessary action as the employee receiving a Negative Notice cannot continue to work for the School.
- Any expired cards or other issues must be actioned immediately with the employee and their Line Manager and if not resolved within 24 hours escalated to the Human Resources Department for necessary action. The employee cannot attend any Lowther Hall school site or participate in School activities until the issue is resolved.
- Any incidences of employees with expired WWCCs are to be escalated to the Human Resources Department and the Principal.
- Employees engaged in paid work must have an Employee WWCC Card and not a Volunteer WWCC Card.

7. POLICY COMPLIANCE

7.1. Policy Breach

A breach of this policy or procedure may lead to disciplinary action. All breaches, near misses and risks related to this policy should be reported to the Human Resources Department.

7.2. Policy Compliance Monitoring

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Human Resources Department and this may include independent audits and reviews.

7.3. Penalties

It is an offence to work with children without a valid WWCC Card. It is an offence for anyone to apply for or engage in child-related work if they have been issued a Negative Notice. The maximum penalty is two years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

Lowther Hall must take reasonable steps to ensure they do not engage or continue to engage a person in child-related work who does not hold a valid WWCC Card. The penalty for organisations is significant.

7.4. WWCC Register Monitoring

To assist with WWCC monitoring, Passtab is used for recording and monitoring visitors and contractors when they attend site. The Human Resources Department perform regular audits of WWCC validity to ensure compliance.

Any WWCC that cannot be validated at the time of a visitor signing in using Lowther Hall sign-in system will be managed by Reception staff to prevent access to the School, with escalation to the Human Resources Department

7.5. Accountabilities, including Record Keeping

The below table details Lowther Hall departments and staff accountable for ensuring that WWCCs are valid and current as per the below classifications. WWCC record keeping is also required to be undertaken and stored as per the appropriate register.

CLASSIFICATION	ACCOUNTABLE	REGISTER
Staff – and Casual Relief Teachers	Human Resources Department	Synergetic – HR module VIT – Employer Portal
Agency staff (including CRTs)	Various depending on work area recruiting the agency staff member Deputy Heads in Blinkbonnie House, Raymond House and Senior School are responsible for daily organisation.	Passtab
Volunteers	Community Office	Passtab

CLASSIFICATION	ACCOUNTABLE	REGISTER
Contractors (long term and short term / occasional)	Director of Facilities and Safety	Passtab
Visitors, inc. guest speakers / incursion leaders relating to events and those visiting offsite for Lowther Hall activities/programs/camps	Event Organiser	Passtab or documentation supplied from external suppliers
School Council and External Committees	Executive Assistant to the Principal	Current – Synergetic Community module Planned – Passtab

7.6. Privacy

Lowther Hall applies privacy principles when collecting, using, disclosing and storing personal information in accordance with Australian Privacy Principles and Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

A copy of the School's Privacy Statement is available on the School website.

7.7. References

Website: <https://www.vic.gov.au/working-with-children-check>

Contact: <https://www.vic.gov.au/contact-WWC> WWCC Check Information Line **1300 652 879**
Department of Justice and Community Services GPO Box 1915
Melbourne VIC 3001

8. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND LEGISLATION

8.1. Lowther Hall policy and procedure alignment

- Child Safe Standards and Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy
- Code of Conduct (staff)
- Complaints Policies
- Enterprise Agreement
- Employment Contract
- Privacy Policy
- Record Management Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Visitor Registration Policy

8.2. Related legislation

The following legislation, standards and regulations apply and this policy aligns with these mandated requirements:

- [Ministerial Order 1359](#)
- [The Worker Screening Act 2020 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Children Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\) including the Australian Privacy Principles](#)
- [Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 \(Vic\) including the Victorian Information Privacy Principles.](#)

Further information on this policy can be obtained from: the Human Resources Manager

9. POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This Policy will be reviewed on every three years or more frequently, if required, following significant incidents and to keep up-to-date with changes to laws and government policies. This Policy is to be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources and Strategic Operations, the Executive Team and the School Council.

Any significant changes to this Policy must be approved by the Principal and the School Council.