



Frequently Asked Questions: Working With Children Checks (WWCC)

The Archdiocese of Sydney 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. Some people ask why they need to get a WWCC when volunteering in positions that they don't consider child-related. Below we have provided the rationale behind why certain positions require a WWCC. The positions that we've included may have contact with children and therefore hold considerable levels of trust and responsibility in our church environments.

Why do I have to get a WWCC?

In the last twelve months, the Safeguarding Office received two very concerning complaints relating to volunteers in positions of trust and responsibility in their respective parishes. In one complaint the volunteer was found to have previous child related convictions and in another, the volunteer approached a child attempting to groom them while their mother was in reconciliation. The Archdiocese then made the important decision to extend its list of volunteers who require a WWCC to include certain positions that are considered to hold positions of trust and responsibility in the Church communities they represent.

We know that by implementing safeguarding strategies into our parishes we are helping to close 'gaps' that some predators may think they can manipulate to gain access to children. WWCC is only one of these strategies however it sends a powerful message to any predator that the Archdiocese of Sydney will not tolerate those with predatory intentions in our Church communities.

Predators come in all shapes and sizes and are often the person we least expect. 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 Archdiocese has completed its due diligence.

The Catholic Church is on a cultural change journey that you are part of when you work or volunteer for the Church. We all have a responsibility to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. This includes role modeling responsible behaviours and actions within the Church and being accountable and transparent in our ministry.

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

How much do I have to pay for a WWCC?

Volunteer positions:	\$0 – the check is free
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 when it is time for renewal.

When does a volunteer become an official volunteer?

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

At what age does a person require a WWCC?

Children **under the age of 18** do not require a WWCC even if working in child related work in a volunteer or paid capacity.



Do parent volunteers require a WWCC?

Yes:

Parents (or close relatives such as aunties and uncles etc) **require a WWCC** if:

- The parent volunteers in a position in the church that requires a WWCC (see Guidelines: Working With Children Check (WWCC) 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 (including close relatives such as aunties and uncles etc) **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.

What if I don't feel 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 feel 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.

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

For more information

If you have any questions in relation to this document please contact the Safeguarding Office by phone on 02 9390 5811.

Related Documents: Factsheet: "Who Needs a Working With Children Check?"
Guidelines: "Working With Children's Checks (WWCC)"