# Purpose

Wannon Water is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

This procedure:

* Provides guidance on the requirement to possess a Working with Children Check (WWCC).
* Provides clarity regarding reportable behaviour.
* Outlines the process of reporting child abuse and neglect.

# Scope

This procedure applies to all Wannon Water employees, student placement programs, contractors, consultants, and its Board of Directors. This includes unpaid volunteers working on behalf of Wannon Water, where there is a direct interaction with children.

# Procedure

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety & Wellbeing Incident Report.

## Working with Childrens Check (WWCC)

To ensure child safe environments, Wannon Water employees and representatives who are engaged in any child-related work on behalf of the organisation are required to have a current Victorian Employee Working with Children Check (WWCC) and a National Police Check.

If an employee or other workplace participant meets all five of the following criteria, then a WWCC is required:

* Engaged in child-related work as defined in the *Worker Screening Act 2020*, which includes engaging in voluntary work and providing practical training as well as paid employment.
* Working at or for one of the services, places, or bodies, or in one of the activities listed in the Act.
* Work which usually involves direct contact with a child or children. Direct contact means physical or face-to-face contact or written (including postal) oral or electronic communication.
* The contact with children is not occasional direct contact and is not incidental to the work.
* Not otherwise exempt from needing a WWCC under the Act.

A WWCC is not required under the following circumstances:

* When an exemption under the Act applies.
* Where there is a private or domestic arrangement for family and friends (unless engaged as a kinship carer) which is unpaid.
* Supervising a student in a practical training that has been organised by their educational institution. This includes work experience placements for students aged over 15 years.
* Taking part in an activity with a child in the same way that a child participates, such as other players in a chess team.

**Nominated positions requiring Working with Children Checks**

Where a position is required to hold and maintain a valid Employee Working with Children Check, this will be documented within the role’s position description.

Employees required to have and maintain a valid Employee WWCC need to provide satisfactory evidence to People and Wellbeing prior to commencing child-related work.

Employees required to hold a valid WWCC, will need to submit their own Working with Children Check application online via Victoria Government ‘[Working with Children Check’ website](https://www.vic.gov.au/working-with-children-check) and submit a general expense claim form for reimbursement.

Employees will be assigned a ‘Working for Child Check’ form in Elevate. After receiving evidence of a satisfactory WWCC, this form should be completed and submitted for approval.

In the event, that an employee does not hold an existing WWCC, and it is identified their role specifically requires them to work with children, Wannon Water will pay for or reimburse the costs to obtain the WWCC.

## Renewal of Working with Children Checks

Employee Working with Children Checks are required to be renewed every five years.

Three months before to the renewal of a Working with Children Check, employees will receive a notification from Elevate, requesting they provide the following information, before renewing their WWCC:

* A list of any tasks/duties within your role at Wannon Water that the employee believe requires them to hold a current Working with Children Check.
* Examples of tasks/duties that may require you to work with or care for children as part of your role at Wannon Water. This may include facilitating school education sessions, educational tours of Wannon Water or other activities.

People and Wellbeing will review the information and provide written confirmation that the WWCC is still required to be held for the position.

Employees will receive a renewal notice from Working with Children Victoria 28 days prior to the expiry of the WWCC. The employee is responsible for arranging the renewal of the WWCC.

Once an employee renews and receives the WWCC card, the employee is required to submit the ’Working with Children Check’ form in Elevate, including attaching a copy of their valid WWCC card.

Wannon Water will cover the costs incurred for the renewal of a WWCC required to be held for nominated positions. Renewal costs for WWCC will only be paid or reimbursed by Wannon Water, where this process has been satisfactorily completed.

Expiry dates are recorded in Elevate, it is the joint responsibility of the line manager and employee to ensure the employee only undertakes work with children if they have a current WWCC.

People and Wellbeing will complete regular reviews of expiration dates to ensure compliance.

**Role requirement training**

Employees who are required to have a valid Employee WWCC, must complete ‘Working with Children’ eLearning module in Elevate and any refreshers, as part of their role requirement training.

**Requests to Engage with Education Institutes**

Requests for Wannon Water to present or attend educational institutes (including kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and universities) should be referred to People and Wellbeing and Engagement team, prior to agreeing to attend any such event.

## Child Protection guidelines

All Wannon Water employees and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

* Ensuring the safety and welfare of the child or young person is always paramount.
* Respecting and valuing the diversity and varying experiences of all children and young people.
* Actively listening and responding appropriately to the experiences and views of children and young people.
* Ensuring materials distributed to children and young people are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand.
* Taking disclosures of harm or abuse made by a child or young person seriously and reporting suspected abuse or neglect in accordance with the requirements of State or Territory as soon as possible.
* Adhering to Wannon Water’s Child Safety and Wellbeing policy.
* Completing any mandatory training.

## Reporting requirements for WWCC holders

**Failure to Disclose**

Reporting child sexual abuse is a legislative requirement and responsibility of all adults in Victoria under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic). All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that another adult has sexually offended against a child are obligated to report and disclose this information to the authorities.

**Failure to Protect**

People of authority within the organisation will commit an office if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

**Mandatory Reporters**

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, requires certain occupations to make a report to Child Protection if, while acting in the course of their employment or professional duties, they reasonably form the belief that a child needs protection. Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their position duties and report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse.

## Reporting child abuse concerns

In a situation of immediate life-threatening risk to a child, police must be notified immediately by telephoning 000.

If there is a risk to the immediate safety of a child that is non-life threatening, Wannon Water employees should contact their local police station or child protection.

If the incident relates to the conduct of an employee or associate of Wannon Water, employees also have an obligation to notify Wannon Water of this conduct as soon as practicable and to comply with the mandatory reporting obligations outlined in this procedure.

### Reportable Conduct

In addition to making all reports as required by law, Wannon Water employees are required to notify the Manager People & Wellbeing or the Executive People & Resilience as soon as possible after forming a reasonable belief that a member of the organisation has engaged in reportable conduct as defined in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, or where a disclosure of child abuse or harm has been made.

Allegations of reportable conduct may also be made by persons external to the organisation and should be escalated to the Manager People & Wellbeing as soon as possible.

To notify the Manager People & Wellbeing, a [Child Safety and Wellbeing Incident Report form](https://wannonwater.sharepoint.com/sites/cdms/SitePages/Homepage.aspx#/WorkingDocumentView/2240) should be completed and forwarded via email to the Manager People & Wellbeing.

In response to any report concerning a Wannon Water employee or volunteer’s alleged conduct relating to the wellbeing of a child or young adult, Wannon Water will comply with making all reports as required by law. Disciplinary action may also be taken in accordance with Wannon Water’s Consequence of Misconduct procedure.

# Roles and responsibilities

| **Position** | **Roles and responsibilities** |
| --- | --- |
| Line Manager | * Monitor and support appropriate behaviours to ensure compliance with the requirements of this procedure. |
| Manager People & Wellbeing | * Ensure this procedure continues to meet legislative provisions for all employees. * Management of all child safety and wellbeing incident reports and investigations or refer to an appropriately trained delegate. |
| People & Wellbeing team | * Process relevant employee checks, including Working with Children Checks. * Arrange appropriate training and education for those working with direct interaction with children. |
| Employees, volunteers, and contractors | * Comply with relevant Wannon Water policies, guidelines and processes related to this procedure. |

# Defini**tions**

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| **Term** | **Means** |
| Child | Any person under the age of 18. |
| Child-related work | Work in either a voluntary or paid capacity, in any of the fields listed under the *Worker Screening Act 2020,* where contact with a child is direct and part of a person’s duties. It excludes any infrequent direct contact with children that is incidental to the work. |
| Contact with a child | Refers to physical contact, face-to-face contact, written communication, oral communication, or electronic communication. |
| Child harm | Means any forms of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or exploitation, harm, or neglect. |
| Indigenous | The term Indigenous is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples. |
| Employees | Includes Wannon Water Employees, Volunteers and Contractors engaged by Wannon Water. |
| Educational Institutions | Educational institutions for children, specifically:   * kindergartens * state schools (all primary, secondary, technical and special state schools) * non-government schools (all primary, secondary and special non-government schools) * TAFE colleges and TAFE divisions of universities providing VCE and/or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) subjects. * some adult education providers offering VCE and/or VCAL subjects. * other institutions providing children’s study or training programs. |
| Disclosure | Refers to the communication of a child safety incident, including a child telling someone they feel unsafe or have been harmed. |
| Mandatory Reporters | Refers to the legal requirement of certain groups of people to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection services. This includes some professionals such as such as teachers, doctors, nurses, police, and childcare workers. |

# Governance

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| **Parent policy/standard** | * Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy |
| **Associated procedures/standards** | * [Employment Check Procedure](https://wannonwater.sharepoint.com/sites/cdms/Working%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fcdms%2FWorking%20Documents%2FEmployment%20Check%20Procedure%2EDOCX&parent=%2Fsites%2Fcdms%2FWorking%20Documents) * Code of Conduct Addendum * Victorian Public Services Code of Conduct * Consequences of Misconduct * Child Safety & Wellbeing Incident Report |
| **Relevant legislation** | * Department of Families, Fairness and Housing - [Child Safe Standards](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards) * [Worker Screening Act 2020 (legislation.vic.gov.au)](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/worker-screening-act-2020) * [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/child-wellbeing-and-safety-act-2005/040) |
| **Owner** | * General Manager People and Resilience |
| **Author** | * Executive People and Resilience |
| **Content enquiries** | * Manager People and Wellbeing |

# Document version history

|  |  |
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