

Screening and Suitability

Scope

This policy outlines the measures we take to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our care through employment screening and suitability assessments. Our policy aims to prioritize the wellbeing of children and young people by preventing unsuitable individuals from engaging with them. All employees, contractors, volunteers, site users, and other adults affiliated with our College must undergo child-related employment screening, which is valid for five years and is portable across roles and organizations in South Australia. We maintain strict record-keeping procedures and comply with all legislative and policy requirements related to screening and suitability assessments.

Our policy also includes a provision for responding to reports of harm, abuse, and neglect, which includes mandatory notification training for all education workers and volunteers. We offer a range of training programs, including a Fundamentals course and an Extended Training Masterclass, to ensure that all staff members have the necessary skills to respond appropriately to reports of harm.

We recognize that working with children requires not only a clear background check but also a demonstrated commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children. Therefore, in addition to screening, we assess applicants' values, motives, and attitudes to ensure that they are compatible with a culture of child safety and wellbeing. We also conduct panel interviews and standardized reference checks to establish confidence that an applicant has the required experience and emotional, physical, intellectual, and ethical capacity to work with children.

Continuous monitoring of suitability includes documenting and acting on inappropriate conduct towards children or young people by people covered by this policy. We also provide supervision and assessments to ensure that all individuals engaged with our children and young people continue to prioritize their safety and wellbeing.

This policy aims to:

- Support the College in meeting its paramount responsibility for the safety of children and young people.
- Ensure that unsuitable persons are not engaged with our children and young people.
- Ensure screening and suitability practices comply with legislative and policy requirements.

Record Keeping

A copy of all screenings must be recorded or held by People and Culture or the nominated Department.

Breaches

In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, it is essential that anyone working or volunteering in a child-related role possess a valid working with children check. This requirement is mandatory and failure to comply may result in serious consequences.

Employers and volunteer coordinators are responsible for ensuring that all individuals in child-related roles hold a current WWCC. Any employee found to be without a valid WWCC will be suspended without pay immediately, as their continued presence in such a role would pose a risk to the wellbeing of children and young people.

It is also important to note that any behavior which violates any employment requirements, policies, agreements, or professional codes related to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people may result in suspension without pay, termination of employment, or an immediate cessation of any existing contracts or agreements. Volunteers who do not hold a current WWCC are prohibited from participating in any College activities, as their presence in such activities could compromise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Definitions

Working with Children Check (WWCC)

As of the 1 July 2019, the law requires people working or volunteering in a child-related role to have a current working with children check.

A working with children check is valid for five years and is portable across roles and organisations in South Australia. Continuous monitoring will be in place for WWCCs, which will be re-assessed as new information becomes available. If a re-assessment results in a person being prohibited from working with children, both the person and their employer will be notified.

Exemption

A person does not need a WWCC if they:

- are a sworn Police Officer
- employ or supervise children in a workplace, unless the work is child related (e.g. managing a fast food restaurant that employs people under 18)
- work in the same capacity as a child, (e.g. working at a checkout in a supermarket that also hires people under 18 in the same type of role)
- don't reasonably believe they will work with children for more than seven days (consecutive or not) in a calendar year*
- are a parent or guardian volunteering with their own child (e.g. at school) and do not have close personal contact with other children, or participate in an organised overnight event (e.g. a school camp)
- live interstate, have a current child related check from their home state, and are working at an organised event in South Australia lasting no more than 10 consecutive days
- are under the age of 14.

*The seven-day exclusion does not apply if the person is involved with an overnight activity (e.g. school camp) or has close contact with children with disability.

Responding to Reports of Harm, Abuse and Neglect

To work or volunteer in education you need to do mandatory notification training. The training is called Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RRHAN-EC for short).

The training includes information about child protection in education.

There are two parts to the training: Fundamentals and Masterclass – Extended training.

Fundamentals is for:

- staff with a current certificate who need to update
- volunteers
- work experience students
- people on professional placement
- bus drivers
- canteen workers
- people bridging from full day Safe Environments – Through Their Eyes training
- corporate staff who do **not** work with children and young people

Masterclass – Extended Training is only for specific staff who:

- work with children and young people
- are **new**
- do **not** have a current RAN-EC or RRHAN-EC certificate.

This extended training is done in 2 parts:

A 2-hour online fundamentals course which covers the essentials, plus

A 4-hour facilitator-led masterclass. This has more advanced knowledge.

Not all staff need to do the masterclass. You can use a decision-making tool to check if this is the right course for you.

Screening

Screening is the process of assessing an individual's relevant history and background. Screening may include verifying an applicant's identity, qualifications, professional registration and relevant background/working with children checks.

Suitability

A working with children check is an assessment of a person's prior behaviour. It doesn't determine a person's suitability to work with children – organisations still need to decide if a potential employee or volunteer is a good fit for the role. Determining suitability encompasses all means;

- assessing that a person is suitable to work in a child safe environment, and
- the establishment of confidence that a person has the required experience and the emotional, physical, intellectual and ethical capacity to be engaged with and/or participating at the College and/or providing a service to a child or young person from the perspective of child safety. Confidence may be established by;
 - Assessing applicants' values, motives and attitudes for compatibility with a culture for child safety and wellbeing.
 - Panel interviews, transparent short-listing and standardized reference checks.

Continuous monitoring of suitability may include:

- Documenting and acting on information about inappropriate conduct towards children or young people by people covered by this policy.
- Supervision, assessment, observation and mentoring of staff and volunteers.

Children and Young People

All students enrolled as students at the College, including students aged 18 years and above.

Volunteer

Anyone who has been accepted to provide any form of on-going assistance to the site irrespective of whether the assistance involves direct contact with children and young people. This includes any overnight camps/school sleep overs/ billeting/school organised homestay. The on-going assistance can be of a regular or irregular nature. *Note: this does not include helping at one-off events such as concerts and swimming events.*

Third-Party Provider

Individuals engaged by the College to;

- work with children and young people without constant supervision by a staff member, or
- perform work in proximity to children and young people without constant supervision by a staff member, or
- have access to records relating to children and young people, or
- manage or supervise personnel undertaking those roles

Examples of third-party providers engaged by the site – sport and music coaches (out-sourced), academic tutors, youth workers, artists in residence, providers of OSHC services

The staff member responsible for engaging the third-party provider is responsible for ensuring that screening and suitability requirements are met and that records are sent to Human Resources.

Contractor

Organisations or individuals engaged by the College to provide services that are not related to working with children or young people and will not be under the direct or constant supervision of College employees.

Examples of Contractors engaged by the site – IT technicians, building contractors, providers of building or machinery maintenance, cleaners, auditors accessing records of students.

The Department responsible for engaging the Contractor, is responsible ensuring that screening and suitability requirements are met.

Employee

Any person engaged by the College and paid on a casual, part time, fixed term or permanent basis.

General process and acknowledgements

1. Information that suggests a person is unsuitable to be engaged with Scotch College must be responded to as soon as that information is available.
2. Changes to Scotch College's screening or suitability policy requirements must be communicated and applied to existing staff and volunteers where legislation and employment contracts allow.
3. The investigation and use of information relating to unsuitability must occur in a manner which respects the person's right to natural justice and procedural fairness.
4. Regular acknowledgment by staff of their understanding of the obligations prescribed by this policy.

Screening Requirements

	Screening Required	Type	Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect (RRHAN)	Records Kept
Employees - General	Yes	WWCC	Yes – must be current to comply.	People and Culture
Employees - Teacher or educator	Current teacher registration	WWCC	Yes – must be current to comply.	People and Culture
Third Party Provider	Yes	WWCC	Yes – must be current to comply. Required to acknowledge receipt of Introduction to Child Safe Environments Policy	People and Culture
Volunteer - Adult	Yes	WWCC	Yes	People and Culture
Contractors	Yes	WWCC or equivalent	No Required to acknowledge receipt of Introduction to Child Safe Environments Policy	Infrastructure or Hiring Manager
Adults residing on campus not enrolled	Yes	WWCC	Yes	People and Culture
Homestay/Billeting - Adults residing in the home	Yes	WWCC	No Required to acknowledge receipt of Introduction to Child Safe Environments Policy	Department requiring the Homestay
Employee - Current student	Yes	WWCC	Yes	People and Culture

Payment for WWCC

All staff are responsible for the payment of their own WWCC and for ensuring that they are maintained.

The cost of the check is tax deductible except for those who have not recently been continuously employed in the field of child-related employment. Therefore, the College will initiate and pay for the initial check for non-teaching staff new to child-related employment (i.e. they do not hold a current WWCC).

The WWCC is at no cost to volunteers.