



**uniting
church**
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

Guideline - Working with Children Check in NSW

This guideline applies to all Synod entities in NSW other than those which require a specific tailored policy. In particular, it is for Ministers, Ministry of Pastor, Lay Leaders, Employees, Volunteers and Members of Councils in a Congregation, Parish Mission or Presbytery of the Uniting Church, Synod of NSW and the ACT.

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Guideline - Working with Children Check in NSW

Background

A Working with Children Check is mandatory for any individual in NSW involved in child-related work. The Working with Children Check incorporates a National Police Check.

Child-related work is work in a child-related sector where the person has direct contact with a child or children, and that contact is a usual part of and more than incidental to the work.

Direct contact includes physical contact or face-to-face contact with children. Child-related work also includes child-related roles specified in the legislation.

All Uniting Church organisations fall within the scope of a child-related sector; however, some entities, or some workers may not engage in child-related work. In some cases, therefore, a WWCC may not be required.

Holders of a WWCC (employed and volunteer) are likely to be Mandatory Reporters and are employees for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme so it is important that all holders of WWCC understand their responsibilities under both pieces of legislation. Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct Guidelines for NSW on the Synod Safe Church Website.

Required Training

It is important that all holders of WWCC complete Safe Church Awareness training every three years and that a register of training is held with the WWCC register by the Safe Church Liaison person. Safe Church Awareness training is designed to equip those who work with children with the knowledge they require to undertake their roles safely.

WWCC Summary of Requirements

- Individuals seeking to engage in child-related work must provide a WWCC number issued by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian to an entity before they can be permitted to engage in such work; and
- Entities must register online and then verify every individual's clearance number online with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian before they permit an individual to engage in child-related work. They must keep accurate records and recheck clearances when they are due.
- Any WWCC holder who cannot obtain a working with children clearance in the first instance; and/or their clearance subsequently revoked and/or a bar or limitation placed upon their capacity to work with children by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, must notify the entity, and the entity must immediately report it to the Safe Church Unit at: safechurch@nswact.uca.org.au

Responsibilities for WWCC

Each Synod Body is responsible for the oversight and management of WWCC in their entity. Many Synod Bodies will manage WWCC under their own policies and procedures. This guideline applies wherever an entity does not have its own policy.

WWCC is to be managed as part of the recruitment and management of staff;

- When a role is created or advertised, the necessity for a WWCC is to be considered and included in the job description
- Before a person starts a child-related role whether paid or on a volunteer basis, they must provide the appropriate WWCC number and their date of birth (for verification purposes)
- A register should be kept showing the WWCC clearance number and expiry date

- All relevant employees (including volunteers) are responsible for keeping their WWCC current, and providing this information to the appropriate person
- All employees (including volunteers) who are required to hold a WWCC must immediately inform the appropriate person if their WWCC status changes.

Who needs a Working with Children Check?

The Office of the Children’s Guardian defines child-related work (including voluntary work) as:

- providing services for children under 18 and you are over the age of 18
- where the work normally involves being face to face with children
- where contact with children is more than incidental to the work.

A Working with Children Check is required by all ordained ministers or individuals engaged as religious leaders or spiritual officers who must undergo a Working with Children Check regardless of whether they engage in face-to-face contact with children.

Examples of those who need a valid WWCC in the Synod context:

- Ordained ministers
- Head Of Entity
- SRE Teachers
- Ministry of Pastor roles
- Chaplains
- Child-care workers
- Teachers, Principals and various other school staff
- Lay church leaders (see definition in table below)
- Any employed person or volunteer who contributes to any program involving children.

Who does NOT require a Working with Children’s Check?

- People under 18 years of age
- People whose work occasionally includes helping out with children as an incidental part of their role

See table below for further examples.

If you are unclear about whether a Working with Children Check is required, refer to the [Office of the Children’s Guardian](#) website.

Or contact the Synod Safe Church Unit – safechurch@nswact.uca.org.au

Summary of WWCC Process

1. Identify everyone within your entity who requires a WWCC.
2. Everyone who requires a WWCC must apply online at [Service NSW](#) and follow the instructions to have their identification documents verified in person at Service NSW.
3. Obtain WWCC numbers from each person who requires a WWCC and ensure they have clearance. No person is able to work with children until their WWCC is granted. If a WWCC is refused, then they are unable to work with children and the Safe Church Unit must be notified immediately so appropriate actions can take place under the Persons of Concern Policy.
4. Verify each person online with [Service NSW](#) so they are linked to your organisation.
5. Maintain a WWCC register showing the details of each holder of a WWCC. A template is provided on the Safe Church Unit website.
6. Ensure that all holders of WWCC renew before their WWCC expires (every 5 years).

7. The Office of the Children’s guardian runs continual screening of databases at a national level. If a holder of a current WWCC is subsequently barred, the OCG will notify the entity who has verified the person. If a person becomes barred, contact the Safe Church Unit immediately. Refer to the table below.

What are the potential statuses of a WWCC application and what do I need to do?

The different outcomes and statuses of WWCC’s are outlined in the table below. It is important that the Safe Church Liaison person and Church Council understand and act upon each status as indicated.

Status	Meaning	Action
Application in progress	<p>A Working with Children Check application is being processed.</p> <p>The applicant may not work with children until the process is complete.</p> <p>If the applicant becomes barred or is not cleared to work with children, the Office of the Children's Guardian will contact you and advise you of what to do next.</p>	<p>Verify their clearance once the employee receives their Working with Children Check number.</p> <p>Keep a record that you have verified the employee.</p>
Cleared	<p>This applicant has a Working with Children Check clearance that is valid until the listed expiry date in five years.</p>	<p>Keep a record that you have verified the employee.</p>
Barred	<p>The applicant has been barred from working with children and it is an offence to engage this person in child-related work or in a child- related role.</p>	<p>Contact the Safe Church Unit immediately. They will advise on the actions required and assist in completing them.</p> <p>A barred person must not work with children.</p> <p>Keep a record of your actions.</p>
Interim Bar	<p>The applicant has been barred from working with children during the course of a risk assessment.</p> <p>It is an offence to engage this person in child-related work or child-related roles until and if they are cleared.</p>	<p>Contact the Safe Church Unit immediately. They will advise on the actions required and assist in completing them.</p> <p>A person with an interim bar must not work with children.</p> <p>Keep a record of your actions.</p>
Not found	<p>The database cannot find a matching Working with Children Check for any one of these reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data entered for 	<p>You must not employ this person in child-related work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the number or employee’s details

	<p>verification (name, date of birth and Working with Children Check number or application number) has errors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person's application has been withdrawn or terminated without an outcome • The person has not completed an application for a Working with Children Check or their renewal (filled in/renewed the online form, presented proof of identity and paid any applicable fee) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind the worker that they must complete their Check application and provide either the WWCC Application number or clearance number • suspend them from child-related work until they have completed their application • transfer them to a non child-related role within the business until they provide their WWCC Application number • dismiss the worker if they do not make all reasonable attempts to provide an application number or Working with Children Check number <p>Keep a record of your actions.</p>
Expired	The person's Working with Children Check has expired	<p>You must not employ this person in child-related work until they provide you with an Application number or Working with Children Check clearance number.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the number or the person's details • Remind the person that they must complete their Check application and provide either the APP number or clearance number • suspend them from child-related work until they have

		<p>completed their application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transfer them to a non child-related role within the business until they provide their APP number • dismiss or stand down the person if they do not make all reasonable attempts to provide an application number or Working with Children Check number <p>Keep a record of your actions.</p>
Closed	The person's application for a Check has been closed and is no longer being progressed.	<p>You must not employ this person in child-related work.</p> <p>They need to re-apply for a Working with Children Check and provide you with an Application number or Working with Children Check clearance number.</p> <p>There are many reasons for an application being closed. These range from duplicate applications (in which case the applicant will have an alternative number), the identification check at Service NSW was not done in time, other names were not disclosed, information was requested and not received, or there may have been a technical glitch.</p>

Further Information

Lay church leader	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members of church council• Elders recognised as having an active spiritual ministry within the congregation• People identified by the ministry agent as key leaders such as in the areas of worship, music and technology• Accredited lay preachers
Other exemptions to the requirement for a WWCC	Some other examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The work with children is very short term e.g. a visitor to a school as a guest speaker• a co-worker or supervisor of a worker who is under 18 (and you are not in child related employment)• visiting from interstate and working with children for fewer than 30 days• volunteering as a referee, umpire or lines person or other sporting official where the work does not involve contact with children for extended periods without other adults being present• work in an organisation that delivers services for children but do not have more than incidental contact with the children• informal domestic work at a home where there are children.

Guideline Review

This Guideline is to be reviewed annually by the Synod Operations.