FV WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK POLICY

Document Version Control

VERSION	PUBLISHED DATE	DETAILS	AUTHOR
1	1 April 2021	New Policy	Club Development Team
2	7 January 2025	Changes to definitions and exemptions	Club Development Team
3	30 October 2026	Changes to scope, exemptions and processes with the introduction of WWC Connect by Social Services Regulator	Member Services Team

Policy Owner

Football Victoria (**FV**) Member Services Team

Review Date

30 October 2028

Purpose and Scope

FV is committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people participating in football and futsal.

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Promote child safety and wellbeing.
- Establish FV's Working with Children Check (WWCC) requirements.
- Ensure that Clubs, FV Advisory Panels, Suppliers, Futsal Centres and other affiliated entities comply with Victorian child safety legislation.
- Define the responsibilities of individuals and organisations in verifying and maintaining WWCC compliance.

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1. PURPOSE

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- Promote child safety and wellbeing.
- Establish FV's Working with Children Check (WWCC) requirements.
- Ensure that Clubs, FV Advisory Panels, Suppliers, Futsal Centres and other affiliated entities comply with Victorian child safety legislation.
- Define the responsibilities of individuals and organisations in verifying and maintaining WWCC compliance.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- Football Victoria;
- FV Member and Affiliated Clubs;
- FV Advisory Panels and FV Sub-Committees;
- Futsal Centres;
- FV Contractors and Suppliers;
- Any other FV affiliated entity;
- All Coaches, Team Managers, Technical Directors, Club Officials, Match Officials, Volunteers, FV Directors, FV Advisory Panel or Sub-Committee Members, FV Staff, Contractors and Participants engaged in child-related roles.

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy:

Child means a person under 18 years of age.

Child-Related Work - Under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Section 7) in Victoria, child-related work is defined as paid or voluntary work at specific child-focused services, bodies, places, or activities that usually involves direct contact with children (people under 18 years of age).

Direct Contact means physical contact, face-to-face contact, or communication via post, phone, email, or other electronic means. Direct Contact also includes having direct access to the personal information of children, for example, a Club Registrar or Club President.

PlayFootball means Football Australia (FA)'s National Online Registration System used by Member Federations, Clubs and Associations for players, coaches, volunteers, and referees to register for community and competitive football clubs.

PlayFootball Administrator means an authorised designated club official or registrar granted backend access to a Club's PlayFootball account, FA's National Online Registration System.

Social Services Regulator (SSR) is the independent statutory authority in Victoria, Australia, established under the *Social Services Regulation Act 2021*. It safeguards the rights of children, young people, and individuals who use social services by regulating quality standards and screening out unsafe workers.

Working with Children Check (WWCC) - The Working with Children Check administered by the Victorian Government.

Verification - The process of confirming the validity of a WWCC through the Victorian Government's online verification system.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

FV requires all persons performing child-related roles within football and futsal to hold and maintain a valid Working with Children Check unless they qualify for an exemption recognised under this Policy.

While Victorian legislation provides exemptions for certain individuals, FV may require a WWCC as a condition of participation, engagement or registration to support a child-safe environment.

5. PERSONS REQUIRED TO HOLD A WWCC

The following persons must hold a valid WWCC where they are undertaking child-related work:

- Coaches;
- Team Managers;
- Technical Directors;
- Match Officials;
- Team Officials and Staff;
- Club Officials (including Club Committee Members)
- Volunteers;
- Contractors;
- Any other person working or volunteering with participants under 18 years of age.

This requirement applies regardless of whether the person is:

- Paid or unpaid;
- A parent;
- A guardian;
- A close relative of a player they are coaching or managing.

In addition, all workers and volunteers involved in official FV or Club activities involving:

- overnight stays;
- tours; or
- camps involving overnight accommodation

must hold a valid WWCC.

6. RECOGNISED EXEMPTIONS

FV recognises the following exemptions:

6.1 Persons Under 18 Years of Age

Individuals under 18 years of age are exempt from the requirement to obtain a WWCC.

6.2 Registered Teachers

Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers are exempt under Victorian legislation.

Where required under Victorian legislation, teachers must notify Working with Children Check Victoria when undertaking child-related work outside of their teaching role.

6.3 Police Officers

Victoria Police and Australian Federal Police officers are exempt under Victorian legislation.

If an officer's employment or status changes and the exemption no longer applies, the officer must comply with any legislative notification requirements and obtain a WWCC where required.

6.4 Guest Presenters

Guest speakers or presenters delivering a one-off presentation are exempt.

6.5 Interstate Visitors

Persons visiting Victoria from another Australian jurisdiction for child-related work or volunteering for a period not exceeding 30 days in a calendar year may be exempt in accordance with Victorian legislation.

FA requires that all PlayFootball Administrators/Registrars have a WWCC even if they are a Registered Teacher or Police Officer.

7. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Any person registering on PlayFootball or any FV-approved registration system in a role requiring a WWCC must:

1. Hold a valid WWCC (unless exempt).
2. Provide their WWCC number, issue date, expiry date and a copy or photo of their WWCC card during registration.
3. Maintain a valid WWCC for the duration of their involvement.

A registration requiring a WWCC will not be approved until the WWCC details have been provided and verified.

8. OCCASIONAL PARENT SUPPORT OF TEAM

Occasionally, a parent may be required to support their child's team, for example, stepping in to run the line, referee or undertake game day marshalling duties. Under Victorian law, a parent volunteering in an activity where their own child is participating or normally participates does not require a WWCC. This exemption does not extend to parents who regularly volunteer at the Club.

9. ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All organisations and entities to which this Policy applies must:

9.1 Collect WWCC Information

Obtain the WWCC number directly from the individual.

9.2 Verify WWCC Status

Verify the WWCC through the Victorian Government's online verification system before the individual commences child-related work.

9.3 Maintain Records

Maintain records of:

- the WWCC number;
- verification date;
- verification outcome;
- renewal verification.

Records must be securely stored in accordance with applicable privacy and record-keeping requirements.

9.4 Monitor Renewals

Monitor the renewal status of the individual's WWCC Clearance via the new Working with Children Connect portal (WWC Connect) – *see Appendix A*. It is illegal for an individual to participate in child-related work if their WWCC Clearance has expired and they do not hold another valid and current exemption like a VIT card.

10. VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Verification is a mandatory requirement.

Verification confirms the validity of the WWCC prior to engaging a worker or volunteer. *See Appendix A*.

Only individuals who have been successfully verified and are authorised under Victorian legislation may undertake child-related work.

11. LINKING WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS TO ORGANISATION WWC CONNECT PROFILE

Under recent child safety reforms, Victorian organisations must actively link their workers and volunteers to their WWC Connect profile and maintain accurate status records. Failure to maintain accurate digital worker records or comply with mandatory monitoring requirements may constitute regulatory non-compliance. *See Appendix A*.

12. RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUALS

Any individual required to hold a WWCC must:

- Obtain and maintain a valid WWCC.
- Provide accurate WWCC details when requested.
- Notify the relevant organisation if their WWCC status changes.
- Renew their WWCC before expiry.

13. NON-COMPLIANCE

Any person required to hold a WWCC who fails to provide and maintain a valid WWCC will:

- be ineligible for registration;
- be prohibited from undertaking child-related work;
- be removed from duties involving children;
- be reported to the relevant regulatory authority.

At the time of publication, engaging in child-related work without holding a valid WWC Clearance or a valid application that remains active and has not been withdrawn carries a maximum penalty of 240 penalty units (approx. $50,184) or 2 years in prison.

Clubs and other affiliated entities that fail to comply with this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, penalties or sanctions under the Club Compliance By-Law and may also be reported to the relevant regulatory authority.

An organisation found guilty of engaging workers or volunteers without a valid WWCC can face fines exceeding $250,000.

14. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

FV may:

- conduct audits;
- request evidence of verification records;
- monitor compliance across affiliated organisations.

FV will continue to cooperate with the Victorian SSR and any authorised compliance activities relating to WWCC.

APPENDIX A – RELATED PROCESSES AND RESOURCES

Applying for a Working with Children Check

Individuals may apply through the Victorian Government's Working with Children Check process via the Service Victoria Portal.

New WWCC Clearances and renewals now require the individual to participate in mandatory online child safety training.

Applicants should refer to the Service Victoria website for current application requirements, identity verification requirements and applicable fees.

Checking a Status before Employing or Engaging someone

It is a legal requirement for the organisation engaging the services of an individual, to obtain the individual's WWCC card number directly from them, verify it using Service Victoria online verification system, Working with Children Check Status Checker, and keep a record of the verification details until you add the worker to your WWC Connect profile to link their WWCC to your organisation and receive updates on any changes to the status of the individual's WWCC.

When you verify, you will receive a result of Cleared, Not Cleared, In Progress, or Not Found. You may only engage individuals who are Cleared.

If the result is Not Found, this usually means that the information entered is incorrect, or the applicant still needs to complete the application process.

Working with Children (WWC) Connect

Introduced on 19 October 2026, WWC Connect is an online portal on Service Victoria managed by the SSR in Victoria. It tracks the connection between organisations, sole traders, or parents and the people they engage in child-related work.

Organisations need to set up an account profile on the portal to link their workers or volunteers who engage in child-related work. This system will then automatically notify the organisation by email and within the portal if a connected worker's WWC Clearance expires, is suspended or is revoked, allowing the organisation to immediately cease engaging that individual in child-related work. Continuing to engage a person whose WWC Clearance has expired may constitute a serious offence.

WWC Connect also allows organisations to verify an individual's VIT card.

FV has developed a WWC Connect | How To Guide to assist Clubs in setting up WWC Connect.